Clean Energy Future Committee

Date: June 27, 2025
Time: 8:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Hybrid Format Meeting

Minutes

Attendance:

- Members Remote: Aimee Graeber, Amos Meeks, James DiTullio, John Alessi, Kristen Fritsch, Pasi Miettinen, Ryan Katofsky (as Chair), Shelly Dein
- Members In-person: Talia Fox
- Members Absent: David Morgan, Eric Helmuth, Jim Feeney, Michael Kozuch
- Also attending: Ann Boland, Paige Kelley, Jake Glickel

R. Katofsky convened the meeting at 8:15 am.

- **Virtual Meeting Reminders**
  - If there is a technical failure, we will try to relaunch the meeting three times.
  - If we are unable to relaunch and there are more than 20 minutes left in the meeting, the CEFC will reconvene the following Friday.
  - If there are fewer than 20 minutes left, the CEFC will carry the remaining agenda items forward to the next meeting.

- **Review and Approve 5/23/2025 Meeting Minutes**
  - May 2025 meeting minutes were reviewed. S. Dein moved to approve the minutes, T. Fox second. A. Graeber, J. DiTullio, J. Alessi, P. Miettinen, R. Katofsky, and S. Dein voted in favor to approve. A. Meeks and K. Fritsch abstained.

1. **New CEFC Member and CELT Fellow Introductions**

   K. Fritsch is filling a committee seat representing the building community. K. Fritsch is an East Arlington resident working at Elkus Manfredi Architects as the Director of Sustainability. K. Fritsch has been working in energy codes, compliance, and the sustainability realm for over 20 years.

   P. Kelley is a Clean Energy & Environment Legacy Transition (CELT) Fellow in Arlington's Planning Department. The fellowship lasts for six months. P. Kelley is pursuing a Master of Public Health at Boston University, focusing on climate change and health, and is very passionate about clean energy and sustainability.

2. **Energy Related Legislative Agenda**

- A. Boland
  A few different bills, related to energy projects, may be part of the upcoming legislative session. These bills are supported by a few different organizations, including Mass 350, Mothers Out Front, and the Sierra Club.

  A few bills in the house and senate are related to infrastructure replacement projects, aiming to give municipalities more say in what gas utilities are doing in towns. Utilities have to receive permits from towns to perform work, but towns currently have little say in what the utility companies are implementing or work being completed. The bills would require companies to provide more detailed information on scope, purpose, repair work, and emergency work. This would provide towns more time to respond to proposed work, allowing them to promote non-pipeline alternatives (NPA) instead of a line replacement. The Town would have the authority to contest pipeline replacements.

  The Municipal Voices Bill would allow towns to review and comment on pipeline replacement plans.

  Tactical Transition to Affordable Clean Thermal Energy bill sets forth a strategic, fiscally responsible transition from heating homes with fossil fuels to heating and cooling with clean energy. The idea is to protect residents, workers, and the environment, and encourage a strategic, equitable transition. The bill would require gas and electric companies to coordinate activities, which can make a difference in towns, including Arlington, where the utilities are different (Arlington has Eversource for electricity and National Grid for gas). It would also incentivize gas companies to install affordable and reliable alternatives like networked geothermal. Replacing pipelines can cost up to $12 million per mile and end up costing utility users. The bill would provide a transition for gas workers to be able to gain employment in the clean energy field for something like geothermal.

  This is the first year of a two-year legislative cycle. Mothers Out Front keeps tabs on these items and can provide T. Fox with updates. Some of these may get included in an omnibus climate bill.

3. NZAP update: subcommittee presentations and discussion

The CEFC reviewed the Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP) actions over many months and proposed new items. Three subcommittees are now moving the process forward.

R. Katofsky proposed a table for presenting action items in the Net Zero Action Plan. The previous NZAP format had a short paragraph about each action item and a table at the end with additional details. Instead of having these two parts separated, the table would bring them together in the report. R. Katofsky would like feedback on the proposed layout before replicating the format with each action item. Action items would be prioritized on three tiers. The previous NZAP had only two priority levels: high priority and priority. Priority levels could be evaluated based on equity, carbon impact, ease of implementation, and many other considerations for each action item. The previous plan put a lot of emphasis on big climate impact or carbon reduction. The new plan could also take into consideration community interest, to help get residents excited about action items.

S. Dein and A. Meeks have been working with P. Kelley on the greenhouse gas update for the NZAP. The data for the greenhouse gas update is from 2022, because 2023 data was incomplete. P. Kelley has completed the inventory and will review it with the subcommittee next month. Overall emissions are down. The subcommittee is going to look at which sectors saw decreases in emissions and what might be the reason behind the decreases in emissions. More updates to come.

P. Kelley met with A. Graeber, J. DiTullio, and M. Kozuch to discuss and plan NZAP outreach activities. Activities have been discussed in two different phases, before the draft NZAP action items are ready, and after. A. Graeber proposed having table visitors complete an index card for what people see for future net zero. M. Kozuch can assist with outreach to schools. R. Katofsky would like to see a timeline that could be shared with the committee for feedback. A. Graeber also developed a document to track interactions at tabling events and gauge awareness. Outreach could play a role in helping to personalize the NZAP for residents, since many actions also require residents to act. Helping community members understand that the current process is an update and not a new plan will also help set expectations. There might be opportunities to hold smaller conversations with stakeholders this summer, including the Transportation Advisory Committee and Bike Advisory Committee.

4. **Sustainability Updates**
   - T. Fox

After the previous CEFC meeting, a letter was submitted for the DPU docket. The letter highlighted concerns with the National Grid Climate Compliance Plan appendix, regarding the NPA framework. The letter also referenced and endorsed MAPC's letter. T. Fox had also provided input and reviewed the MAPC letter. The letter sent was circulated with other materials for today's CEFC meeting.

The Town held an EV show and tell. The day was rainy, but 30 people attended with their EVs and e-bikes. Hopefully the Town can hold another on a sunny day and get higher attendance.

National Night Out could be an opportunity to do outreach for the NZAP. The event is being put on by the Police Department and the Housing Authority, near the Thompson School in east Arlington.

Today may be the last day to weigh in the Town's EV curbside charging survey. A link to the survey will be circulated after the meeting. Based on the surveys completed, there seems to be interest in charging stations near Capitol Square, the Thompson School, and the intersection of Mass Ave and Pond Lane. P. Kelley helped distribute fliers promoting the survey. The survey was also promoted on Facebook. The survey has received 200 responses. T. Fox could move the deadline for the survey and do another round of fliers, possibly around apartment buildings to increase survey responses.

- **Confirm Next Meeting Date July 25th**

P. Miettinen moved to adjourn, A. Meeks seconded. Unanimous vote in favor to adjourn.

Submitted by Aimee Graeber 7/22/2025

Agenda Item	Document Used
1	NZAP document structure proposal
2	Summaries of Tactical Transitions and Municipal Voices Bills
3	Arlington's Comments on National Grid Climate Compliance Plan, DPU 25-41

Net Zero Action Plan Roadmap

What's changed since the 2021 NZAP

- Greater identification/consideration of cost and equity issues
- More recognition of the interdependencies between action items
- Some action items from the 2021 plan are complete, other have been consolidated others and some news ones have been added. As such, the numbering of the action items doesn't correspond 1-1 between the 2021 and current plan. In the tables that follow, we've identified the action item(s) from the 2021 plan that most closely maps to the current ones
    - For reference, we've reproduced the summary tables from the 2021 plan and included them in the Appendix.

Summary of Proposed Actions

Primary Focus area	Net-Zero Buildings	Zero-Emissions Mobility	Clean Energy Supply
Community-wide emissions			
Town facilities			
State policy			
Crosscutting	- Metrics development & tracking - Other?		

Commented [RK1]: Right now I'm envisioning this more of a qualitative assessment, but I've left room below for at least one truly cross-cutting action item

Commented [RK2]: I think this will be much easier than trying to show the continuity within the main tables/narrative of the updated plan.

Commented [RK3]: I'm also envisioning a new section of the updated plan that summarizes are main accomplishments since we adopted the 2021 plan.

Commented [RK4]: This is just a mapping of all the action items to their primary target focus area

Net Zero Buildings

Action item	NZB 1: Community-wide building electrification
Focus area	Community emissions
Related action items	(listing of related/interdependent action items)
2021 plan closest action items*	NZB 1 and NZB 4
Priority	High, Medium, Low
Description	
Specific strategies	
Resource requirements	
Implementation timeline	Short term (within next year); Intermediate (1-5 yrs); Long-term (>5 yrs); ongoing
Lead	
Key Partners	
Measures of success	
Cost and equity considerations	
Other considerations	

* see Appendix A for details of the 2021 NZAP action items.

Gas Bill Provisions

An Act relative to a tactical transition to affordable, clean thermal energy

Brief Summary

Builds on the DPU's groundbreaking 20-80 order and gas provisions in the recently passed climate law. Three broad goals:

- Further integrate networked geothermal into the regulatory scheme.
- Provide resources for the transition to clean thermal energy.
- Ensure that utilities will actually invest in clean thermal energy by requiring them to proactively and jointly plan for the transition.

Prohibits gas companies from recovering the costs of new gas infrastructure unless they first conduct an analysis of whether non-gas pipe alternatives are feasible and cost effective.

Requires gas companies to spend a gradually increasing percentage of GSEP funds on repairing or retiring gas infrastructure or installing networked geothermal infrastructure. Requires that 100 percent of GSEP funds are spent on such projects by 2035, meaning that 0 percent of GSEP funds will be spent on gas pipe replacement projects by that date.

Requires gas and electric companies that share territory to submit joint tactical thermal transition plans detailing how they will meet the 2050 emissions limits and sublimits by transitioning customers from gas to non-emitting forms of thermal energy.

Based closely on a recently passed California law, directs the DPU to establish a program whereby gas companies propose projects to convert entire neighborhoods from gas to air-source heat pumps and other electric appliances.

Detailed Summary

Prohibits gas companies from recovering the costs of new gas infrastructure unless they first conduct an analysis of whether non-gas pipe alternatives are feasible and cost effective.

Amends the statute governing rate cases to reflect that gas companies may now sell utility-scale non-emitting thermal energy in addition to gas; ensures that rates cover the cost of providing utility-scale non-emitting thermal energy service.

Prohibits the use of "substitute fuels" unless they are non-emitting in their lifecycle, safe, and available in sufficient quantities to meet demand. Prohibits the injection of hydrogen into gas distribution systems, except to serve hard-to-decarbonize industrial processes.

Prohibits the approval of a rate design or other plan that subsidizes gas line extensions to new customers. A customer requesting new gas service must pay the full capital cost of any line extension.

Requires gas companies to spend a gradually increasing percentage of GSEP funds on repairing or retiring gas infrastructure or installing networked geothermal infrastructure. Requires that 100 percent of GSEP funds are spent on such projects by 2035, meaning that 0 percent of GSEP funds will be spent on gas pipe replacement projects by that date.

Requires gas and electric companies that share territory to submit joint tactical thermal transition plans detailing how they will meet the 2050 emissions limits and sublimits by transitioning customers from gas to non-emitting forms of thermal energy.

Plans will: cover the work to be performed, by street segment, over the following five years; map out the pace of the transition for each five-year period through 2050; and explain how gas companies will maintain a workforce sufficient to ensure the safety and reliability of the gas system through 2050.

Plans will developed in consultation with a newly created Gas Transition Advisory Council, submitted to the Gas Transition Advisory Council for approval, and then submitted to the DPU for final approval, amendment, or rejection.

Directs the DPU to establish performance-based rates related to the implementation of the joint tactical thermal transition plans.

Provides that when a gas company connects customers to a networked geothermal system, the gas and electric company for the territory should determine how much additional money would have been spent to electrify those customers' buildings via

air-source heat pumps instead of connecting them to the networked geothermal system. This "avoided cost" can then be recovered and spent on retrofitting the customers' buildings. Essentially, the utilities will calculate how much money they saved and then spend the savings on building retrofits.

Establishes the Gas Transition Advisory Council, chaired by the Office of Energy Transformation, to review and provide recommendations on the gas and electric companies' joint tactical thermal transition plans.

To expand access to clean energy and reduce energy costs, allows a city or town to create a sustainable energy utility like the one being launched in Ann Arbor, Michigan. A sustainable energy utility could own and install solar and energy storage systems on private property, with the owner's permission, and sell the energy to the owner. It could also build networked geothermal systems and sell thermal energy to customers connected to those systems.

Requires electric companies to offer consolidated billing for solar and energy storage systems owned by sustainable energy utilities, as they will soon do for low-income community solar projects.

Gives the DPU the authority to promulgate regulations governing the installation, construction, operation and maintenance of utility-scale non-emitting thermal energy systems, except those that are installed and operated wholly on private property.

Based closely on a recently passed California law, directs the DPU to establish a program whereby gas companies propose projects to convert entire neighborhoods from gas to air-source heat pumps and other electric appliances.

An Act relative to municipal voices in gas utility work

This bill grew out of the work of the Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative and the leadership of municipal officials and local activists.

It addresses the problem of gas companies providing inadequate information to cities and towns when plan to dig up municipal streets to perform gas work.

The bill would require gas companies to provide more detailed information about the purpose, scope, location, and timing of planned work, as well as general information about the condition of the gas infrastructure within a city or town.

It would also ensure that municipalities have adequate time to consider and respond to the information they receive from gas companies.

Receiving this information in a timely manner would facilitate coordination between the gas company plans and other municipal plans, such as water and sewer projects and street repair projects, so that gas companies are not ripping up streets shortly after cities and towns repave them.

It would also give municipalities time to propose alternatives to gas pipe replacement work, which would be consistent with the recent climate law's emphasis on repairing or retiring gas infrastructure instead of automatically replacing it.

The bill appropriately balances municipalities' interest in receiving information with the gas companies' need to ensure safety. That is why it does not apply to emergency gas work.

Town of Arlington
Office of the Town Manager

James R. Feeney
Town Manager

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June 4, 2025

To:
Mark D. Marini, Secretary
Department of Public Utilities
One South Station
Boston, MA 02110

Re: D.P.U. 25-41; 2025 Climate Compliance Plan of The Boston Gas Company d/b/a National Grid

Dear Secretary Marini:

The Town of Arlington ("Arlington" or "Town") respectfully submits these Comments in response to the Notice of Filing, Public Hearings, and Request for Comments ("Notice") issued by the Department of Public Utilities ("DPU" or "Department") on May 7, 2025, in the above captioned proceeding.

Arlington, like many communities in Massachusetts, has a goal of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and is diligently working toward this goal across all major sources of GHG emissions in town, including transportation, energy supply, and buildings. The Town's Net Zero Action Plan explicitly directs the Town to engage with utilities, regulators, and other partners to transition away from natural gas and toward all-electric buildings, accelerate the repair of gas leaks, and phase out the natural gas distribution supply network.

As the Town stated in its comments in DPU 24-GSEP-03[1] and in recent testimony at the May 14, 2025, hearing of the Massachusetts Senate Committee on Climate Change and Global Warming, to achieve our net zero goals, we must move beyond a building-by-

[1] *Comments of the Town of Arlington*, DPU Docket 24-GSEP-03, December 16, 2024.

building approach and focus on a neighborhood-scale strategy to decarbonize buildings. To that end, the Town is eager to play a more active role in identifying viable non-pipeline alternative ("NPA") opportunities in Arlington.

The Town formally endorses the comments of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council ("MAPC") in response to DPU 25-41, DPU 25-44, and DPU 25-45 (consolidated with DPU 25-44). We would like to briefly underscore several points regarding DPU 25-41 Exhibit NG-CCP, Attachment 3, NPA Framework ("Framework"), which reflect our perspective as a municipality deeply engaged in the work of community electrification.

The Town appreciates the effort that went into developing the Framework and incorporating stakeholder feedback. The Town also appreciates that the NPA Framework is not a static document, and that it can be shaped by information from the Electrification Demonstration Projects, future pilot projects, and additional stakeholder feedback.

The Town recognizes that factors including safety, urgency, customer adoption propensity, and cost are important when determining whether to pursue NPAs. The Town is concerned, however, that the Framework in its current form will yield very few, or no viable NPAs. The steps in the NPA Identification Process allow for significant utility discretion which, in the absence of appropriate long-term planning, transparency, and proactive collaboration with municipalities, seem likely to lead to the frequent dismissal of potential NPAs.

We would like to underscore MAPC's frustration with the lack of municipal engagement and coordination as part of the NPA Identification Process, specifically for the Customer Viability Review phase. The Town understands that outreach can be a costly and labor-intensive endeavor. If municipalities like Arlington were notified of potential NPA locations with sufficient lead time, however, Town staff and volunteers could support the utility with customer engagement. The Town is concerned that the proposed customer adoption propensity model would lead to the dismissal of NPAs on the basis of a desktop exercise that does not reflect the reality of customer viability in our community, where we have a combination of motivated residents, a successful Electrify Arlington campaign, and volunteers willing to assist with outreach. Furthermore, for the Benefit Cost Analysis, assumptions are likely to be made regarding participant costs in the absence of information on the actual condition of residents' homes and businesses. The Town would appreciate the opportunity to contribute to relevant components of the Benefit Cost Analysis for potential NPAs or, at minimum, review the details of how the analysis was performed.

Finally, the Town hopes the NPA Framework can accommodate more flexibility with regard to the interaction between pipeline repair work and NPAs. With smart planning, advanced repair technologies could be leveraged to address problematic leaks and extend the life of pipeline segments. Rather than a pipeline segment replacement precluding the introduction of an NPA for an entire area, strategic repair could buy time to plan for more substantial, future NPA projects while lowering emissions, mitigating total costs, and reducing the risk of stranded investment as buildings electrify over time.

The Town appreciates the significant effort and attention being devoted to this overall effort and remains committed to the long-term work of the energy transformation in our community. We look forward to working with regulators and our utility partners to meet the Commonwealth's climate goals.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of these comments.

Respectfully Submitted,

James R. Feeney
Town Manager

Ryan Katofsky
Chair, Clean Energy Future Committee