

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, March 31, 2023

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Councilors Present: Liz Anderson, Sarah Bresolin Silver, Marybeth Campbell, Larry Chretien, Kathryn Cox-Arslan, Jennifer Daloisio, Elizabeth Mahony, Amy McGuire, Kyle Murray, JS Rancourt, Andy Sun, Alex Worsley, Kathryn Wright

Non-Voting Councilors: Digaunto Chatterjee, Carol Sedewitz, Kevin Sprague

Councilors Absent: ---

DOER Staff Present: Joanna Troy, Aurora Edington, Anett Ludwig, Sarah McDaniel

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Mahony, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 01:02 PM.

2. Welcome, Agenda, Meeting Attendance

Commissioner Mahony – Commissioner Department of Energy Resources (DOER)

Commissioner Mahony welcomed all participants and appreciates to brainstorm how the Council can be active and effective. DOER has been developing resources and documents to prepare for the first GMAC meeting. She thanked everyone for serving on the Council. Commissioner Mahony guided through the agenda (slide 2).

3. Overview of GMAC

Commissioner Mahony opened this section of the meeting noting that all GMAC meetings are subject to open meeting law.

Origins & Legislative Responsibilities

Commissioner Mahony explained the background, origin, and legislative responsibilities for the GMAC (slides 4-5). Commissioner Mahony highlighted that the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) requires Massachusetts to achieve Net Zero emissions in 2050. As stated in the Clean

Energy and Climate Plan for 2050, the dominant strategy to decarbonize transportation and buildings is electrification. The power sector is key to meeting decarbonization goals.

GMAC and Electric-Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs)

Section 53 of 2022 Climate Law is the guiding law for the GMAC. Section 53 has several targets for the ESMPs. The aim of the GMAC is to discuss with the Companies about how to achieve the requirements in the law. Commissioner Mahony noted that the Companies have to consider and summarize all proposed and related investments and alternatives that have been reviewed, are under consideration, or have been previously approved by the Department of Public Utilities (the Department).

Commissioner Mahony noted that many members on the GMAC have been involved in the Department's proceedings. Many of those proceedings have been in silos. A lot has happened, and a lot has been achieved so far but the GMAC will allow us to think about how a lot of those proceedings and Orders work together. It is also important to talk about costs because the ESMPs impact all ratepayers. Commissioner Mahony explained the origin and requirements for the Electric Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs) (slides 6-7).

Timeline

Commissioner Mahony explained the GMAC timeline and the outlook to 2028 (slide 8). The GMAC will convene monthly in 2023. The Companies have to file their ESMPs by September 1, 2023. The timeline is short but the review at the Department will be rather quick. DOER wants filings to be robust to cut down on discovery. The Companies will update their ESMPs with the GMAC every five years and file with the Department. Implementation begins in 2025.

Discussion

Wright asked how DOER envisions the coordination with the transmission, environmental justice (EJ), and Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC) groups. Commissioner Mahony explained that DOER is interested in talking with the GMAC how they would like to coordinate with other groups. Commissioner Mahony emphasized that EJ is an important area for this administration. Murray asked when the clean energy transmission working group will come together. Commissioner Mahony replied that it should convene in a few weeks.

4. GMAC member introductions

Edington introduced agenda item 4 and asked each member to introduce themselves with name, representation, and their expectations for the GMAC (slide 9).

Voting members

Commissioner Mahony, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, GMAC Chairperson

Commissioner Mahony noted that DOER is a state agency tracking clean energy targets. The Commissioner's expectation is to help bring together all the different topics. A modern effective grid is the necessary to meet the decarbonization goals and lower bills for customers.

Liz Anderson, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General

Anderson is representing the Attorney General and the ratepayer's perspective. Her expectation is for smart, cost-effective, equitable grid investments.

Jennifer Daloisio, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), Representing the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center

Daloisio is CEO of MassCEC, - a quasi-state agency - growing clean energy, economic development, and workforce development. Their expectation for the GMAC is to make sure strategies are cost-effective and equitable.

Sarah Bresolin Silver, ENGIE North America, Representing the energy storage industry

Bresolin is working at ENGIE North America as Director for governmental and regulatory affairs. Working on global IPP, traditionally fossil-fuel, now primarily renewable energy. In Massachusetts, ENGIE North America has focused the last four years on energy storage. She formerly worked at the AGO and the Department of Public Utilities.

Marybeth Campbell, Worcester Community Action Council, Representing a local agency administering the low-income weatherization program

Campbell is the Executive at WCAC – an anti-poverty agency in state – which provides EE and fuel assistance to low-income households. She has 15 years of experience in the clean energy sector in policy and legislature, including at MassCEC.

Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance, Representing low- and middle-income residential consumers

Chretien is Technical Director for the Green Energy Consumer Alliance – a private non-profit organization with offices in Boston and Providence for 40 years. His current mission is to speed decarbonization and drive down greenhouse gas emissions in a smart, fair, and equitable way.

Kathryn Cox-Arslan, New Leaf Energy, Representing the distributed generation renewable energy industry

Cox-Arslan is Director on Interconnection Policy Development at New Leaf Energy based in Lowell, Massachusetts. Her focus is on community solar and utility scale solar (previously a development arm of Borrego). She worked on interconnection policy over the last three years at New Leaf Energy. New Leaf Energy is a player with activities across multiple states and in Massachusetts.

Amy McGuire, Highland Electric Fleets, Representing the electric vehicle industry

McGuire is representing the Highland Electric Fleets – a fleet electrification provider – as Director of Market Development. She previously worked for DOER. She supports customers in transition to electric vehicles. Highland Electric Fleets' focus is currently on school bus fleets.

Kyle Murray, Acadia Center, Representing the environmental advocacy community

Murray is Senior Advocate and Massachusetts Program Director for clean energy policy at Acadia Center. He shares common goals with many on the panel. His interest is in taking grid planning out of the black box and allowing more people to participate.

JS Rancourt, DXS - Direct Expansion Solutions

Rancourt is a Principal at DXS New England (manufacturer representatives for Daikin). He is representing the building electrification industry. He has an interest on the consumption side, heating cooling, hot water, e.g. all the tools we use to decarbonize.

Andy Sun, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Representing engineering expertise in interconnecting clean energy

Sun is Associate Professor (with tenure) and holds the inaugural Iberdrola-Avangrid Professorship in the Sloan School of Management and MIT Energy Initiative, MIT and conducts research on interconnection problems.

Alex Worsley, Enel North America, Representing the transmission-scale renewable energy industry

Worsley is working as Manager at Enel North America (Regulatory Affairs) – an international power supplier and producer. Enel North America is active across the country and in New England. His main focus is representing large solar and wind technologies.

Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation, Representing the environmental justice community

Wright is working as Senior Program Officer, Clean Energy at the Barr Foundation – a regional private foundation in Boston. Its focus is on modernizing the grid to decarbonize and environmental justice organizations. She is representing the EJ community in the GMAC. She has been working in consulting in buildings and equitable energy efficiency.

Non-voting electric distribution company members:

Digaunto Chatterjee, Representing Eversource

Chatterjee serves as Vice President in System Planning at Eversource. He leads all the distribution planning processes for Eversource in Massachusetts.

Carol Sedewitz, Representing National Grid

Sedewitz serves as the Vice President on Electric Asset Management of National Grid. These include transmission and distribution planning and assets, integrating DER into the system. Her aim for the GMAC is to develop a safe, reliable, and affordable grid to reach the net zero goals.

Kevin Sprague, Representing Unitil

Sprague works as a Director, Engineering at Unitil. He leads grid modernization activities.

5. Governing document review and voting

Commissioner Mahony introduced the governing document review (slide 10).

a. Ground rules

McDaniel introduced the draft Ground Rules (slide 11).

Council Discussion and Vote

Wright asked about a reasonable time to receive agenda files. Commissioner Mahony noted that GMAC would like to prepare and post agenda files more than 48 hours in advance.

Cox-Arslan asked for clarification about posting materials in a timely manner and acknowledged the GMAC website.

Sprague asked about expectations to record the GMAC meetings. McDaniel noted that DOER is required to take meeting minutes and that she does not expect the meetings to be recorded.

Worsley asked that meeting materials be distributed in a timely manner.

Bresolin asked about preferences for present and remote attendance.

Cox-Arslan recommended members identify their sector representation.

Edington recommended identifying sector representation in member Zoom titles.

Worsley asked about the process and opportunities for public comments.

Murray motioned to approve the Ground Rules. Bresolin seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The Ground Rules were approved by the Council.

b. By-laws

McDaniel introduced the draft By-laws (slide 12)

Council Discussion and Vote

Bresolin asked for clarification on the majority of Council members.

Wright asked about designee rule. McDaniel referred to the respective article.

Sedewitz recommended clarification for designee rule on non-voting members.

Murray motioned to approve the By-laws. Bresolin seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The By-laws were approved by the Council.

c. Executive Committee charter

McDaniel introduced the draft Executive Committee charter (slide 13).

Council Discussion and Vote

Sedewitz asked for clarification if Executive Committee should include all three representatives of the Companies. Commissioner Mahony referred to EEAC Executive Committee with one non-voting member representing the Companies. Daloisio asked if designees would be allowed for participating in the Executive Committee charter. Commissioner Mahony referred to the Ground Rules.

Bresolin motioned to approve the Executive Committee charter. Murray seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The Executive Committee charter was approved by the Council.

d. Remote participation policy

McDaniel introduced the draft remote participation policy (slide 14).

Council Discussion and Vote

Chretien asked for clarification around the timeline for remote participation. McDaniel noted that GMAC members can be fully remote until 2025 according to state law.

Murray asked about clarification.

Anderson noted that some documents the GMAC may request could contain confidential information and raises the question of how those would be handled. Commissioner Mahony suggested discussing with the Companies offline and how GMAC wanted to handle it. Sedewitz raised the topic of critical infrastructure information.

Murray motioned to approve the Remote participation policy. Bresolin seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The remote participation policy was approved by the Council.

e. Future meeting times

Commissioner Mahony noted that the GMAC is looking to have monthly meetings in 2023 (slide 15). The results of the poll sent to GMAC members found two preferred times for future meetings. Of the two times, DOER recommended the Thursday 1-4 PM time slot. With this time slot, the next GMAC meeting would be scheduled for Thursday, April 13, 2023. Commissioner Mahony noted a schedule conflict and proposed the GMAC shift the one meeting by an hour to 2-5 PM. All other GMAC meetings would be held from 1-4 PM on Thursdays.

Council Discussion and Vote

Bresolin encouraged a hybrid meeting.

Murray preferred fully remote or hybrid in-person meeting.

Anderson is supportive of in-person meeting.

Wright recommended in-person meeting with transit access.

Commissioner Mahony recommended launching the May GMAC meeting in hybrid mode.

Murray motioned to approve the future meeting times. Bresolin seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. Future meeting times were approved by the Council.

Commissioner Mahony, on behalf of the GMAC organizer, thanked the Council for their comments and feedback.

--- Meeting break from 03:09 PM until 3:19 PM. ---

6. Introduction to the electric companies

Chatterjee presented Eversource and its planning activities based in increased load from electrification (slide 17).

Sedewitz presented National Grid and its planning activities in the electricity sector (slide 18).

Sprague presented Unitil and its planning activities in the electricity sector (slide 19).

Discussion

No questions.

7. GMAC Consultant scope

Commissioner Mahony explained the origin and scope of a GMAC consultant (slide 20).

Discussion

Chatterjee noted that consultants have background in cost-allocation and recommends that expertise to consider for hiring consultants.

Bresolin asked if GMAC could hire two separate consultants. Commissioner Mahony noted that GMAC is allowed to, based on the Ground Rules but questions the efficiency.

Chretien supported hiring two consultants, one for technical expertise and one for administrative components.

McGuire supported the idea of a sub-consultant.

Wright supported the idea of consultant teams and noted that some consultants would have different skills related to stakeholder engagement versus technical expertise.

Murray emphasized the consideration of a hiring a technical consultant.

Commissioner Mahony, on behalf of the GMAC organizer, thanked the Council for their comments and feedback.

8. DOER recommendations on ESMPs

Commissioner Mahony explained DOER's recommendation for the ESMPs (slide 21) and postponed the discussion to the next GMAC meeting due to time constraints. She noted that part of the recommendations go beyond the requirements of the Climate law.

9. Close & Next Steps

Commissioner Mahony explained the next steps (slide 22).

Discussion

Cox-Arslan supported having U.S. Department of Energy representatives present to the GMAC and proposed that the EDCs self-identify their planning processes.

Chatterjee supported inviting representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy & partners on integrated distribution system planning.

Murray recommended including statements from nominees for Executive Committee.

Anderson asked when the first meeting of ExCom is planned. Commissioner Mahony noted that this question will be answered during the next meeting.

Commissioner Mahony, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 04:02 PM.

Meeting Materials:

Draft Meeting Minutes – for approval by GMAC

- Agenda
- Meeting 1_GMAC slides
- Draft Ground rules
- Draft By-laws
- Draft Remote participation policy
- Draft Executive committee charter