

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)
Executive Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, August 09, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Councilors Present: Aurora Edington (designee for Elizabeth Mahony), Liz Anderson, Sarah Bresolin Silver, Sarah Cullinan, Kyle Murray

Non-voting Councilors: Digaunto Chatterjee (Eversource)

DOER Staff Present: Julia Fox, Colin Carroll, Marian Harkavy

Consultants Present: Tim Woolf, Kyle Schultz

1. Welcome, Roll Call, and Agenda

Aurora Edington, as acting Chair in place of Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony, welcomed the group, took roll call, and went through the meeting agenda on slide 2.

2. 2024 GMAC/ESMP Schedule

Aurora Edington shared slide 3, listing upcoming dates for GMAC (including potential GMAC meeting dates), Equity Working Group, and significant DPU events.

3. 2025 Budget Filing Update

Edington gave a 2025 GMAC budget update. DPU approved an extension request for CY2025 GMAC budget. DOER is starting to prepare filing materials. ExCom will review materials and proposals at the next meeting.

4. Expanding ExCom Participation

Edington shared slide 5 of the presentation to discuss other GMAC members' participation in Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee Charter and bylaws are silent on whether GMAC members can participate in ExCom meeting.

Councilor Kyle Murray, Acadia Center, representing the environmental advocacy community: Ok with participation, so long as participation is somewhat limited.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver, ENGIE North America, representing the energy storage industry: These are open public meetings, correct?

Aurora Edington: Executive Committee meetings do follow open meeting laws. Unsure of legal perspective regarding participation of non-committee members.

Councilor Kyle Murray: Excom meetings are open in that people can attend and view. The committee can set the extent of public of participation.

Aurora Edington: Open meeting law discourages use of a Zoom meeting chat, so we have disabled chat in GMAC meetings. This participation question is to this group to decide if GMAC members should be able to participate in the ExCom. We could see how much uptake there is and reevaluate.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver: To what extent does the GMAC member proposing ExCom attendance want to participate? If there is an open spot on ExCom and they want to participate, could consider. Not opposed to GMAC member participation, but wants to keep order of meeting, given that it is an executive committee, and we move through a lot of topics quickly.

Aurora Edington: I am hearing that we can make the decision to allow GMAC members to participate but we will monitor and see how it goes. We will preserve expectation that priority to actively participate in each ExCom meeting be given to ExCom members.

5. Stakeholder Engagement Materials Update

DOER staff member, Julia Fox, gave an update on the plan for stakeholder engagement materials, including a revamped page on the GMAC website with a repository of information that encapsulates grid planning. The materials include two digital factsheets that will be on the website and that DOER is hoping GMAC members can share widely. These will be translated into the top 5 spoken languages in the Commonwealth. Fox provided a summary of the factsheets and intended audience and asked for feedback. Factsheets are written at the 101 and 201 levels.

Councilor Liz Anderson, Office of the Attorney General, representing the Office of the Attorney General: Two pieces of feedback: 1. Do regular residential customers know what electrification is? Doesn't think so, so need to explain. 2. Focus of GMAC and ESMPs is on the distribution side, so confused about purpose of statement around doubling electricity supply.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee, representing Eversource: In the Eversource ESMP, we had made an attempt to look at a single residence regarding what their usage is today, how it will change with adding a heat pump, EV, etc. It would be good to connect the dots between electric consumption in the house and the grid, e.g., connect the consumption in the house to the transformer at the end of the street. Could start with explaining what are DERs, how customers can help to manage their consumption with DERs.

Julia Fox: The challenge is how much information can fit on one page. This will be one round of many factsheets.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver: Seems complicated and a lot of words to say, “climate friendly and fossil fuel free.” Have you considered simplifying by using the term “clean energy?”

Julia Fox: Good point, want to be simple.

Councilor Liz Anderson: Agree with Sarah Bresolin Silver.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, representing the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center: On earlier point, could try to make the connection between grid and home by saying power needs to be delivered by wires and poles. Could make a simplifying analogy to roads to explain why we need to improve electric system.

Councilor Kyle Murray: Could be another factsheet that explains: “what is the grid?” Pictures of things – poles, wires. Disagrees on taking out second sentence under electrification on doubling amount of energy, it lets people know the scale of the problem.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Agrees it is important to show the scale. Could reframe it to be about moving electricity around, not the supply.

Julia Fox: Could reframe?

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Yes, could reframe, maybe to something like your household will double the amount of electricity it consumes.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Could we show a heat pump in the graphic? (on the 101 level).

Julia Fox: Yes, could add a compressor? Not sure people will know what it is.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Should connect poles and generation to house. Lego trees are weird.

Councilor Kyle Murray: Agrees with adding a heat pump image. Important to familiarize people with them. Good to show connections between generation, poles, house, heat pump, etc. to show everything is interconnected.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver: Is term “grid modernization” recognizable enough at the 101 level?

Aurora Edington: I agree that it is a more technical term and thinks even ExCom members would give different definitions. There is a focus group scheduled for next week with 15 people from different backgrounds. They will add question to the list asking if the phrase “Grid modernization” is clear.

Julia Fox: There is a picture of MA as a placeholder for GMAC logo.

Fox showed 201 level factsheet and asked for feedback.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver: Title is great. Electric grid is clearer than just grid.

Julia Fox: is it too busy/is there too much going on and taking away from message?

Councilor Kyle Murray: Thinks it looks good, not too cluttered.

Julia Fox: Welcomes written feedback from members, also happy to have small discussions/meetings.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Just sent an image to Julia and Aurora that Eversource has used that shows connectivity of house to grid. Could have consultant use ideas from that picture.

Fox shared plans for DOER communications. DOER met with EDC stakeholder engagement contacts to learn where they can align on messaging. Want to make sure there is some alignment on terms they are using. Will rely on GMAC members. Do members have additional distribution ideas or other channels?

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Can check with MassCEC team and maybe put link in social media accounts, emails.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver: NECEC (Northeast Clean Energy Council) have a broad network in terms of clean transition. Could push out through them and their networks.

Councilor Liz Anderson: In the past at the AGOs office, have done public service announcement radio spots. Hears a lot of advertisement from MassSave and energy dealers on sports radio.

Aurora Edington: Like idea, thinks radio would be next engagement because they would have to craft the language appropriately. At this stage, just factsheets. Something to think about what level of engagement over next couple of years.

Fox discussed timeline. Focus group happening next week. Potential testing through Barr Foundation. In September, DOER will revise factsheets based on DPU Order.

Edington presented 10 different GMAC logo options on slides 14 and 15. Asked for feedback and initial reactions.

Councilor Kyle Murray: Preference for MA based logo. Favorite is number 1. Does not care for 7, 8 and 9 do not get at what they are trying to do, 10 is too basic. 2. Electric symbol is disconnected. 4. Is hard to read.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver: Likes 1 and 3. Thinks should keep outline of state. Everything should have poles and wires.

Councilor Liz Anderson: Likes 1. Only criticism is 1 highlights solar too much. Map is not geographically accurate in 1-4, likes map in 10.

Aurora Edington: What about adding a heat pump?

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: Likes 1. Feels like solar is taking too much real estate. Wondering if there is a way to connect house to poles and wires.

Aurora Edington: Hears consensus from members on liking option 1. Will make new versions. Will update map to use map in number 10 and will make changes around solar, connecting house to poles, adding heat pump compressor. Will show new options at next GMAC meeting.

6. Strategic Planning Post-DPU Order

Edington asked if there is interest in discussing 2025 planning in advance of DPU Order.

Councilor Kyle Murray: Really hard to do advanced planning without knowing scope of Order. Preference is to wait until Order comes out before planning

7. Other Discussion Areas

None were proposed.

8. Close and Next Steps

The next ExCom meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2024, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

9. Adjourn

Aurora Edington adjourned the meeting at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kyle Schultz, Synapse

Meeting attachments: Meeting agenda and slide deck