



Climate Action & Sustainability Commission Agenda

Wednesday, September 9	5:30PM	City Hall Room 113
		215 Pleasant Street
		Malden, MA 02148

Roll Call (1 min)

- Councilor Carey McDonald - Present
- Staff Liaison Rebekah McPheeters - Present
- Diego Maldonado* (Secretary) - Present
- Bob FitzPatrick* - Present
- Rachel Surrette* - Absent
- Lipin Ji* - Present (virtually)
- Amanda Treat* (Vice Chair) - Present
- Ricky Ma* (Chair) – Present
- Julius “JJ” Scott (Youth Member) – Present
- Ema Xhindi (Youth Member) – Absent

Also present were Julia Nassar (MAPC) and Arbin Timilsina.

*Commission’s voting members.

Minutes to be Approved (4 min)

Commission to approve minutes from August 25 meeting.

- Bob motioned to approve the minutes. Amanda seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

CASC Introductions (5 min)

CASC members to introduce themselves, including new members.

- Arbin has not been officially appointed yet, but was present as a Malden resident.

CASC background. (Ricky)

- Ricky shared the CASC annual report draft, as it provides good context on what the CASC has been working on. Ricky walked through the 5 main goals of the Climate Action Plan, and progress on those goals to date.

Sierra Club Debrief (15 min)

Grace Tumavicus (OSPCD) to join to share out on Mass Save in Malden.

- The state legislature's proposed cut to Mass Save program is \$1B. This proposal is in conference committee right now, with a deadline of 12/31/26.
- Grace's former position included being an energy advocate for Malden's Mass Save Community First Partnership program. A new staff person has been hired and will be joining Malden's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development in two weeks to fill the role.
- The Mass Save Community First Partnership (CFP) program was established to create dedicated municipal staff to get the word out about Mass Save incentives, to address language barriers specific to municipalities, and generally to support equitable access to the program.
- This proposed cut would affect the CFP program and disrupt equitable access to the program.
- Is Malden saturated in terms of reaching all the "low hanging fruit" for Mass Save? HomeWorks has done great outreach in Malden, so the program has been well-utilized.
- Malden is a designated "equity community," but Capic (our designated CAP agency for low-income residents) is overburdened, and the wait lists are too long. There is not enough budget for the low-income program. Grace has been advised to slow down outreach to low-income residents.
- The program budget is set for the next 1.5 years, based on 3-year planning cycles.
- If the state cuts \$1B, the cut would take effect in the current budget of \$4.5B that runs through the end of 2027.
- While Mass Save is flawed, it is the system we have to promote clean energy adoption and energy efficiency cost savings.
- Councillor McDonald is supportive of the CASC writing a letter to the State, and they could draft a similarly worded City Council resolution for further support.
- Broadly, the legislature is looking at how to cut the "extra" charges on ratepayer's bills, that's their angle. However, Bob noted that the Mass Save program is finally at the point where the incentives are getting to low-income populations, and therefore it is the worst time to cut the program.

Group to make a decision about advocating to the State on behalf of Mass Save and/or other issues raised by Sierra Club in our last meeting.

- The Commission agreed to oppose cuts to Mass Save for the reasons named above.
- Ricky as the Commission Chair will draft a letter, and will send it to the group in a week.
- Bob will let Ricky know where to send the letter.
- Ricky to send the letter to Councillor McDonald by Wednesday (9/16) so they can get a similar resolution on the City Council docket, too.
- Julia noted that there are template letters Ricky could use, and suggested checking out resources from Mothers Out Front.

Project Updates & Announcements (20 min)

Vote on Energy Coach Memo & project update. (Ricky & Julia)

- Julia overviewed the memo for new members: The memo collates research on various energy coach programs in the region and makes Malden specific recommendations for how we could roll out the program here.

- Our next step is to pursue funding for the energy coach program. We are pursuing MassCEC's Empower grant, which offers up to \$150k. Julia met with Bekah, Grace, and Alex (OSPCD) on this today, and she will start pulling together a narrative for the application.
- In the application, Malden could pair a coaching program with a "Solarize"-type campaign.
- Commission will plan to look at a draft application in Nov/Dec meeting. City is aiming to apply in March grant round.
- Group started discussing community solar, and whether that could be contemplated in the application. Bob noted negative feelings about community solar. Bekah had concerns about participants getting two bills, although Bob noted that there is a docket with the DPU to change this.
- Group decided to put a solar discussion on a future agenda, perhaps in the Nov/Dec meeting when we talk about the Empower grant.

Bloomberg YCAF grant update. (Bekah)

- Program overview: Malden youth 15-24 years old are eligible to apply, can win up to \$5k microgrant to implement a climate project in Malden, apps due 9/30
- Bekah to send JJ the flyer to share with his AP Environmental Science class
- Bekah to send the flyer to Councillor McDonald who will get it to the Key Club and the MC Green Club
- Bekah noted that the Mayor will post a video about this program on his Instagram soon, so JJ can share it!

MVP De-paving Project update. (Bekah) – This item was tabled.

Barr Foundation project concept. (Bekah) – This item was tabled.

General Comms & Annual Progress Report (Ricky, 20 min)

Final feedback/review of annual progress report.

- Grace noted that she ultimately hosted 5 bill clinics this year, with over 100 attendees. Julia suggested we add these numbers to the report next year.

Group to vote to approve the report.

- Amanda motioned to approve the report pending a few edits to graphics, and Bob seconded. Commission voted unanimously to approve the report pending edits.

Discuss report translation.

- We are planning to translate the report into Chinese, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.
- Ricky and Lipin are doing the Chinese translation "in house" (in Traditional Chinese, which Lipin says is good because it is more broadly accessible to the Chinese community)
- Councillor McDonald noted that Anna Tse in the Clerk's Office may be a good resource for Malden-specific Chinese translation questions.

Discuss possible presentation to City Council.

- Councillor McDonald is supportive of the CASC presenting to City Council on the annual report, and noted that we should also send out a corresponding press release, in addition to publishing the report on the City's website.
- Councillor McDonald to check on 9/29 as a date option for the presentation.

Retrospective (Ricky, 20 min)

Recap Year One goals, progress, successes. (Ricky)

[CASC Working Group Retrospective FY26.pptx](#) (Ricky)

- The group noted these accomplishments from the last year: Letter re: Amelia Earhart dam, got Solsmart designation, Green Malden Fair, the rain barrel program, 2 grants (CELT and YCAF), the CASC newsletter
- The group noted the following feedback from the last year: Too many working groups, maybe we need learning vs. action tracks, we should consider how to prioritize time when lots of groups want to come talk to CASC
 - o Discussed that community groups could get items in our newsletter as a way to platform them
 - o Julia noted we will need someone to keep an ear out for progress report items throughout the year, as Julia has been doing this for us and her time with us will end at the end of the calendar year
- The group noted these considerations as we consider next year's priorities:
 - o Focus on areas that do need CASC action (not stuff the City was going to do anyway)
 - o Ricky would like to schedule regular alignments with key city departments
 - o Anything we should stop doing?
 - We should refine structure of working groups
 - o Anything we should start doing?
 - More meetings with city staff
 - More social media
 - Look for opportunities to send CASC resources where they've been cut from the City's budget (i.e. to Chris Rosa who no longer has an admin)

Next Steps (5 min)

Discuss agenda for next meeting.

Consider that time will be needed for YCAF project selection.

- Next meeting scheduled for 10/14 5:30-7:30 to account for extra time for YCAF application review; Group noted that we should order food.

Consider MyWRA's CLEANAIR presentation, Black Earth Compost

Confirm date/time for next meeting and length of meeting.

Share out any upcoming relevant events.

- Malden River Works Grand Opening 10/4 1-4PM

Adjournment – 7:00PM

Amanda motioned to adjourn. Bob seconded the motion, and the commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:07PM.

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