

Bath Climate Action Commission (CAC)

Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2025

Attendees: Sorrel Dunn, Connor English, Ruth Indrick, Rod Melanson (staff), Amelia Neilson, Paul Perkins (Co-Chair), Nancy Sferra, Laura Walters, John Zittel (Co-Chair)

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve July minutes: Nancy
- Seconded by: Connor
- Motion approved

Strategic Planning & Equity Council

- Siler to collaborate with the Strategic Planning Commission; follow-up scheduled for Monday's meeting.
- Development underway for an Equity Council Advisory Group.
- Lucy is conducting one-on-one meetings in town, focused on social resilience and public engagement.
- Engagement strategy prioritizes targeted outreach and partnerships over public events.
- Lucy will also attend the upcoming Strategic Planning Commission meeting to advance this work.

Envision Resilience Collaboration

- Recent coordination meeting with Envision Resilience, GMRI, and Siler. Aligning efforts with the zoning code update and strategic planning process.
- Upcoming Monday coordination meeting (Zoom) – informal discussion with Lucy and next steps.
- Envision Resilience program is academic in nature: student-driven research and data gathering rather than direct public input.
- Includes modeling scenarios based on existing data for Bath and the region (e.g., Rockland).
- Possible outcomes include:
 - Overland flooding sensors
 - Early warning systems

Zoning Code Update

- A spreadsheet has been shared for zoning updates review.
- CAC may want to designate members to review relevant sections.
Rod's suggestions:
 - Use the climate plan as a lens to assess zoning (e.g., solar farms).
 - Focus on a few key items rather than all changes.

- Timeline: Comments due by end of October
- Option to provide input individually or as a committee.
- Discussion to be added to October agenda.

Energy Fund Update

- First rebate from the Energy Fund has been processed!

Communications & Community Engagement

- Upcoming: Transportation public meeting (Congress & Centre) – Monday night.
- Limited communication staffing continues to impact outreach efforts.
- Ruth offered to share City content via KELT communications (bi-weekly).
- Minimum 2-week notice recommended for community event promotions.
- Examples of successful casual engagement:
 - GMRI open house
 - Dog park tabling with surveys
- Continued promotion of the Energy Help Fund through:
 - Newsletters (Front and Centre, Resilient Bath)
 - Posters and outreach channels
 - Energy Subcommittee Updates

Stretch Code

- Discussion with Codes Department about stretch code implementation.
 - Support exists, but concerns about cost impact were raised.
- Will be revisited at next CAC meeting.

Home Energy Help Desk

- Launching September 7 at the Bath Library; will run monthly (first Saturday).
- Staffed by Connor and Laura, with materials from Efficiency Maine.
- Visitors can ask questions, receive printouts, and get personalized advice.
- Promoted through multiple channels including Window Dressers and KELT.

Vendor Outreach

- Letters sent to vendors within a 15-mile radius to boost awareness of energy rebates.
- Focus on reaching residents who recently obtained heat pump permits.

Energy Coaching

- Subcommittee exploring how to launch a regional energy coaching program.

Challenges:

 - Engaging lower-income households
 - Comfort/privacy concerns about in-home visits
- Proposed messaging: Comfort, health, cost savings, rather than climate language.
- Ideas include:
 - Temporary air quality monitors to engage residents
 - Vendor presentations to CAC on setup and logistics

Public Event Series

- Event #1: November (Parking)
- Event #2: January
- Collaborating with library on scheduling and promotion.
- Potential future events:
 - High school student involvement via Leiha Larry / GOPIF (Oct 25)
 - Book talk + panel on CO2 (Rod to coordinate)
 - E-Demo Day rescheduling (weather contingency: under the bridge)
- Planning to involve local bookstores and make events inclusive for attendees who haven't read the material.
- John to coordinate with Rod on CO2 event planning.

Monthly Bulletin

- Sorrel and Amelia producing Resilient Bath Bulletins:
 - Updates on CAC initiatives and resilience topics.
 - Focused on short, digestible content.
- Seeking a designated point person for bulletin coordination.
- Ideas to streamline:
 - Use a shared spreadsheet to track topics and timing.
 - Consider a set agenda item each month for bulletin brainstorming.
Possible inclusion of event blasts for timely promotions.
- Sorrel to share draft checklist and spreadsheet with Rod. File will be publicly accessible, but editing access remains open (caution advised).

Grant & Infrastructure Updates

- Rod submitted a CRP grant for Upper Washington/Harward flooding mitigation.
- FEMA downtown flood grant appears unlikely to be awarded.
- Active local efforts:
 - Bike/Ped Committee:
 - Lincoln Street traffic calming
 - South End traffic study
 - A2K connectivity (Brunswick, Bath, West Bath)
 - Sidewalk ADA inventory
 - Rod will share ADA inventory app details and training guide from Ginger.

Urban Forestry

- Meeting with Maine Forest Service entomologists:
 - Focus: Ash Borer and HWA (Hemlock Woolly Adelgid)
- Plans for:
 - Homeowner treatment support program
 - Equipment purchase (injectors)
 - Potential cost-sharing program
- Urgency: Treatment must occur before 50% canopy loss.
- Targeting outreach and coordination with Brunswick and KELT.
- Education needed: Many residents don't know they have ash trees.
- Connor requested documentation to support outreach at the Home Energy Help Desk.

SWAC & Window Dressers

- SWAC:
 - Free compostable and reusable food service ware trial ongoing.
 - Amelia proposed discussing reusable food service ware pilot as a standalone event or during larger community events (e.g., City Park days).
 - May not require a full event slot (~1.5 hours).
- Window Dressers:
 - Sept. 14: Final day for measurements
 - Oct. 11–16: Build event
 - 130 inserts, 58 re-wraps scheduled
 - Volunteer shortage
 - Paul to send out signup link
 - Limited participation from low-income households, despite outreach

Community Involvement Day – October 4

- CAC will have a table (Rod to reserve).
- Also tabling: BPT, Forestry
- Opportunity to point attendees to the Library for the Home Energy Help Desk.
- Next CAC meeting: October 2

Other Notes

- Deb Keller is aware of the Comfortably Home program and is a likely promotion partner.
- Peter Dugas available to present.
- Discussion held regarding memo shared with City Council.