

Green Energy Committee Charge

The Green Energy Committee (“GEC” or “Committee”) is charged to proffer advice and make recommendations to the Select Board, other Town committees and boards, Town staff, and Town residents and businesses on issues and potential actions related to climate change, as more specifically set out under “Tasks”, below.

Background

In 2009, the Green Energy Technology Committee was formed to help the Town qualify for designation as a “Green Community” and thus benefit from state funding to reduce energy consumption in Town buildings.

In 2015, the name was changed to the Green Energy Committee (“GEC”), whose purpose was expanded to include residential buildings. That included informing residents on improving building insulation and efficiency, installing solar panels, and using new technologies such as heat pumps.

The GEC’s activities have subsequently expanded to include, among other things:

- Promoting the use of electric vehicles (“EVs”) and other ways that the Town and its residents and businesses can voluntarily reduce their carbon footprint
- Advising the Select Board and supporting Town staff on implementing the Town’s state-approved Community Choice Aggregation program (known as Lincoln Green Energy Choice)
- Preparing a greenhouse gas emissions report for the Town in 2019
- Proposing warrant articles related to mitigating climate change that have been adopted at several Town Meetings
- Providing input to various Town special projects, including through the South Lincoln Planning Advisory Committee, the School Building Committee, and the Community Center Building Committee
- Providing extensive input to the preparation of Lincoln’s Climate Action Plan
- Monitoring related developments in the state legislature
- Recommending to the Select Board when it should submit comments regarding related state-level policy making.

On May 15, 2021, Town Meeting adopted a citizen-sponsored resolution that among other things directed “Town departments, boards, and committees to collaborate on and otherwise take expeditious action to adopt and implement appropriate measures to reduce the carbon footprint in Lincoln to the extent reasonably possible”.

On February 1, 2024, the Lincoln Planning Department published a Climate Action Plan for Lincoln that had been developed through a process that spanned most of 2023. That Plan considered the three major categories of potential response to climate change (mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency); identified seven high-level goals for the Town; identified ninety potential projects or efforts (referred to as “strategies”) to advance those goals; and outlined potential implementation plans for nineteen of those strategies. No process has yet been established to assist the Select Board and Town staff in prioritizing among those strategies and developing plans for implementation.

Purpose of this update

This update is intended to provide more detail as to the charge, consistent with current Select Board practice; clarify the scope of support requested from the Committee; [and give the Committee a name consistent with that scope].

Tasks

As noted above, the Committee is charged to advise and make recommendations on issues and actions related to climate change to the Select Board, Town staff, other Town committees and boards, and Town residents and businesses. Actions related to climate change are often put into categories of mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency. The Committee is expected to focus on reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions through decarbonization of buildings, transportation, and the electric supply, but the Committee may also pursue other actions that help the Town mitigate, adapt to, or be more resilient to climate change.

This includes tasks such as the following:

1. Inform, advise and assist Town residents and businesses about how they can help mitigate climate change - including through choices they make regarding their homes, energy usage, transportation, and civic engagement - and through methods such as mailings, emails, online events, in-person events, website, and individual coaching.
2. Participate in capital planning and make recommendations regarding Town capital expenditures.
3. Participate in budget planning and make recommendations regarding Town operating expenses.
4. Participate in planning of and make recommendations regarding Town construction projects.
5. Help Town staff monitor and apply for potential grant funding and technical assistance to implement programs.
6. Work with Town staff and others to collect, analyze, and present data, including to track impacts of Town actions.
7. Make recommendations regarding and support the implementation of the Lincoln Green Energy Choice program.
8. Make recommendations regarding implementation and updating of the Lincoln Climate Action Plan.
9. Make recommendations regarding Town participation in state incentive programs, such as the Green Communities program and the Climate Leader Communities program, and support implementation.
10. Explore, identify, and recommend potential new Town projects and initiatives.
11. Monitor and research developments in relevant technologies and best practices, including benchmarking with other municipalities.
12. Propose, or make recommendations regarding, warrant articles for Town Meeting.
13. Monitor climate policy developments above the Town level; make recommendations to the Select Board, Town Manager, and/or Town residents regarding communications with state and federal policymakers; and/or issue such communications on the Committee's own behalf.

Membership

The Committee shall consist of up to 9 Lincoln residents appointed by the Select Board. The Committee will generally meet monthly.

The Committee shall elect its own Chairperson annually.

Following are among the types of experience, skills, expertise, or interests would be useful to have on the Committee:

- Community choice aggregation
- EVs and other low-emission vehicles
- Solar power (rooftop, ground-mounted, individual, community)
- Heat pumps and building electrification
- Building insulation and energy efficiency
- Embodied carbon
- Government incentives and subsidies
- Other ways that Town residents can help mitigate climate change
- Identifying and helping apply for grants for Town activities
- Data collection and analysis
- Monitoring and seeking to influence state-level government action (legislature and executive branch)
- Effectively communicating about the above (such as through writing, public presentations, event planning, website design and maintenance, and social media).

Open Meeting Law and Public Records

The Committee is required to comply with the provisions of the Massachusetts Open Meeting and Public Records Laws.

Revised charge voted by the Select Board:

Kim Bodnar, Chair
Jennifer Glass
Jim Hutchinson

January 7, 2025