



HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, October 8, 2024 **11:00 AM** **Sullivan Chamber**

The Health and Environment Committee will hold a public hearing to receive an update from city staff on BEUDO implementation and to review and discuss regulations, elements of BEUDO, and possible future updates.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11:28 AM
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11:38 AM

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Health and Environment Committee was held on Tuesday, October 8, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 11:00 a.m. by the Chair, Councillor Nolan. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

- Councillor Azeem – Absent*
- Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote*
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Wilson – Absent*

Present – 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

- *Councillor Siddiqui went from remote participation to in person participation at 11:23a.m.
- *Councillor Azeem was marked present and remote at 11:28a.m.
- *Councillor Wilson was marked present and remote at 11:38a.m.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks (Attachment A) and noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing to receive an update from City staff on BEUDO implementation and to review and discuss regulations, elements of BEUDO, and possible future updates. Present at the meeting were Susanne Rasmussen, Director of Climate Initiatives, Nikhil Nadkarni, Senior Climate Program Manager, Julie Wormser, Chief Climate Officer, and Jennifer Ballew, Sustainability Project Planner. Also present at the meeting was Councillor Zusy.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Susanne Rasmussen, who along with Nikhil Nadkarni, gave a presentation titled “Implementation of BEUDO Building Performance Standards: Updates and Next Steps”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of Cambridge’s building greenhouse gas

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(GHG) emissions, background on BEUDO, current priority tasks for implementation, first phase of regulations, and medium- and long-term implantation activities.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan opened Public Comment.

Quinton Zondervan, 174 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ, offered comments that were in favor of the presentation and the updates and progress that have been shared.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions related to BEUDO updates.

In addition to public comment, Chair Nolan read for the record one communication received from the public (Attachment B).

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Susanne Rasmussen who provided feedback and clarification to remarks made during public comment.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked if any information could be shared with the Committee on collaborations related to this that are happening regionally, highlighting how Cambridge has been a leader on building reduction emissions. Susanne Rasmussen shared that there is very active engagement and conversations with neighboring communities on ways to achieve building emissions reductions and adopting new regulations. Nikhil Nadkarni provided additional information and examples of ways Cambridge is working with other communities relative to BEUDO. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked how many buildings are currently in the process of being developed fossil fuel free. Nikhil Nadkarni pointed out that after a discussion with Inspectional Services (ISD), it is expected that 10-20 additional buildings are in line to meet those requirements. Susanne Rasmussen provided an overview of the role that ISD plays with building requirements and responded to clarifying questions from Councillor Nolan regarding the granting of hardship applications.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who asked what type of feedback has been received from forums and meetings with clients. Nikhil Nadkarni shared that generally people have been excited to see clarity in regulations because it helps to plan ahead and that there has been positive feedback in forums. Councillor Zusy asked for more information on how developers are complying. Nikhil Nadkarni explained that most of the input that has been received from business owners who are in the first steps of planning. Councillor Nolan pointed out that if building owners get renewable electricity before they do energy efficiency or renovations, they are already reducing their emission pollution.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Siddiqui who thanked the team for the update and shared her appreciation for how far the City has come. Councillor Siddiqui asked for additional information on the ARPA funded business energy efficient and renewable energy equipment available for restaurants. Susanne Rasmussen noted that the program was not just for restaurants and highlighted the amount of interest that has been shown. Susanne Rasmussen and Nikhil Nadkarni shared additional information that supports how beneficial the different

programs and funding work to help the City and its' businesses. Councillor Siddiqui pointed out that it would be good for this Committee to continue to meet and receive updates on BEUDO. Chair Nolan agreed.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan echoed comments made during public comment regarding the goal of being net zero city wide by 2035 and highlighted the leadership role Cambridge plays. Councillor Nolan asked for confirmation if the BEUDO database has been fixed for any glitches and previous errors and what trends are being seen in the data collection. Susanne Rasmussen acknowledged that the database is a continuous evolving tool that is supported by the government and the staff works closely with the database to catch anything that is out of the norm. Susanne Rasmussen explained how some of the numbers and information in the database can become incorrect. Sussane Rasmussen also explained what the team is currently focused on, noting that there has not been a trend analysis done yet. Councillor Nolan shared that she was excited to see the City moving forward into enforcement for data collection purposes, noting the importance of businesses knowing the City is continuing to move forward with regulations. Councillor Nolan asked if more information could be shared on resource hubs. Nikhil Nadkarni pointed out that it has always been a goal of the City to have it's own resource hub that is specific and customized to the needs of BEUDO buildings, and provided additional information on how the federal grant money could be used towards that.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan offered closing remarks related to BEUDO, energy efficiency reductions, and electrification. Councillor Nolan noted the importance of Harvard and MIT setting examples for campuses across the country and for the City to be accountable with assisting those who need to be supported into the right direction.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Wilson who shared that she appreciated the conversations. Councillor Wilson asked how the City is educating and engaging residents and young people. Susanne Rasmussen shared that there is a lot of conversations being done with the Climate Committee and CDD staff on the work that needs to be done to continue to educate. Susanne Rasmussen provided examples of how the Mayor's Program and collaborations with the School Department are two avenues that are used to educate young people. Susanne Rasmussen shared that E Inc. is currently a program that provides energy and climate education in after school programs. Nikhil Nadkarni also shared that there is a student from CRLS who is on the Climate Committee and that there have been meetings with the Workforce Development Program on how to use them towards green jobs for residents. Councillor Wilson enforced the importance of educating and is happy to see all the work that is being done with young people.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Siddiqui who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho – Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:40p.m.

Attachment A – Opening remarks by Chair Nolan (not verbatim)

Attachment B – Communications from the public

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/852?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Susanne Rasmussen, Director of Climate Initiatives, transmitting a presentation titled "Implementation of BEUDO Building Performance Standards: Updates and Next Steps".

Attachment A

Councillor Nolan opening remarks (not verbatim)

We are here to get an update on all the progress that has been done over the last year-plus since ordaining amendments to BEUDO in June of 2023. Requiring reductions of greenhouse gas emissions pollution was one of the most consequential things we have done in sustainability as a city. As the Sustainability team (formerly CDD) will explain, buildings account for approximately 83% of our citywide emissions. And BEUDO won't get us all the way there - BEUDO reductions will actually only account for a maximum of around 57% of our total emissions. So when we have this discussion, we need to understand that this is a big part of the overall emissions pollution reduction, but by no means is this the entire pie. In fact, this work, if wholly successful, will only get us to a 43% reduction by 2035, and as a reminder, the state law requires a 50% reduction by 2030 - so we need to continue to make progress in other areas as well.

There is success to be celebrated which the council and community should know about: all the work into emissions factors and planning – and progress to date. Most folks don't know how much progress has been made, which is why we are having the meeting – to get an update and any feedback on the work plan.

So we're here today to get a report on the progress made since passage on both regulations and implementation. We will hear about progress on outreach to building owners and support for smaller building owners who want to make building upgrades. This will be a good benchmark to see where we are at and what we still need to do to ensure that BEUDO is successful in reducing emissions pollution. The City staff has been busy on this ordinance, and I hope the community listens to what is happening.

Erwin, Nicole

Attachment B

From: Hayes, Patrick
Sent: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 12:13 PM
To: City Clerk
Cc: Hayes, Patrick
Subject: FW: THOUGHTS ON BEUDO FOR THE H&E COMMITTEE

Please add to the record for today's H&Env Cmte meeting as public comment.

From: David Rabkin <dgrabkin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 10:49 AM
To: Nolan, Patricia <pnolan@cambridgema.gov>
Subject: THOUGHTS ON BEUDO FOR THE H&E COMMITTEE

A few points from David Rabkin – long-time Climate Committee member and former chair, Cambridge resident, PMN spouse – to consider relating to BEUDO:

1. Although the focus is on large commercial properties right now, we can't lose sight of all the other buildings in Cambridge – institutional, smaller commercial, and residential. Addressing them will require challenging policy development; that will take time and, as a result, needs to start now.

2. Over the many years I've been on the Climate Committee, I've seen the City put a lot of effort into developing or finding good measures of emissions. We will never have an "accurate" measure of emissions and we don't need one. Since the basis of BEUDO is emission reduction over time, we need a measure. Simple, consistent, pretty good and done will serve us far better than an endless pursuit of perfection.

Further, let's NOT waste effort trying to measure emissions from our smaller structures. All we really need to know is whether a building is all-electric yet, how they're sourcing their electricity, and – perhaps if we want one level of detail further – for what purpose, if anything, they still burn fossil fuel on site.

3. Rather than worry too much about measures, we need to put effort into awareness and recruiting as well as support for those subject to our regulations. They need programs to provide awareness of and access to financing, access to trustworthy technical advice, access to trustworthy firms to design and implement. We need to think about programs to develop this capability within and for our city. And all this will become even more important as we move from large commercial properties to smaller ones and residences, where the owners won't have the same resources and capabilities as those covered by BEUDO and where equity will pose substantially greater challenges.

4. The offset program we need to create really should be used as a mechanism for raising funds to help our smaller and less financially capable property-owners convert their properties. The compliance fees we will receive are a resource to be used to help address the equity concerns that loom before us and may well serve as a model for other cities and towns with a mix of large commercial and residential/small commercial properties.

Finally, do not delay. 2050 may seem a long way away, but it'll start coming at us fast as soon as we're truly into implementation, and given the data and what science is telling us, we're going to need results sooner.

David Rabkin

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