



Town of Barnstable Infrastructure and Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 5:00PM

This meeting of the Barnstable Infrastructure & Energy Committee is being recorded and will be posted for future viewing on the Town of Barnstable website. Under MGL Chapter 30A Section 20, anyone else desiring to make such a recording or transmission must notify the Chair.

Remote Participation Instructions

The Infrastructure and Energy Committee's Public Hearing will be held by remote participation methods. Real-time public comment can be addressed to the Infrastructure & Energy Committee utilizing the Zoom link and access code for remote access below:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://townofbarnstable-us.zoom.us/j/81185779775?pwd=IWwpqaeEVrQXL3rbEwApX5INmtAB6b.1>

Meeting ID: 811 8577 9775

Passcode: 568500

Infrastructure and Energy Committee Members Present: (On Zoom)

Barry Sheingold, Chair; Chris Gloninger, Vice Chair; Ron Ruggiero; Rob Wilson; John Solomon; Jane Ward

Infrastructure and Energy Committee Members Absent:

Others in Attendance: (On Zoom)

Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager, Barnstable DPW

Agenda:

Call to Order

Chair Barry Sheingold called the June 25, 2025 meeting of the Infrastructure and Energy Committee to order at 5:08 PM.

Approval of May 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The committee discussed the minutes from the May 27th meeting. Chair Barry Sheingold requests correction to one typo, under New Business, regarding the acronym used for the Department of Public Utilities (edit: DPW to read as DPU). The minutes are edited accordingly. John Solomon makes

a motion to approve the minutes, Chris Gloninger seconds. The Committee votes unanimously to approve the May 27th meeting minutes.

Old Business

a) Green Communities

Chair Barry Sheingold began the Green Communities discussion with an update on what's happening at the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) level, in regard to the economics of gas heating versus the use of heat pumps for heating and cooling. A working group, which included the Department of Energy Resources and other agencies, have been looking at the potential to change the rate structure for utilities and the associated delivery charges. The goal would be to achieve a couple of purposes – one is to reduce the cost of heat pumps relative to gas and make it comparable or lower in cost to assist in the Commonwealth's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The second is to make the rate structure more consistent with cost causation. Eversource developed a proposal that should be in effect by next winter heating season. What they've done is basically a seasonal rate structure that would have lower rates in the winter and higher in the summer, rather than across the year. And one of the reasons for that is to accommodate "winter peaking". We are a "summer peaking utility system" and the heat pumps will require more electricity usage during the winter, less in the summer, compared to air conditioning use. This rate structure was deemed to be more consistent and would also serve the purpose of making the cost of electricity using heat pumps to be less than using gas and electricity together. The proposal is pending before the DPU. Overall, Sheingold feels this is a very positive development. He adds that this issue was embedded in the DOER economic analysis related to the MassSave Program.

The conversation transitioned to Jane Ward, and how this development relates to the Stretch Code. Ward notes that at an informational meeting the night prior, there were a couple of Eversource reps present, with whom she inquired about this topic. Eversource stated they would be willing to chat with the us (the Committee) if there was interest at a future meeting – overall, Ward said her "understanding was that the changes being proposed would move people more, incentivize, more in the direction of electrification," to which Eversource agreed. The larger picture is that this topic came up last time and probably will come up again when Stretch Code discussions resume. The concern is that heat pumps are more expensive and generally thought to be a more expensive capital cost. With the MassSave rebates, the capital cost is more comparable. What could actually be more expensive would be the operating costs, but with the proposed changes to the rate structure, that would address and deal with that issue.

Ward also found a recent pilot in Framingham to be interesting and relevant to the Cape. She reports that there is a very large neighborhood installation of geothermal, at least 4 square blocks, something on that order, and it's been very well received. The project is actually removing gas lines and replacing them with geothermal. They said they are looking for other locations in the State, primarily for new construction, where this may be applicable. Ward suggests if there's a housing development going on, or affordable housing or something, it may be worth giving them a heads up for consideration.

As the Green Community discussion continues, the Committee reviews current topics and agenda items currently prioritized by Town Council (i.e. completing budget hearings, Flow Neutral Ordinance, Local Comprehensive Plan); it is anticipated that the Stretch Code

conversation could be revisited after these items (August/September timeframe). Ward encourages the Committee to consider speaking at Town Council during public comment to keep the Stretch Code top of mind, especially by highlighting the cost savings aspect.

b) Food Waste

John Solomon reports that he recently had a productive conversation with Kari Parcell, Municipal Assistance Coordinator with Barnstable County and MassDEP, regarding the opportunity for Barnstable to be part of the discussions regarding the proposed joint composting facility. Parcell shared that she anticipates releasing her report very soon, in which she will solicit public comment and feedback from local communities and those municipalities that are already involved. Parcell shared that at that time she will be asking for support from the upper Cape towns that have been “targeted” for this program. All of which goes back to the report three or so years ago that identified food waste as the best avenue for reducing overall solid waste and proposed (3) separate facilities be established – one for the Upper Cape, one for the Middle Cape, and one for the Lower Cape. And with that, the project at the Joint Base was really geared towards the (4) Upper Cape Towns. Parcell said that if Barnstable is interested, she doesn't see any reason why we couldn't or shouldn't be included in it.

Solomon reports that Parcell did share some initial needs and requirements for participating municipalities which may include each individual Town dedicating 6-hours per month of a Town employee or representative to participate in discussions about next steps and how to move forward. A nominal financial commitment, of not more than \$10,000, is also expected. Ultimately, this would be opened up to the 4 Upper Cape Towns first, but Parcell didn't see any reason why Barnstable couldn't be part of the working group. Solomon feels this is a positive step toward Barnstable's participation, as it will give us (the Committee) a clear picture of what to ask Town Council for, related to support. This path forward would also provide the opportunity to request additional overall support for food waste programming at the Transfer Station.

c) Climate Change and Climate Science

Vice Chair, Chris Gloninger continues to lead planning efforts for a potential outreach event at Sandy Neck. Targeting August. Gloninger feels we could broaden the topic(s), beyond just solar, to include climate change, coastal resiliency, etc. to drive larger attendance and more interest. The Committee also discusses the timing of the Coastal Resiliency project anticipated to break ground this Fall, and the anticipated media/community event to mark the start of construction. Staff Liaison, Kelly Collopy, to send a link to the Town's Special Events Permit portal for the Committee to consider when reviewing event needs and logistics.

Gloninger also reports on the growing local concern in regard to record high temperatures. Every hour of the day, we keep records of temperature, and yesterday's heat in Boston, we saw 6-hours over a 24-hour span of record heat (90+ degrees), which is pretty remarkable and unheard of. Trends like this could also help to broaden the topic(s) addressed at the Sandy Neck outreach event to include the hazards and risks associated with the climate change we are witnessing.

Discussion continued with thoughts from Jane Ward in regard to educational content, video, and outreach initiatives to help better inform and engage the public on solar. Ward notes

that she feels “a lot of residents don't realize at the Transfer Station, Community College, at the airport and on top of the schools, solar exists. She’d like to encourage some type of tour and community education to bring more awareness to the benefits and use cases of solar – some positive PR. Staff Liaison, Kelly Collopy, suggests perhaps going through Sustainability Manager, Sean Hogan, to propose at a staff-level some content and outreach, that could potentially be supported by the Barnstable Government Access team.

d) Air Quality Monitoring

No major updates, although Jane Ward does share that recent conversations with professional contacts in the school system have identified student concerns and complaints regarding maintenance, air quality, unusable bathrooms, etc. She feels it’s a shame that the \$42M grant/funding is just sitting somewhere not being utilized at the schools. “Frankly, the Green Community program is the kind of thing that can get us into the school improving indoor air quality.”

e) Technology and Infrastructure

Ron Ruggiero provided an update regarding conversations with David Eisenberg from the Falmouth Municipal Broadband Program, with an update on Falmouth’s desire to build and manage their own Internet service. They approved the feasibility study (\$50,000) pretty quickly, which was completed and resulted in a State grant for \$150,000 for a higher-level project design. At that point they ended up getting a bid from a private company to build out and maintain a private broadband network, but the deal kind of fell apart. He has since resigned from that committee but reports that Verizon won a \$105M grant to run fiber through Falmouth and Sandwich. It's about a million dollars per mile essentially, to run fiber. So that was going to be about 105 miles of fiber through those towns, but that money is currently frozen Federal money. That made such a ruffle with Comcast that Comcast actually decided to upgrade all their amplifiers in the town of Falmouth. This resulted in speed increases for customers using Comcast Internet.

Ruggiero then reports he spoke with Brian McCarter, who is heavily involved with the Cape Cod Technology Council and is one of the most well-spoken people on this subject. McCarter states that Federal money is still coming in and provided a contact with Verizon who may be able to speak more on the \$30M grant mentioned during a previous Committee meeting, which is meant to serve (8) different Towns on the Cape, including Barnstable. Ruggiero also mentions a Municipal Fiber Grant, available for up to 2-miles of fiber optic cable, which must be used for municipal purposes, however any residential or commercial properties along that route can tap into it. Ruggiero pointed to a use case where this was deployed on the Lower Cape, in Wellfleet, to support emergency response systems in areas where service dropped off.

Discussions continued about the seasonal impacts on service, including streaming service speeds during peak population months (Summer). Ruggiero also plans to connect with GoNetSpeed, the company who is investing in Yarmouth. Ruggiero would like to have a representative provide a presentation to the Committee; a suggestion is made to also approach Comcast for a presentation.

New Business

a) Additional updates from Committee Chair and Committee Members

- Rob Wilson shares anecdotal information related to electrification and the cost for

the utilities versus the delivery charges. Discussion resumes around the seasonal rate structure. Ultimately this points back to the Commonwealth's intent to meet climate change/greenhouse gas emission goals, the push would need to be toward heat pumps, powered by electricity versus gas utilities.

b) Discuss Summer Meeting Schedule

- Jane Ward had to attend another meeting; departs at 6:05PM. Remaining Committee members discuss the Summer meeting schedule, keeping in mind that at least 4 members would need to be present and available to meet the quorum requirement. The following meeting dates are selected:
 - i. July 14
 - ii. August 11
- Staff Liaison, Kelly Collopy, to circulate proposed September – December meeting dates to full Committee to consider and discuss at an upcoming meeting

c) Recruiting of new member(s)

- With Rob Wilson stepping away from the Committee, the need to recruit new members is of importance. A brief discussion follows about how best to promote the Committee and its goals/mission which has expanded beyond traditional "infrastructure" to climate change, Green Communities, etc.
- Decision to move this topic for further discussion at an upcoming meeting

Assigned Tasks

- Chris Glonginger & Barry Sheingold
 - To connect regarding logistics and share relevant contacts related to proposed Sandy Neck outreach event
- Ron Ruggiero
 - To connect with representative from GoNetSpeed
- Kelly Collopy
 - To circulate upcoming meeting dates

Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn is made by John Solmon, so moved by Rob Wilson, the Committee votes unanimously. The June 25, 2025, meeting of the Infrastructure and Energy Committee is adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Next Meeting: July 14, 2025, at 5:00 PM

DRAFT Upcoming Agenda for July 14, 2025

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of June 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes
3. Old Business
 - a. Green Communities
 - i. Relevant Updates
 - b. Food Waste
 - i. Relevant Updates

- c. Climate Change and Climate Science
 - i. Relevant Updates
 - ii. Sandy Neck Outreach Event Discussion
- d. Air Quality Monitoring
 - i. Relevant Updates
- e. Technology and Infrastructure
 - i. Relevant Updates
- 4. New Business
 - a. Additional updates from Committee Chair
 - b. Discuss agenda for next meeting, August 11, 2025
 - c. Assigned Tasks
- 5. Motion to Adjourn

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager, Barnstable Department of Public Works