

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 27, 2025, 1:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Hybrid meeting

Councilors Present: Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, Chris Modlish (virtual), Larry Chretien, Sarah Cullinan, Kate Tohme, Alex Worsley (virtual), Julie Curti (virtual), Amy McGuire (virtual), Kathryn Wright, Jonathan Stout (virtual), Kyle Murray (virtual), JS Rancourt (virtual)

Councilors Absent: Marybeth Campbell, Andy Sun, Sarah Bresolin Silver

Non-voting Councilors: Andrew Schneller (National Grid), Kevin Sprague (Unitil, virtual), Digaunto Chatterjee (Eversource)

DOER Staff Present: Julia Fox, Colin Carroll, Marian Harkavy (virtual), Austin Dawson

Consultants Present: Tim Woolf, Kyle Schultz

Others Present: Nancy Israel (National Grid Counsel)

1. Call to Order

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy Department of Energy Resources (DOER), as designated Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy welcomed all participants to the GMAC meeting and took roll call for voting and non-voting members. A quorum of GMAC voting members was present for the meeting.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments. Mariel Marchand (Cape Light Compact) submitted written comments.

4. Meeting Minutes Review and Voting

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked if there were any corrections or additions to the January 30, 2025, GMAC minutes. None were offered.

Councilor Kyle Murray moved to approve the January 30, 2025, GMAC meeting minutes. Councilor Kathryn Wright seconded. The motion carried.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked if there were any corrections or additions to the February 13, 2025 ExCom minutes.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan noted that on page 4 the acronym HEET is incorrect and should be edited from HEAT to HEET.

Councilor Kyle Murray moved to approve the February 13, 2025 GMAC meeting minutes as corrected. Councilor Sarah Cullinan seconded. The motion carried.

5. Open Meeting Law

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy gave an update on the pending expiration of a temporary provision of the Open Meeting Law allowing public bodies to hold meetings remotely without quorum physically present. Absent an extension of the provision, a quorum of GMAC members are required to be in person beginning in April.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, Representing the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center: Can members attend virtually so long as there is an in-person quorum?

Colin Carroll, DOER Legal Counsel: Yes.

6. Synapse Cost Recovery Memo

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked the GMAC if they had any questions regarding the consultant cost recovery memo. None were asked. Andrew Schneller requested to provide initial reactions to this memo and provided thoughts toward the end of the meeting.

7. 2025 GMAC Meeting Agendas

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy discussed the proposed GMAC meeting agendas and speakers from March through July and highlighted two changes to the original six-month meeting plan. Do GMAC members have any suggestions?

Councilor Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation, representing the environmental justice community: One note about July. For equity, may be appropriate to have Mireille Bejjani who is on the CESAG, to lead a discussion.

Councilor Kate Tohme, New Leaf Energy, Representing the distributed generation renewable energy industry: Is the opportunity to speak only open to GMAC members or others as well?

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Can have other speakers. For example, RMI is speaking today.

Councilor Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance, representing low- and middle-income residential customers: For the next GMAC meeting, can July 17th stakeholder session be included in table on slide 7?

8. ESMP Activities Updates

a. ESMP Phase II

Councilor Chris Modlish, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Representing the Attorney General: All intervenor testimony has been filed, discovery is closed. Intervenors have an opportunity to request evidentiary hearings. If hearings occur, they will take place on March 12th.

b. CESAG

Councilor Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation, Representing the environmental justice community: At EWG, Erin shared list of six organizations that will be in the CESAG.

Councilor Andrew Schellner, Representing National Grid: List of organizations includes: ABCD; Slingshot; Western Mass Public Health; Browning the Green Space; Emerald Cities Collaborative; and Amplify Latinx. CESAG meetings are still being planned.

c. Joint Working Group

No updates.

d. LTSP Working Group

Kate Tohme gave an update on the LTSP. Things are going well. EDCs provided a draft LTSP framework using feedback from stakeholders. Currently working on redlines. Likely will be non-consensus redlines in the April 4th filing. Stakeholders have submitted redlines on the entire framework and on cost allocation and flexible interconnection. All the materials are available on LTSP website, which is linked in slides.

GMAC members participating in LTSP working group wanted to raise establishing a stakeholder engagement group that is a subgroup of the GMAC. The group would be used to facilitate the stakeholder engagement process. DPU does not have jurisdiction over GMAC. If GMAC agrees, LTSP group would like to seek feedback from the GMAC on the process for establishing the subgroup. Today, Kate is recommending GMAC take a vote on the concept of establishing a subgroup. If GMAC votes yes, LTSP working group would send a one-page letter to DPU informing them of the willingness to establish a group.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Might look like EWG. Would require following Open Meeting Law. Could include members outside the GMAC, like the EWG.

Councilor Kate Tohme: Redlines haven't been reviewed by EDCs but generally are supported by industry groups and stakeholders. Would be members of the group speaking, but open to public for observation.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: Spent some time on this aspect of the LTSP at the EWG meeting. EWG was supportive of having more accessible engagement in DG. On face, working group seemed like a good idea, but had a lot of questions, including about representation.

Councilor Kate Tohme: Would like this to be the opportunity to generally support the creation of a sub-group, not necessarily support the engagement group as drafted in the redlines.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: To clarify, the point is to voice that the GMAC is open to hosting the subgroup in the letter to the DPU. We would want to do a roll call vote next month.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee, representing Eversource: 5- and 10-year forecast have been very clear -holds with safety and reliability of EDCs. To have shared responsibility with another entity to those investments without responsibility for safety and reliability doesn't comport.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: Makes sense to have a sub-group. Wouldn't agree that it would be more accessible than current group. Might make sense to have a smaller working group. Agrees on having input to the assumptions. Not sold on planning inputs. Generally seems like a good idea.

Councilor Kate Tohme: To be clear, the idea is not to change the existing working group. This would be coordinated stakeholder engagement so that when EDCs are required to engage stakeholders, they are not reaching out to all stakeholders, they are reaching out to stakeholder representatives.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: When would composition of stakeholder working group be determined?

Councilor Kate Tohme: Right now, interested stakeholders have submitted redlines. Redlines recommend the creation of the subgroup. Redlines available to all members of group. Anyone who is interested can weigh in between now and March 25th on the composition of the group. Right now working up to a proposal to submit to the DPU.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Would be voting on supporting the establishment of a working group? But composition would be determined in redlines. GMAC doesn't have decision making power over membership.

Councilor Kate Tohme: Currently, composition is included in redlines in the framework to be submitted to the DPU. Will depend on how the DPU decides to move forward. If GMAC wants to have more influence as to the composition of the group, there are opportunities to change that.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: DPU can approve framework, but they can't approve something in the GMAC. This will require extra thought.

Councilor Larry Chretien: As we think long term, aren't focusing enough on the importance of managed charging of EVs. Will influence a lot of grid mod. Observation is because that's not an industry that is large enough right now. Needs to be involved in the planning. Someone should be there who is not representing a specific industry but also cost effectively. Maybe someone non-governmental.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Confused on timelines. If LTSPS stakeholders arrive at redlines by end/ middle of March, would GMAC be taking a vote on what the redlines would have been?

Councilor Kate Tohme: Not seeking a vote on the redlines. If the GMAC sees fit, would be seeking to file a letter with the DPU stating that the GMAC supports the LTSPS stakeholder engagement group being housed in the GMAC. Not a question of the establishment of the stakeholder engagement group. Asking for support of whether that group should be housed in the GMAC.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Can we have general consensus on Kate and group drafting a letter to DPU? Will be on the agenda for next meeting to discuss the letter and vote. Needs to be clear what the GMAC is saying yes to.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked for opposition to the outlined plan. No GMAC members were opposed. Kate will draft a letter for next meeting.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Re: Larry's point about EVs. LTSP is mostly focused on planning. A huge component of managed charging relies on rate design, etc. Should likely stay outside LTSP.

Councilor Larry Chretien: Not saying long term process should be pushing certain policies. Should at least be discussing certain options. Frustrated with many separate working groups. Someone must pull the whole thing together.

e. Equity Working Group

Councilor Kathryn Wright provided an update on the EWG.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: EWG met last week. EWG has been thinking about metrics and biannual reporting (ESMP phase II). Reminder that EWG put recommendations re: metrics in original phase. Since EDCs are submitting the same metrics as previously, some of this commentary still applies. Major points of feedback include: (1). thinking about how to reflect community conversations in annual report; (2). Metrics currently don't reflect benefits and burdens. Want to understand impacts of ESMP on affordability and community benefits; and (3). There is a lot of public confusion around what they're being asked to comment and think about. Would like to see the report be a way to pull together different aspects of planning.

9. Synapse Presentation: Metrics 101

Tim Woolf (Synapse) delivered a presentation on utility metrics. Tim noted he generally has seen stakeholders prefer action-based metrics in the beginning of a process, and outcome-based metrics later.

Councilor Larry Chretien noted that the Mass Save website/dashboard is the Mass Save Data site, which is different from the EEAC website.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Added that the metrics are meant to highlight that EDC infrastructure is not just for reliability and enables electrification and renewable energy.

Councilor Kate Tohme: Metric 3 of incremental ESMP investments – when would capacity be counted?

Councilor Andrew Schellner: When the asset goes in service.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: More helpful way to have hosting capacity is to have it not be static. Have 2025, 2026, 2027 maps that show expected hosting capacity as a result from planned investments.

Councilor Kate Tohme: So will be included in reports once investment is in service and would be included in hosting capacity maps for future to see planned hosting capacity.

Julie Curti, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Representing municipal or regional interests: Does metric 2 – percentage of customers benefiting from incremental ESMP investments – also propose to report by EJC? Can the EDCs report it?

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: That should be no problem to add.

Councilor Andrew Schellner: Wasn't necessarily envisioned with that metric. But it is doable.

Councilor Larry Chretien: Is map going to be in the six-month report?

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: As of October of this year, solar hosting capacity maps will be updated monthly.

Councilor Larry Chretien: Is there a way to map change in hosting capacity by community? Can we map EV capacity?

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Will take it back. Will also follow up for when dynamic forecasting hosting capacity maps will be updated.

Councilor Andrew Schellner: Would have to look into whether their maps have the capability of providing forecasted capacity.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Firstly, likes Larry's idea about EV hosting capacity or also load for commercial/ industrial customers. Question re: ready for load achievement date metric: does it mean investment date relative to plan?

Councilor Andrew Schellner: Yes, keep in mind they will be reprioritizing investments. Will be providing a forecast of all investments in progress, and the date they were achieved relative to expected.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Is the new functionality in hosting capacity maps a product of work they're doing with envelio?

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Will have timeseries for hosting capacity maps by Q2.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: On metric 5 (DERMs): why isn't there a geographic element to the metric? Can we get a sense of where the investments will be located? Doesn't get a sense of where participating sites are.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Noted. It's an easy add.

10. RMI Presentation: Metrics Best Practices and Examples

Stephanie Bieler (RMI) delivered a presentation on metric best practices and examples.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee (Eversource): Are there other jurisdictions that report a metric that covers the cost to ratepayers per GHG reduction? Ultimately everything flows through to customer bills.

Stephanie Bieler: Not aware of one.

11. Draft Framework for ESMP Metrics

Tim Woolf (Synapse) presented on a draft framework for ESMP metrics, including key considerations for identifying ESMP metrics of interest and performance areas that may be of interest to the GMAC.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: ESMP metrics are good at measuring the things the ESMPs are in the box to do. Money for EVs, heat pumps, doesn't flow through ESMPs. It's hard to tie ESMP investments themselves to the decarbonization outcome. Affordability tether is also really difficult. Is about how efficiently we're getting the capacity, is not just about the total bill impact.

Councilor Larry Chretien: What we want to know is if there are constraints to enablement of heat pumps/ EVs.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Understanding is that the EE three-year plans have metrics of deployment of HPs/EVs.

12. Close and Next Steps

Deputy commissioner Joanna Troy: Next GMAC meeting is on reporting. Would love for GMAC to bring thoughts to the next meeting.

Councilor Andrew Schellner: Provided thoughts on the GMAC consultant cost recovery memo. Memo discusses a recommendation to adjust the spending cap with the biannual reporting. Believes it would result in inefficiencies in execution of the plan. Changing cap on a six-month basis would result in stopping projects, laying off contractors, not being able to plan efficiently.

Want to set a cap and stick to it. Memo also makes assertion that there is no regulatory lag. Would disagree. Investments are long-term investments. Don't get recovery until the year after the investment is in service. Have to put out capital for whole timeline of building a project and the time following the year it comes in service.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Schultz

Synapse Energy Economics

Meeting Attachments

- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Slide Deck
- GMAC Metrics Fact Sheet
- February Activity Tracker
- Synapse Cost Recovery Memo