

Motion to Create a Standing Energy And Climate Action Committee and to Adopt Climate Action Goals

Preamble

Climate change is a global emergency.

- The 2008 Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act, acknowledged the urgency of climate change by setting statewide goals for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reductions.
- The 2018 United Nations International Panel on Climate Change special report underlined the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and urged strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change.
- The 2018 National Climate Assessment provided an in depth look detailing the multiple ways climate change is already affecting and will increasingly affect the lives of Americans in each area of the US.
- The 2018 Resolution to Create a House Select Committee on a Green New Deal addresses the threat of climate change by setting forth an aggressive plan to move the United State to a renewable energy economy within 10 years.

However, recent inaction at the state and federal level on bold climate proposals highlights a need for local action. Amherst has a history of recognizing the challenge presented by climate change and meeting it with action.

- Amherst created a [Climate Action Plan in 2005](#), with greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals in the areas of energy use, transportation, waste management, and land use and planning, based on a 1997 greenhouse gas emissions inventory.
- Amherst included sustainability as an overarching value in the Town's 2010 Master Plan.
- Amherst reduced its municipal emissions by 21.4% from FY2011 to FY2016 through nearly eliminating use of heating oil in municipal buildings
- Amherst joined the New England Municipal Sustainability Network in 2017.

- Amherst passed the 100% Renewable Energy Resolution in 2017.
- Amherst passed the Zero Energy Municipal Building Bylaw in 2017, revised in 2018, requiring that new Town buildings be Zero Energy.
- Amherst joined the Multi-Municipal Community Choice Energy Plus Task Force in 2017.
- Amherst performed a second greenhouse gas inventory in 2017 as part of the Compact of Mayors program goals.

- Amherst has implemented many sustainability initiatives, including, but not limited to, hiring a dedicated part-time Sustaining Amherst Coordinator, attaining Green Community designation, implementing a Solarize Amherst program, banning polystyrene and single use plastic bags, accepting a Zero Waste Plan, joining the Valley Bikeshare program, providing an annual Sustainability Fair, completing an LED streetlight retrofit, and purchasing solar energy.

Yet, Amherst has a long way to go to achieve ambitious climate action goals.

- Amherst's greenhouse gas emissions dropped only 2.3% from FY2011 to FY2016.
- Transportation emissions from on-road vehicles in the community and municipal sectors increased by 5.1% and 21.9%, respectively, from FY2011 to FY2016.
- Amherst has not established current emissions reduction goals or emissions reduction benchmarks.
- Amherst's current Climate Action Plan is outdated, based on a 1997 greenhouse gas inventory and lacking emission reductions goals beyond 2009.
- Amherst does not maintain a standing energy or sustainability committee, as established in other communities, to advance climate action, and has not achieved climate objectives on the scale of many other communities.

Amherst needs to be taking bold action on climate and establishing itself as a municipal energy and climate leader.

I move therefore that the Town Council:

ORDER the establishment of a standing committee [Charter Section 2.5] called the Town of Amherst Energy and Climate Action Committee (ECAC) to guide the Town in meeting its climate mitigation and resilience goals.

ORDER that the Energy and Climate Action Committee, within 90 days of its first meeting, submit to the Town Council for adoption initial recommended target dates, benchmarks and/or annual/interannual targets to achieve the climate action goals adopted in Article 16 passed by the Fall 2017 Special Town Meeting [100% renewable energy/electricity] and other emissions reductions goals recommended by the ECAC and that the Town Council act by voting to adopt the recommendations submitted with or without amendments within 90 days of receipt from the ECAC.