

Energy and Climate Action Committee Meeting

Virtual Meeting

Minutes – May 14, 2026

Approved June 16, 2026

Meeting Start: 7:02 pm Eastern

Committee Members Present: Michael DeChiara, Gail Fleischaker, Nate Heard, Greg Day

Stormwater Mitigation and Implementation Committee

Greg reported that the SMIC members will be sworn in at the May 26th Select Board meeting.

Shutesbury Elementary School Lighting Update

Michael DeChiara updated the group about the status of an inquiry into the Shutesbury Elementary School parking lot lights. These lights are on an “old school” timer that requires some pins in order to turn on and off. Frank McGinn of the Buildings Committee is currently looking for replacement pins, and looking into installing motion sensors around the building.

Solar Project with Colonial Power Group

Michael and Mark Cappadona of CPG have been meeting to move this project forward. Currently the conversation is around procurement through DOER and determining who needs to contact whom. Mark is ready to go, and progress is slow but steady. Michael commented that the ease of communication and progress is riding on the tails of our successful implementation of Community Choice Aggregation.

Nate Heard gave an update on CCA integration for Eversource customers. Eversource customers will be seeing a rate increase in August that goes above the basic CCA rate, so these customers can now be onboarded into CCA, as previously discussed with CPG.

ECAC held a vote to give CPG the go-ahead and agreed unanimously. Mailings will be sent in mid-June for an August meter-read.

Municipal Micro-Grid

Michael learned that Leverett is creating a new municipal plan to do solar aggregation. This is “a few years” out, but something that Shutesbury may be interested in collaborating with Leverett on. ECAC members will begin researching this. Michael suggested pitching a new MLP to the town, which could handle the administrative overhead.

Climate Leader Grant

Michael updated the group on the status of the two current plans for the Climate Leader grant. The group talked about the requirements to do procurement through an “ESCO” (Energy Service Company). Michael will send follow-up emails with more information as he gets it.

Plan A: Geothermal at Shutesbury Elementary School. Meetings have been held with both Trane and BrightCore at the school, which provided meeting members with an understanding of how the retrofit could be approached. Nate was present for both meetings and has high confidence. BrightCore estimates that the school will need about 20 boreholes, and the best place to dig them will be the parking lot, so the grant should be able to cover the expense of re-paving the school lot. Once both companies have given notes to ECAC, Michael will have the information necessary to draft the grant; this is expected within the week.

Plan B: Do as much of the work on the decarbonization roadmap as possible. This option will only be pursued if geothermal at SES is proven to be unfeasible, and would involve re-prioritizing decarbonization roadmap items to take advantage of the Climate Leader grant.

In any case, the grant will be finalized and submitted this month.

Final Words, Minutes, Scheduling

ECAC is investigating the possibility of acquiring land-use grants for more PV (Solar/PhotoVoltaic) installations. It may not be feasible to install PV on the highway department building, a survey of the roof will be required.

ECAC unanimously approved minutes from the April 9th, 2026 meeting, submitted by Gail Fleischaker.

The next meeting of ECAC has been scheduled for June 16th, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,
Greg Day