



## MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 17, 2020  
Virtual Meeting via GoToWebinar

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**Councilors Present:** Greg Abbe (for Jennifer Maddox), Marie Abdou (for Chris Porter), Cindy Arcate, Don Boecke (for Maura Healey), Amy Boyd, Justin Davidson, Maggie Downey, Charlie Harak, Elliott Jacobson, Paul Johnson, Deirdre Manning, Maggie McCarey (Chair), Cammy Peterson, Robert Rio, Stephanie Terach, Mary Wambui, Sharon Weber (for Martin Suuberg)

**Councilors Absent:** Victoria Rojo

**Consultants Present:** Eric Belliveau, Adrian Caesar, Adam Jacobs, Margie Lynch, Jeff Schlegel

**DOER Staff Present:** Rachel Evans, Emily Powers

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### 1. Call to Order

McCarey, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM.

### 2. Public Comment

Due to the June EEAC meeting being held virtually in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, public comment was received in writing ahead of the meeting and posted to the EEAC website. During the meeting McCarey noted that Edward Woll of the Gas Leaks Allies submitted public comment in support of incentives for heat pumps, and Steve Cowell of E4theFuture submitted public comment regarding recommended changes to COVID-19 safety protocols.

### 3. Council Updates & Business

McCarey provided the following statement at the beginning of the Council Updates & Business:

*Since the last time we met as a Council, a national movement has galvanized following the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and so many others in the black*

*community. This week is also the five-year anniversary of the brutal murder of nine members of a historically black church in Charleston, South Carolina. And as Juneteenth Day approaches on Friday, we are all faced with an urgent crisis of recognizing the role of systemic racism in our country and in our lives.*

*I recognize that many of us have been engaging in discussions within our workplaces, with family, with friends, and others on where we go from here. How do we each do our part to dismantle structural and systemic racism in this country?*

*As chair of this Council, I don't have all of the answers, but what I do know is that we can't be silent. We can't give up when it is difficult to reach and serve certain communities of color, we need to recognize and raise awareness of the systematic issues that may not be in direct control of the EEAC and how they impact our programs. We need to step out of our comfort zone to be able to admit where we haven't succeeded or done enough, and take new approaches. We need to consider that making incremental improvements to generally successful statewide programs may not be the best way to serve certain communities, and we need to do a better job of listening to members of those communities and giving them a voice in these discussions to forge a new path forward.*

*I wholeheartedly believe that these energy efficiency programs are an important component to improving equity, including racial equity in Massachusetts – reducing impacts of climate change, especially for the most vulnerable communities, using energy efficiency as a tool to improve quality of life, indoor air quality, and reduce monthly utility bills, and as an economic driver if we can truly foster and create a more diverse workforce in this industry. I know this is isn't easy. I recognize that this will take time and that we need to individually and collectively think carefully about our next steps, but I also believe there are some immediate commitments that we can make as a Council as we move forward:*

- *First, DOER commits to re-examining EEAC governance and meeting structures to improve diversity and inclusion. This includes bringing in more diverse voices and perspectives into our discussions and proactively seeking input from minorities and organizations that serve and represent them to identify ways to make Mass Save more equitable and make the EEAC a more inclusive and welcoming environment.*
- *Second, we should commit to increasing efforts to collect data on equity of Mass Save to drive appropriate solutions.*
- *Third, let's use our Equity Working Group that the Council established last month to assess how we define equity, ensure that the racial equity is explicitly considered, and bring in diverse voices outside of this Council as active working group members.*
- *Fourth, let's commit to recognizing non-energy efficiency related structural and systematic barriers to racial equity and raise awareness of how these barriers impact Mass Save.*

*DOER is undertaking a review of our programs, including our work with the EEAC to benchmark, identify areas for improvement, and make more specific recommendations for our programs.*

*I personally recognize that as a white leader of this council, I am responsible for doing a better job of using this position to bring in diverse voices to help develop the right solutions.*

*I know many Councilors and PAs have also been considering specific recommendations for the EEAC and Mass Save programs and I look forward to working with all of you as we move forward.*

Wambui said community members have raised issues of structural racism and lack of equity, but the Council has failed to solve those issues. Wambui recommended the use of specific metrics to quantify equitable program delivery, and urged the Council to directly address racial injustice in the energy efficiency space. Dorfler also supported the quantification of equitable program delivery and expressed excitement about the Equity Working Group.

Harak noted that increasing spending on workforce development could help diversify the workforce and allow programs to reach underserved communities. Peterson echoed support of increased workforce development in underserved communities, and anticipated engaging with equity issues in future discussions.

Weber stated that race and equity issues should be weaved into Council discussions and program planning. Weber was also discouraged by participation rates for limited English proficiency (LEP) customers and suggested that tracking of auditor language proficiencies might encourage participation for LEP customer groups.

Johnson emphasized that the Council has failed to serve the Black community since most of the Black population is comprised of renters that have reaped minimal program benefits. Johnson said that major programmatic changes need to be made in order to facilitate equity in energy efficiency programs.

Arcate strongly supported McCarey's opening statement regarding systemic racism and requested that it be posted to the Council website. Arcate added that the Equity Working Group will shift the paradigm toward successfully serving marginalized communities. Arcate also recommended that members of underserved communities are provided a platform to provide feedback and share perspectives at Equity Working Group meetings.

### ***Virtual Meeting Procedure Review***

McCarey provided a review of the virtual meeting procedures during COVID-19, which included the following:

1. The Council meetings would be recorded

2. All attendees except for Councilors and presenters would remain muted for the duration of the meeting
3. Councilors would hold comments until the end of presentations, but Councilors and other participants should speak instead of using any chat functionality
4. Public comment would be posted to the Council website and reviewed by DOER during the meetings.
5. Councilors who disconnect from meetings need to announce when they rejoin.
6. All Council votes would be taken by a roll call for accuracy.

***April 4, 2020 EEAC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes***

Boyd motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Jacobson seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The minutes were approved, as submitted, by the Executive Committee.

***April 15, 2020 EEAC Meeting Minutes***

Peterson motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. McCarey seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed. The minutes were approved, as submitted, by the Council.

***May 6, 2020 EEAC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes***

Jacobson motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Dorfler seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The minutes were approved, as submitted, by the Executive Committee.

***May 20, 2020 EEAC Meeting Minutes***

Harak motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. McCarey seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed. The minutes were approved, as submitted, by the Council.

**4. Greater Lawrence: Update from Columbia Gas**

***Program Administrator Update***

Cellucci indicated that participation rates in Lawrence were lower than Andover and North Andover, but the number of jobs completed between January and May was higher in 2020 than 2019 despite COVID-related program suspension. Cellucci also described efforts to boost participation including targeted marketing materials and coordination with municipal partners in Lawrence.

***Council Discussion***

Wambui said the program administrators (PA's) cannot continue to normalize lower participation in communities like Lawrence if they want to create a more just society.

Peterson was encouraged by the municipal partnerships as direct engagement with communities is important. However, Peterson felt the amount of funding allocated for the partnerships was too low and hoped the budget would be reconsidered to make them successful in targeted municipalities.

Boyd said the Council needs to be more receptive of feedback provided by community members. Wambui agreed that voices beyond energy efficiency stakeholders need to be amplified.

Johnson said the PA's need to directly engage with underserved communities in order to understand their needs and boost participation. Johnson urged the PA's to test different outreach strategies since they have already identified which populations are underserved. McCarey recognized that solving this problem will take increased community engagement and new strategic approaches.

Wambui noted that a customer service representative asked a homeowner to find someone in the household who spoke English, which was frustrating for the customer. Wambui added that without multilingual services, LEP communities will continue to be underserved. Cellucci replied that their lead vendor has representatives who can speak both English and Spanish, but it would be hard to rectify the situation if another entity were responsible. Wambui said the PA's need to eliminate all potential language barriers that might hinder customer participation.

Arcate said Massachusetts PA's need to investigate what strategies have been implemented in jurisdictions with more LEP customers. Arcate suggested the burden is on the PA's to communicate with LEP customers successfully, not on LEP customers to speak English. Johnson recommended proactive customer outreach in Spanish, both over the phone and in person, as a proactive marketing strategy to help reach underserved customer groups.

McCarey said Cellucci will follow up on the specific customer service issue Wambui raised, but they will coordinate with the municipal partnership organization in Lawrence to improve participation there.

## **5. Mass Save Program Implementation During COVID-19: Update**

### ***Program Administrator and LEAN Presentation***

Mazuera and Wollenburg, on behalf of the PA's, provided an update on virtual customer offerings, online contractor trainings, work safety protocols, and continuation of field work amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Wells, on behalf of the LEAN, summarized developments around the low-income project pipeline and challenges to continuing field work.

### ***Council Discussion***

Wambui asked what "ensuring customer can participate" meant as it related to virtual audits. Mazuera responded that given the assessments are virtual, the PA's need to ensure customers are comfortable sending pictures and videos of their homes. Wambui asked if those customers reluctant to record their homes are flagged as eligible for in-person audits. Mazuera said these customers are tracked. Wambui also asked if COVID-related costs will be a line item in future budgets. Wells said there is a proposal to report those costs, but exact quantification will be complicated. Jacobson believed that additional COVID costs will likely cause notable budget effects and factor into the next planning cycle.

Peterson was pleased to see the potential finalization of enhanced incentives for municipal buildings. Peterson asked if they could amplify marketing of virtual audits to underserved

populations since virtual assessments are more accessible. Peterson also noted that the economic impacts of COVID have left many unable to pay utility bills, so the Department of Public Utilities should have a moratorium on the shut off of utility services. Wollenburg said the PA's have promoted no-cost weatherization to the Mass Landlords association, targeted renters and homeowners with open contracts who have not yet converted, and performed multilingual outreach as well. Wells added there is a strong pipeline for projects for low-income and renters, but they are determining what funding can be used to offset utility bills for low-income groups. Jacobson said there may be additional COVID-related Federal programs that provide some financial relief. Jacobson also indicated LIHEAP has accelerated next year's program start date so people can apply earlier and funds can be applied to their summertime electric bills;

McCarey asked if there is prioritization for certain low-income demographic groups, like the elderly, who would be vulnerable to summer heat conditions. Wells said seniors and people with young children would be prioritized.

Johnson asked if the health and safety inspections should take precedence over quality inspections. Wollenburg said the lead vendors would conduct safety inspections on the first job for each crew, then they can continue to do work without a QA inspector present. Once all contractor crews meet this requirement, QA inspections for health and safety will be conducted at a lower frequency. Johnson wondered if contractors would be compensated for personal protective equipment (PPE) and the extra time spent donning and doffing PPE. Wells said PPE-related costs were hard to estimate until the safety guidelines were implemented. Wells also noted there is a committee working to calculate COVID costs and how much contractors should be compensated after a few weeks of work are completed. Johnson asked why fevers are not checked prior to jobs, and stressed the importance of having practical guidelines that contractors actually follow. Wells said the health experts do not recommend temperature checks as a reliable test because many can carry the virus with no fever.

Harak said the fuel assistance program will be making secondary payments to people with gas or heating. In addition, Harak announced recently unemployed people may be eligible for different forms of energy assistance from the fuel assistance program.

Rio said the safety protocols and their associated costs will be integrated into normal practices even after the pandemic begins to slow.

Davidson said the Massachusetts Association of Realtors can help with reaching out with small landlords since a lot of their members are small landlords or work directly with small landlords, so they can coordinate with PA's.

## **6. Mass Save 2019 Plan Year Reports**

### ***Program Administrator Presentation***

Steve Menges and Brian Greenfield, on behalf of the PA's, presented Statewide 2019 program results and highlights for the Electric and Gas portfolios. In 2019, achieved annual Electric MWh savings were 105% of planned savings, while Gas annual MMBtu savings were 93% of planned savings.

***Consultant Team Presentation***

Schlegel, Lynch and Jacobs, on behalf of the Consultant Team (C-Team), presented 2019 program results with a focus on KPI results, areas of focus for 2020, as well as sector-specific results and performance trends.

***Council Discussion***

McCarey indicated the Executive Committee would consider how to facilitate Council discussion on 2019 results that was cut short due to time constraints.

**7. Adjournment**

McCarey, as chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:13 PM.