



MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 15, 2019
100 Cambridge St, 2nd Floor
Conference Rooms C & D
Boston, MA 02114

Councilors Present: Don Boecke (for Maura Healey), Jenifer Bosco (for Charlie Harak), Amy Boyd, Sean Burke (for Cindy Arcate), Cindy Carroll, Elizabeth Cellucci, Maggie Downey, Paul Gromer, Frank Gundal (for Tilak Subrahmanian), Elliott Jacobson, Judith Judson, Shan Li (for Janelle Chan), Deirdre Manning, Audrey Penna (for Michael Sommer), Cammy Peterson (for Rebecca Davis), Robert Rio, Stephanie Terach (for Laurie Pereira), Amy Vavak (for Chris Porter), Mary Wambui, Sharon Weber (for Martin Suuberg)

Councilors Absent: Justin Davidson, Michael Ferrante, Paul Johnson, Rick Malmstrom, Andrew Newman, Victoria Rojo

Consultants Present: Eric Belliveau, Craig Johnson, Mark Kravatz, Margie Lynch

DOER Staff Present: Rachel Evans, Ian Finlayson, Maggie McCarey, Emily Powers

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Judson, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

2. Public Comment

Emily Jones – Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Boston

Jones noted that she had three points to make. First, she requested more clarity on the budget. Specifically, she asked for more information about the budget breakdown among the Low Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN) multifamily, LEAN single family, and residential amounts. Second, she indicated that she was excited to hear the final incentive amounts for passive house. She added that she hoped that affordable housing owners of highly efficient buildings can receive the full incentive amount. Finally, she indicated that there is excitement and interest in active demand management through battery storage within the LEAN program.

She indicated that she would like to get some clarity on if, and when, the LEAN program would be able to take advantage of battery storage.

3. Council Updates and Business

April 3, 2019 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Boecke 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 10, 2019 EEAC Meeting Minutes

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

DOER Zero Energy Modular Affordable Housing Initiative Update

Powers noted that the Zero Energy Modular Affordable Housing Initiative was announced through a Governor Baker initiative in 2017 and that a grant was awarded to the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) to develop the program. She indicated that the program would be launched soon and would include the development of ten zero energy modular homes. Powers added that the majority would go in existing manufactured home cooperatives and that approved applicants would receive a grant to help buy down the first cost of the home.

4. Low-Income Program Updates

John Wells, on behalf of the Low Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN), gave an in-depth update on the Low-Income program. Wells was joined by Councilor Jacobson and Amy Vavak for portions of the update. The update was organized into seven sections, which included 2016-2018 results, low-income research, low-income marketing, the LEAN Network, data collection and management, moderate income, and new measure development.

2016-2018 Results

Wambui noted that many customers are rejected when they apply for certain energy efficiency upgrades and that they are not always informed why. She suggested that the total spending coming in under budget is not necessarily a good result if people are being deemed rejected.

Low-Income Research

Boyd referenced a point that was made about services being equitable across all cities and towns in proportion to the low-income population. She asked what the overall percentage of the low-income population had been served. Wells indicated that it would be in the sixty to seventy percent range, but that the results were still in the process of being finalized. Boyd asked when the results would be complete. Wells indicated that it would be completed in the next year or so.

Peterson indicated that she would like to see more detail on the sixty to seventy percent that had been served, as well as the thirty to forty percent that has not been served so that they can be better served. She added that the new municipal community partnership strategy could be an

integral part of understanding what communities are doing and help to identify communities that have not been participating.

Wambui asked if the research LEAN was conducting on statewide low-income sector implementation results was part of the overall evaluation, measurement, and verification (EM&V) framework. Wells indicated that it was not and that the research was being conducted completely within LEAN. Wambui noted that if the research was conducted within the EM&V framework, its results would have more credibility and accountability. Wells noted that LEAN was working with the utilities and their evaluation staff to jointly agree on what data can be used. Vavak added that the customer profile studies, which are being conducted within the EM&V framework, would touch on some of the areas related to low-income participation.

Wambui noted that some of the Community Development Corporations (CDCs) that she works with have indicated that they were unaware of what the LEAN multifamily roadmap was. She suggested that LEAN should be sure that they are reaching everyone. Wells indicated that they have served every CDC in the city of Boston and suggested that the groups that were unaware should apply and that they would serve them.

Peterson asked if the R2 discount rate was used as a criteria for determining eligibility. Wells indicated that it is used as a pool for eligibility but that it was not a criteria. Peterson referenced an Efficiency Maine program that used property value and several other state and federal programs whereby customers only needed to meet one of those to be eligible for the program.

Low-Income Marketing

Weber expressed concern that customers may be confused by having a secondary call center that is not under the Mass Save branding. Wells indicated that the call center is not meant to be independent of Mass Save, rather that it was used as an internal tracking system for LEAN.

Wambui noted that Community Action Program (CAP) agencies, like CDCs, were not originally formed to deal with energy related issues. She asked what LEAN does to ensure that energy efficiency is prioritized by the CAP agencies. Wells indicated that LEAN contracts with all CAP agencies in the state and that they have goals. He did note, however, that many CAP agencies have multiple utilities in their territory, and even though they do their best to make sure efforts are coordinated there are often agencies that struggle to meet their goals. Wells added that LEAN has invested resources in recent years to assist certain areas where CAPs have struggled to meet their goals.

Moderate Income

Commissioner Judson asked if they were able to fully fund weatherization for those customers that were interested in it. Vavak indicated that that was correct. She added that heating systems and appliances were rebated at the same level as the applicable rates for 2018. Commissioner Judson asked if the difference between the rebate level and the cost to replace the system was too large for moderate income consumers to take action. Vavak indicated that that was generally the case and that that result was unsurprising. Commissioner Judson agreed and suggested that that information be used to better target those customers in the future.

Boyd asked what the reason was for only 39 of the 311 customers identified having interest in participating in the moderate-income demonstration. Wells indicated that some percentage of the customers originally identified ended up being low-income customers and so they were able to be served through that program. He added that some of the other customers had already been served through the market rate program.

Boyd noted that every one of the 27 customers that had eligible weatherization opportunities followed through with getting weatherization completed through LEAN's quarterbacking model. She asked how that compared to the moderate-income program without the quarterbacking model. Vavak indicated that she did not have that information readily available but that she could investigate it.

5. Consultant Team Presentation and Council Discussion

Mark Kravatz and Margie Lynch, on behalf of the consultant team (C-Team), gave a presentation on its view of income eligible services. The presentation was split up into three areas which included electronic data collection, management and analysis, program marketing and partnerships, and a review of moderate-income offerings. For each, he discussed challenges and C-Team recommendations.

Boyd noted that she felt LEAN's success has been particularly amazing given some of the data issues they are facing. She recommended that industry standard data collection processes be implemented so that questions about data in the future can be more easily answered.

Boyd asked what the size of the cohort was that received weatherization recommendations within the moderate-income applicant pool. She suggested it would be useful to know so that it could be compared with LEAN's quarterbacking model. Lynch indicated that it would likely not be an apples-to-apples comparison but agreed that it would be good to investigate.

Boyd asked what the Cape Light Compact (CLC) was doing to make their moderate-income program so successful and why other program administrators (PAs) could not do the same. Downey indicated that their program is successful because they have an in-house verification system that is completed on-site which makes participation much easier. She added that they can do that because they are a municipal aggregator and that she would not expect the larger PAs to be able to easily do the same thing.

Li recommended that once a more collective platform for seamless data collection is established that it be made available to agencies such as the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) that could utilize it and help facilitate the LEAN programs.

Weber noted that field data collection would be implemented by the third quarter of 2019 and asked if that meant that data would stop being collected on paper. Wells indicated that not all data can be collected electronically and noted that some federal programs that they work with require paper. He added that any software program they pick must be approved by the Department of Energy. Lastly, Wells indicated that they are currently rolling out a platform to see how it works and that once it is evaluated, they will need to figure out how to plug it in to

each of the PA's reporting requirements. Jacobson added that DOE is in the process of redoing their audit software which would likely take another six months to a year. He indicated that that needs to be completed before LEAN moves to a final solution. Belliveau indicated that he understood why they need to be compliant with DOE but noted that DOE funding makes up less than five percent of the total funding.

Jacobson suggested that the census figures that have been proposed as the baseline for which program success is measured against are baseless. He indicated that they are not valid because they are outdated and not based on household size. Wambui noted that if the census figures are baseless then someone needs to determine what that number should be. She suggested that the PAs and LEAN are in the best position of determining what that number is. Wambui added that if the PAs and LEAN are not going to provide that number then the Council should proceed by making a formal request with a deadline.

6. Columbia Gas Update

Cellucci gave an update on energy efficiency efforts in the Greater Lawrence. She noted that spending is up by about a million dollars compared to the previous month. She added that they are on track to spend about ten million dollars by the end of the year and that that would represent about twenty percent of their budget on just three communities.

Boyd referenced a point in the presentation that suggested that Columbia Gas was replacing heating and hot water equipment for the last of the customers that were impacted by the gas service outage. She asked if those customers were getting standard or high efficiency equipment. Cellucci indicated that they are installing high efficiency equipment where available. She added that in some cases, the existing pipes in the building might not allow for that. She also noted that in some cases, customers want the type of equipment they previously owned because they have maintenance parts stockpiled.

Commissioner Judson recommended that the types of lessons being learned from this effort should be documented at the end of the process.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Judson, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:15 PM.