

Minutes of Pepperell Climate Change Committee – 2022-04-14

Meeting Recording: [Custus VOD Widget - Climate Change Committee Meeting, Apr 14, 2022](#)

Committee Members in Attendance:

Robert Cataldo
Sue Edwards
Renee D'Argento
Jason Vesey
Jessica Vesey

Agenda for Apr 14 Meeting:

1. Welcome
2. Acceptance of minutes from prior meetings
3. New Business Discussion / Action Items
 - a. Community Solar project update (Jason)
 - b. Tree City US next steps (Beth)
 - c. Community Outreach update (Sue)
4. Other business
5. Adjournment

Minutes:

Welcome

Jim Scarsdale (clerk) hosted the meeting in the absence of Ken Hartlage.

Item 2: Acceptance of minutes from prior meetings

As there were still outstanding comments from the 2022-03-12 meeting, a vote to accept has been postponed to the next meeting.

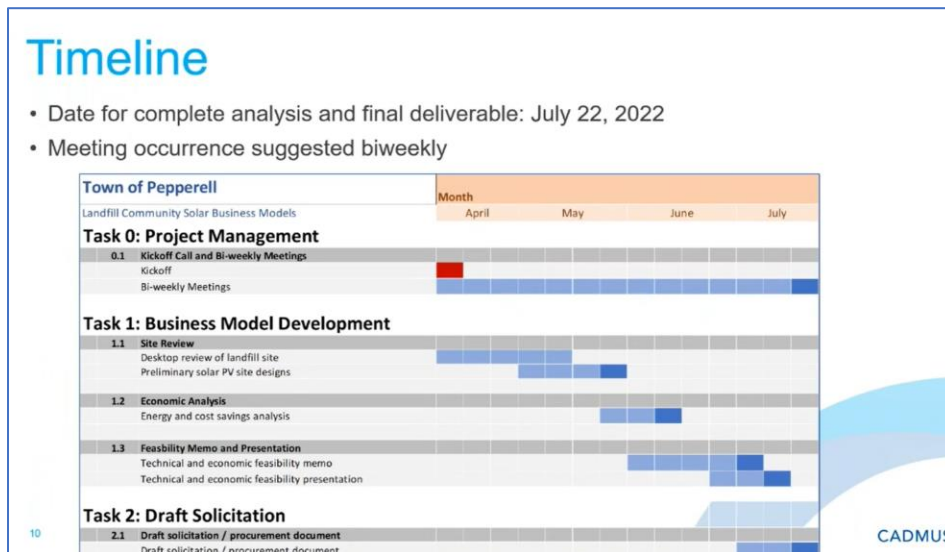
New Business Discussion / Action Items

Item 3a: Community Solar Project Update (Jason)

The review subcommittee overseeing the project has the Awarded *Business Consultancy contract* to *Cadmus*.

- Consensus of the review committee that they offered best value to the town
- Contract has been set up and formally started week of April 4, 2022
- 4-month contract – expect study to be finished and presentation of final outputs by end of July / early August
- Kickoff meeting was held April 8, 2022
 - Committee laid out scope of work to be done.
 - Cadmus introduced their team
 - Discussed overall schedules and communication
 - Positive assessment of Cadmus's understanding of what's to be done

- Timeline and Project Plan (as shared by Jason)



- Expect interim outputs from Cadmus
- Committee asked for the following
 - Conduct an *analysis of different business models* for a Community Solar Project on the Landfill
 - Report on *different business models* – costs & benefits, advantages & disadvantages
 - Recommend the *best business model* for Pepperell’s purposes
 - As a Supplement, prepare a more *in-depth analysis of probable costs* of building solar on the landfill and *probable amounts of solar electricity generation* that could be realized
 - Help prepare *procurement documents for the next stage of the project*: Implementation of the Preferred Business Model and appropriate contracts / solicitation documents
 - Preliminary analysis results by late May or June, Final analysis in July
 - Final report to include supplementary information on costs and energy production potential
 - Procurement documents will be at end of project (July)
 - One formal output is a presentation of the results of the study to the Climate Change Committee and a presentation to a second committee (probably the Select Board) – expect to schedule in late June, or early to mid July
- Types of business models to be explored:
 - Agreed that all business models are likely to take advantage of the state’s SMARTS Incentive Program for Solar
 - Smarts provide the best economic return for the project
 - Models which would NOT take advantage of SMARTS, such as one in which the town would build the project and sell the energy on the open market, are probably more complicated and not economically viable
 - Given the assumption that *SMARTS will be used*, there are different potential project configurations – Cadmus has preliminary ideas, but expect further development with review committee’s guidance

- Asset ownership possibilities:
 - Direct town ownership of solar equipment
 - Developer ownership of the equipment
 - Special purpose entity – LLC set up to specifically to own the assets and manage the people participating in project
- Jason Vesey, Ken Hartlage, Bob Cataldo, and Ken Kalinowski of DPW are part of the *Town's Project Committee* – will meet with Cadmus to review progress every two weeks
- Goal: Identify viable business model, achieve consensus, and set up all legal and financial aspects of the project by end of year, begin construction by end of year or early next year

Questions:

Renee: Regarding the different business models – will it include town funding of a Climate Change Director and thereby add additional benefits to the project?

Jason: Would revenue for the project be used to fund a climate-change director position – is that the question?

Renee: Would that person participate in ongoing management of the project and energy?

Jason: Had not been considered, but will ask Cadmus to consider the possibility of having a dedicated staff person to be the administrator for the project, making town-led business models more viable.

Renee: Might also provide a good reason for funding a climate change director position who could be involved in other activities as well

- Jason will bring the idea to Cadmus
- Cadmus still needs to consider who owns the assets, who is responsible for hiring the developer, who is responsible for managing participants, where does revenue go, etc. All need to be laid out in systematic & structured way. But process is just starting.

Renee: would like the idea of a potential climate change director to be introduced to be considered from outset.

Jason: it's a good time to add such ideas, so that Cadmus can add such elements to the mix while analyzing business models

Bob: It's early on, but having done this as a consultant, do they need time to digest the information? Are we happy with Cadmus, or is there some initial bias?

Jason: Yes – he's very happy with them – no concerns – they're doing a fine job. Wants to be sure we have systematic process – review committee will steer them in the direction we want. But it's just starting – need time and space to conduct analysis.

Bob: Endorses the timeline that starts this year – wants to avoid dragging it out over years.

Jason: Threshold in state's SMARTS Program – if you build a project of more than 500 kW, you have to deploy storage with it. Will look at cases where the system would have storage and cases where it wouldn't to determine how financing would be affected.

Jim: Knows a storage company, and storage has gotten more expensive due to supply chain, war in Ukraine, and side-effect of increased demand in Europe to replace Russian gas.

Item 3b: Tree City USA

(postpone due to unavailability of a presenter)

Item 3c: Community Outreach Program (Sue)

- Sue, Ken, Jim, and Juliana from the Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee have met with Mass Energize to get training on the web platform.
- Content management system has strong capabilities for collecting data and presenting, but has some learning curve.
- GreenPepperell.org website development is underway using Mass Energize platform
- Functional site expected for Earth Day (Sat Apr 24).
- *Needed:* photographs that show people with solar arrays (Kimball farm?), electric vehicles, etc
- *To promote website:* Paper bags w/ URL suggested by Deb Fountain – she and Bob will hand out on Earth Day. Goal is to generate traffic to the web site.
- Distill and communicate presentations such as the Community Solar project and other updates from the CCC meetings
- Update regularly
- Partner with the *Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee* – will share *private Facebook group* with CCC
- Bob can report on *Earth Day*
- Need to send out Google Spreadsheet with list of contacts – requires more thought

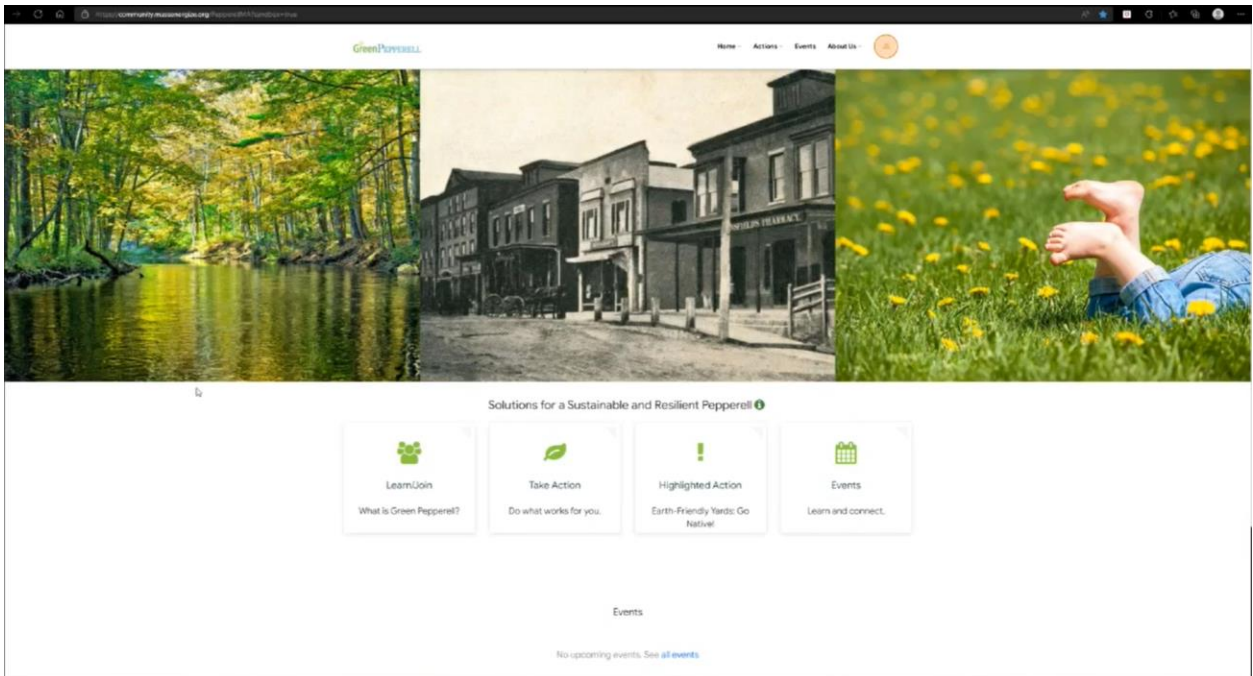
Jim: What's the context for the contacts list?

Sue: At marketing meeting, we identified the need for an outreach list to get our name out.

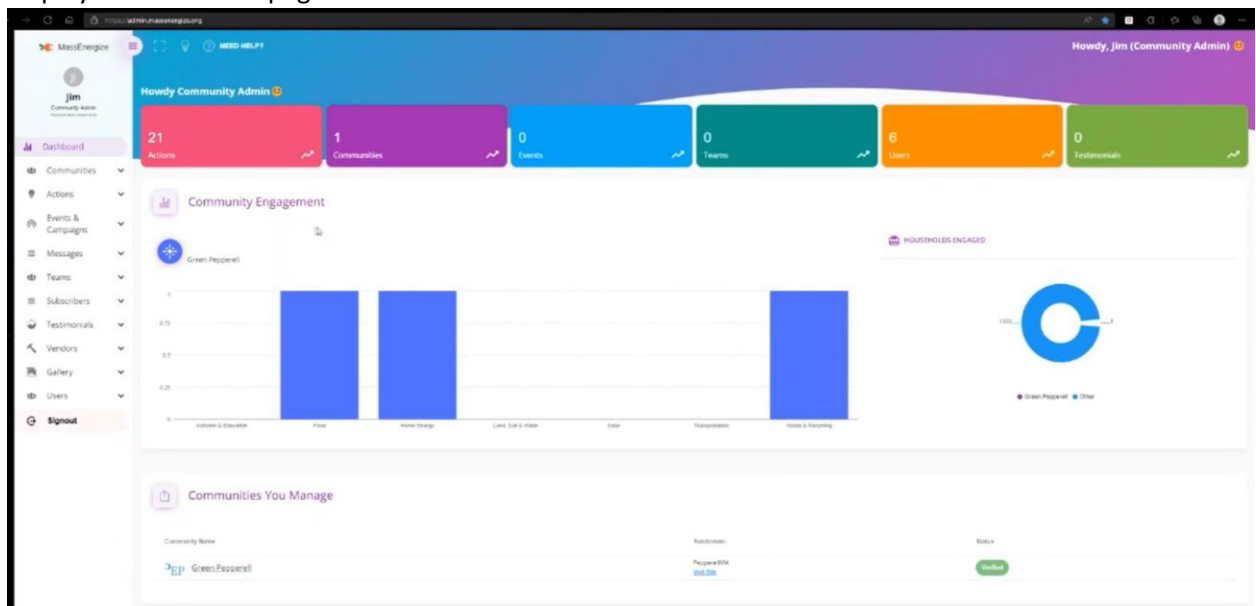
Jim: Invite that list of people to join the GreenPepperell.org website.

Jim:

- *Current website* – roughly based on the Wayland site



- Sue has brought our context into the page
- Still understanding *Actions and Graphs* that reflect the status of the Goals related to the action
- MassEnergize admin page example shows our ability to manipulate what topics and actions are displayed on the web page.



- Variety of actions are possible. Actions can have graphs that correlate the weighted progress being made on the actions.
- Sue and Ken have initially proposed a small set of actions to display.
- **Jim:** (to Jason) Is now the time to advertise the Community Solar Site?
Jason: it's okay to advertise, but we're not ready for people to sign up for Community Solar. Is it possible to put information on the site without allowing people to sign up?

Jim: We're still learning how to set up the pages. Sandbox has complications we don't fully understand.

An example is *Earth Friendly Yards*.

Agreed that we'll try to add an action for it this week. Show some small level of completeness graph, depending on the metric given by the review committee.

- Basic Actions to be displayed initially
 - Community Solar Project – 2 to 5 % complete, set of steps that lead to completion
 - Sue:**
 - Earthly-friendly yards – reduce use of pesticides & fertilizers – relation to CO2 footprint
 - Land and water protection (the 4 rack cards we developed last fall – 2 for our committee, 2 for invasive plants)
 - Native plants - Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee
 - Information and brochures from IDA – about reducing outdoor lighting and related energy consumption
 - Protect the night sky
 - Land and water protection
 - Clean and green with electrical energy aggregation
 - Support Community Solar
 - Save our Trees and Forests – make Pepperell a *Tree City*
 - Reduce use of disposables & plastics
 - Increased walking and bicycles
 - No car idling
 - Reduce, recycle, reuse, repurpose
- Subsequent Actions to be displayed over time
 - Make your next car a hybrid or an EV, moving out of realm of no-cost / low-cost
 - Buy local – save gas and time
 - Clotheslines are cool
 - Composting

 - Probably start with first 4-6 items, no measurements displayed initially to avoid showing 0 – wait for people to sign-up / join
 - Each action has a “deeper dive” – “Back yard Compost” example:

GreenPresents


Home Actions Events About Us

Home > All Actions > Backyard compost or service

Backyard compost or service

Impact: **100 000 000** Cost: **\$**

To Do Done



To Do List

Nothing here, yet! See all [actions](#)

Completed Actions

Nothing here, yet! See all [actions](#)




Description **Steps To Take** **Testimonials** **Deep Dive**

Hate to trash food scraps but can't compost yourself? Want to reduce your household waste by up to 50%? Not have a smelly trash bin? Get quality compost? [Reduce your carbon footprint?](#) Save your septic? There are two options:

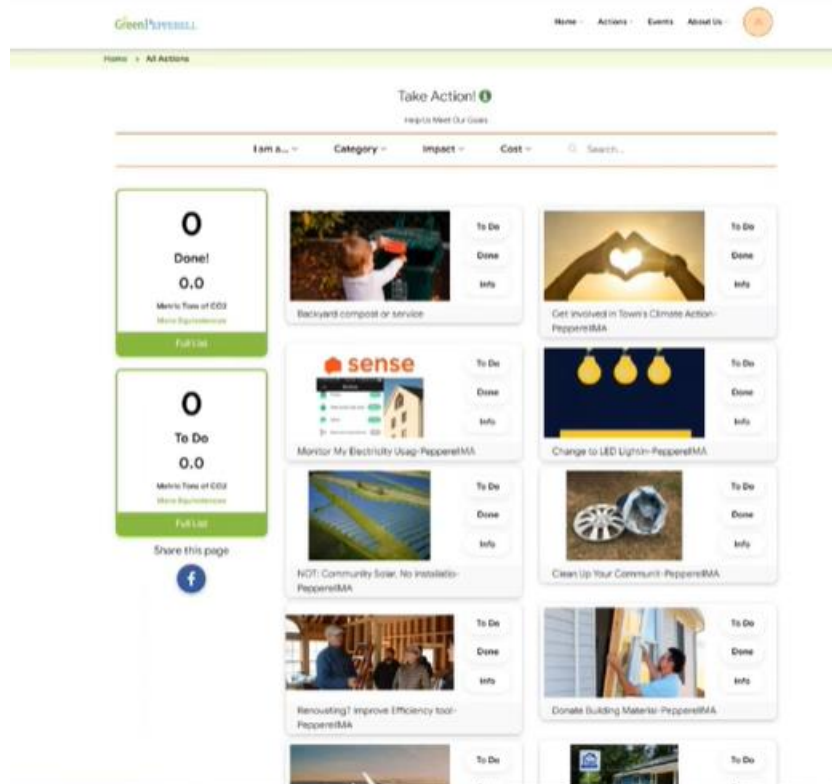
- 1. Compost at home.** If you have a backyard, no matter how small, and access to some "brown" (leaves), you can have a compost bin. By composting in your own yard, you avoid unnecessary transportation of materials back and forth and you can use the nutrients for your lawn, perennials or veg garden. Here are some instructions on the [basics of composting](#) from EPA and the [Rockdale Institute](#). Find out more under the Steps to Take and the Deep Dive tabs.
- 2. Have food scraps picked up at the curb** by Black Earth Compost, a reliable weekly curbside pickup service. They take all your organics, including food-stained newspaper, flower cuttings, meat, grease, cheese and even bones. [Here's](#) the full list of what you can put in the bin. They can also pick up your Fall leaves. In the spring you can either receive a voucher for a bag of finished compost, redeemable at participating Garden Centers, or you can donate your compost to Backyard Growers.

(EnergizeWayland does not receive money from Black Earth Compost. A customer already? Use another vendor? Let us know how they're doing by leaving a Testimonial here, or emailing us at info@energizewayland.org.)

Share this action!

- 25 communities that are sharing the Mass Energize platform – top-level content with deeper dive
- Mostly canned actions from Mass Energize – little customization thus far – still coming up to speed



Chuck: Maybe use every direct to door mailing to advertise as mentioned to Sue and Ken

Sue: July or August design the direct mail

Chuck: Not that expensive, and could fall under *Master Plan Implementation for Community Outreach*

- **Sue:** We have our we platform contracted with MassEnergy. One outstanding feature of is that they talk to their communities – *what are your communities interested in?* E.g., Concord and Action interested on 100% EV cars. State and national incentives that were discussed apply to us as well.
- Events still to be listed
- Goal – to have the site up for Earth Day

Proposed Review of website - Thursday Apr 21

Plan call to get committee consensus on “go live” call of GreenPepperell.org

Bob: concerned we might be moving too fast without adequate content. Too much, too soon with no data or connections. Should get it worked out / user friendly before making available to public.

Jim: minimal site proposed – suggest that we get review then.

Will have at least screenshots available for review – site may or may not be available.

Looking for show-stoppers that would preventing review.

Jessica: Thurs Apr 21 - potential conflict with Civic Engagement night

CCC doesn't have issues on the Civic Engagement night.

Municipal Aggregation to be discussed at Civic Engagement night on **May 4**

Renee: Question for Sue – can the site be customized to let people know about the different programs to help save energy – the Low Income Heating Assistance program – let people know about the programs during the season where it's time to fill out fuel assistance forms (September to April).

Also - weatherization for low-income households could be a topic.

Sue: Members who have topics to display - one month before you want to show the action, send the content so we can prepare and review

Copy Sue, Ken, Jim, and Juliana (or entire committee + Juliana)

Also – looking for images around town to display on the site.

Sue, Jim, and Juliana administering the site. Sue and Juliana meeting Saturday – Juliana is expert at organizing.

Consensus is it's that it's too early for people to join the website

Maybe show graphs for the solar project. No other % complete graphics on the site.

Jason: Question – should we keep the link that says “Donate”? If so, how would those donations would be managed, and what entity would manage that link?

Renee: Could go to *Tree Fund*, once we have a Tree Committee.

Consensus: For now, the link will be removed.

Events: Earth Day

- Bob Cataldo – Tent will be outside of Library w/ Invasive Species tent.
- Hours: 10 – 2
- Bob will send a follow up email and will attend our table
- Jim will share duties with another table
- Biggest goal is to get our name out there and communicate what we're doing

Jessica: *Community Solar* and *Web Page* both useful and valuable – it's time to start getting the brand out so that people start to know about it.

Other Business

- **Jim:** notable article on Native American adoption of multi-megawatt solar facilities have been set up on reservations – very interesting example of community engagement. Link to follow if anyone is interested.
- **Sue:** *Nashua River Watershed Association*, *Climate Impact Committee* presentations – info to follow separately

- *Presentation 1: The Impacts of Climate Change on Our Rivers and Streams*, by Sarah Whiting of Shirley
- *Presentation 2: Torrential rains from slow-moving tropical systems.*
- Jessica is working as the water scientist for the NRWA.
- Plug for Nashua River Watershed Association, which supports the 32 communities.
 - Water protection – very important – compare Boston where people are buying water
 - Fundraiser Auction on April 29 – Gala Event – first resumption since
 - Experiences like learning to tree-climb, animal cross-over bridges, etc.
- **Jason:** Town Election on April 25
 - *Question 1* on the ballot is the adoption of the *Community Preservation Act*
- **Jessica:** announce on the website:
 - *Municipal Aggregation*
 - *Light By-Law*
 - *Board of Health – mosquito opt-out for municipality to avoid blanket spray*
 - *Individual Households can opt out, but public emergency will override opt-out*
 - Add to website
 - Unified Event entry for Election
 - Highlighted Action – Vote, Go to Town Meeting

Motion to adjourn

Jessica, Renee seconded – unanimously agreed.