



## MEDFORD LEAP WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

**Location:** Medford City Hall, Council Chamber

**Date:** Tuesday, April 10 2012

**Time:** 3:30 - 5:30 pm

**Meeting Leader:** Erin Brandt, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

**Facilitator:** Helen Aki, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

**Note Taker:** Po-Yu Yuen, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

**Attendees:** 18 residents/stakeholders

### Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Purpose and Desired Outcomes
3. Introduction to Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and LEAP
4. Past Community Achievements
5. Baseline: "Where are we now?"
6. Brainstorm
  - a. What are the best things about living/ working in Medford?
  - b. What are the greatest challenges?
  - c. What past community efforts worked well and why?
  - d. What past community efforts didn't work well and why?
  - e. What should be the primary objective of LEAP?

### Meeting Purposes and Desired Outcomes

- To launch the LEAP program with stakeholders in the Medford community
- To present an overview of the program
- To begin discussions on opportunities in pursuing clean energy work in Medford
- To learn about past experience with energy work in Medford
- To begin discussions on developing next steps
- This meeting was for general brainstorming purposes
- In-depth discussions on pros and cons of any particular ideas were not encouraged
- This meeting aimed to develop clean energy ideas that would tie to the community's priorities

### Introduction to MAPC and LEAP

Erin gave an overview of MAPC and LEAP. See presentation at <http://www.mapc.org/leap>.

## **Past Community Achievements**

MAPC explained that it had an understanding of Medford’s municipal clean energy achievements and efforts, but needed more information on residential and commercial efforts. Meeting participants were asked to discuss past energy efforts initiated by residents, local businesses, and community organizations in Medford. The following information was given:

- Grace Church upgraded its boiler and conducted lighting retrofits to LED
- Tufts converted from an oil to a gas boiler, as well as did HVAC efficiency improvements
- 750 National Grid households participated in the MassSave home energy assessment program in 2011
- Green Medford initiated Walk/Ride Days

## **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming activities were facilitated to help MAPC and the City of Medford develop a strong understanding of the community’s assets, challenges, priorities and goals in clean energy work. Five questions were asked.

### 1. “What are the best things about living/working in Medford?”

Participant’s answers mainly focused on diversity, accessibility, infrastructure and public facilities. Medford’s unique urban/open space balance was also highly valued.

- Diversity
  - Socioeconomic diversity
  - Great racial diversity
  - Mix of ages
  - Many local artists
  - Fascinating people/residents
  - Residents that have lived in the community for a long time
- Accessibility
  - Accessibility to Tufts
  - Availability of public transportation
  - Proximity to Boston, Cambridge, Route 128, and other major communities (2)
  - Ability to easily access activities and resources of other communities
- Infrastructures and facilities
  - Wind Turbine
  - Outdoor spaces – green parks (2)
  - Space for biking

- Wright's Pond
- Medford Square and West Medford – mix uses (restaurants/ shops) at community centers
- Hospitals
- Distinctive characteristics
  - Good urban and open space balance
  - Progressive- first city to have Climate Action Plan
  - One-stream recycling

2. “What are the challenges about living/working in Medford?”

Meeting participants discussed the challenges of living and working in Medford. These challenges mainly revolved around diversity, communication, transportation, and built infrastructure. Energy-related struggles were also mentioned during this discussion.

- Diversity
  - Difficulty doing outreach and communicating broadly to diverse resident populations (different cultures and levels of education)
  - Transient housing stock (tenants/ landlords/students) is challenging for reaching to the right decision makers
  - Groups of people/cultures are geographically separated in different parts of the community
  - Competition exists among neighborhoods and cultural groups
  - Large student population creates a transient and seasonal population
- Communication
  - Difficulty doing outreach to residents
  - Communication is often one-way, meaning residents get information, but those doing outreach don't get feedback from the residents
  - Communication gap between people with the knowledge and information and those who don't is wide
  - Lack of transparency and understanding of how to get things done in the city, which results in the need to re-invent processes
- Transportation
  - Traffic pattern does not accommodate bike users
  - Route 16 totally inadequate for biking
  - Little parking enforcements and little parking spaces
  - Lack of respect from drivers; many of them view the city as a highway
  - Green Line Extension may upset urban ecology/ equilibrium (traffic/ retails)

- Infrastructure
  - Old housing stock – and many people, such as elderly, in such homes don't have resources to fix their housing problems, like asbestos or inefficient oil heaters
- Energy-related challenge
  - Hard to distribute broad information about energy to residents and businesses
  - A lot of old buildings make energy efficiency improvements difficult
- Other concerns
  - Some crime around Tufts area, although for the most part, it's safe
  - Limited funding resources
  - Municipal budget has been tight – little resources available for making changes

### 3. What past community efforts worked well and why?

Meeting participants discussed past community efforts or events that worked well in the community. Successful efforts or events included those that are well established in the community and attract many attendants. Events or efforts that draw attendees through contests or awards were also highlighted. Some discussed success with efforts focused specifically on energy issues. Some highlighted the benefit of combining energy events with established events that already have great attendance.

- Medford Health Matters
  - Public recognition and giving out awards brought people to the event
  - Event created a strong community feel
- Green Ups/Clean Ups
  - Brings people together from a group like a church to do something that is easy
- Let's Move
  - Brings together a variety of communities
  - Kids are involved
- Jingle Bell Festival
  - Very well-attended for activities, like the lighting of the tree
  - Multiple events over a long period
  - Family-oriented
  - Free

- Next Step Living had a table at the festival; Green Medford and Energy Committee shared a table
  - Tufts Community Day
    - Well attended
    - Free food
    - Residents enjoy it
  - Community garden at the Columbus school
    - Incredibly successful
    - Columbus has strong parent presence; parents run after school program
  - Farmers Market
    - Market is doing well.
    - Market get publicity through people liking it on Facebook
  - Energy related events
    - CFL Swap (Tufts)
    - Reusing refrigerators for art work (an event in other communities)
    - National Grid Poster Contests – people have to come to events to find out if kids won poster contests
  - Other successful events
    - Art Festival (Medford Mystic)
    - Events at the Senior Center
4. What past community efforts didn't work well and why?

Meeting participants discussed past community efforts or events that did not work well. Reasons for unsuccessful events or efforts included scheduling and organizing difficulties, challenges with outreach, and specific event contexts.

- Scheduling and organizing difficulties
  - Overlapping events
  - There is often an overwhelming number of events in Spring and Summer
  - There is a lack of alternative space to hold events if there is bad weather
  - Events can get really crowded – almost too much to be enjoyable

- Outreach
  - Difficulty for some to find out about events
  - It is challenging to engage parents with older kids
  - Information doesn't get shared
  
- Context
  - Events that are well attended and most liked in the community are just about having fun; educational components are often not valued or of interest to attendees; there is a challenge to get people to pay attention to activities that are not pure entertainment
  - A common sense of purposes is missing at events; there needs to be a strategy to help people feel like there is a mission/purpose to an event or effort that everyone can rally around

5. What do you think should be part of LEAP's objectives and goals?

Meeting participants brainstormed potential objectives and goals for LEAP. The group then picked their top six priorities. The number of votes each idea received is noted in parentheses.

- Communication (11)
- Education (10)
- Prioritizing residential programs: focus on MassSave (9)
- Sustainability (8)
- Greater community involvement (6)
- Fiscal sustainability (6)
- Target residential energy (4)
- Community awareness (4)
- Emissions reduction (4)
- Cost reduction (3)
- Use of subsidized programs (3)
- Tackle non-building energy uses (3)
- Energy efficiency and conservation (2)
- Change through codes and standards (2)
- Resilience/ adapt action (1)
- Other buildings consumption reduction(e.g. business sector) (1)
- Unified community front



### **Next Steps**

- MAPC will continue to compile research for energy action plan
- MAPC will hold two public meeting or visioning workshop
  - (May 2, 7-9pm & May 3, 10am -12pm)
- The Working Group will be invited to discuss the draft action plan
- The draft plan will be open for public comment before it is formally adopted
- MAPC will work with the City and Medford stakeholders to begin implementing action plan strategies

### **Meeting Evaluation**

The meeting ended with a +/Δ exercise where everyone noted one thing that worked well during the meeting and one thing they would like to see changed for future meetings.