

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)  
Executive Committee

**MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, April 24, 2025, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Virtual Zoom Meeting

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**Councilors Present:** Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy (Chair), Kyle Murray, Chris Modlish, Sarah Cullinan

**Non-voting Councilors:** --

**Councilors Absent:** Sarah Bresolin Silver, Digaunto Chatterjee (non-voting)

**DOER Staff Present:** Julia Fox, Aurora Edington, Marian Harkavy, Colin Carroll

**Consultants Present:** Tim Woolf, Aidan Glaser Schoff

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**1. Welcome, Roll Call, and Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 AM. Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, as Chair, welcomed the group and took roll call.

**2. GMAC Long-Term Strategy**

Consultant Tim Woolf of Synapse Energy Economics discussed GMAC Planning for 2025 and beyond. He discussed the plan for 2025 from the October 2024 GMAC meeting; the ESMP events occurring between 2026-2029; DPU guidance on GMAC activities and GMAC directives per Section 92C(b) of the 2022 Clean Energy Act; the process of determining the long-term strategy in the September 2025 GMAC meeting; and elements of the 2026-2029 GMAC strategic plan such as interviews with GMAC members.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center:** The process could benefit from GMAC members having more touchpoints on what are the goals for GMAC. It's important

to determine how to stage issues to the GMAC. The September meeting could be preceded by activities such as surveys, schematics for timelines, major policy directions that can be influenced by GMAC via substantive conversation. To be impactful, having touchpoints before the September meeting can make the result what it should be. Recognizes that this is more work. DOER and the consultant team can work on facilitating and making suggestions.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, Department of Energy Resources (DOER):** To summarize your extra steps: Survey, facilitated small group discussions on assigned topics moderated by DOER or GMAC members. Would this cover specific topics?

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Maybe. We want to make the best use of the meeting time we have. We haven't developed a plan or use for additional working groups, aside from Equity Working Group and LTSPP. Going back to the ESMPs, there are some policy recommendations that we can think hard about and explore parallel to the DPU processes. GMAC should strategically use our time to make progress on those pathways. Developing the shortlist of potential topics is valuable.

**Consultant Tim Woolf, Synapse Energy Economics:** I like a lot of those ideas, but there is something I want to highlight -- we want the ideas to come from the GMAC, rather than coming from specific priorities of certain people.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** A survey may be most effective then. A survey could have a ranking of potential tools to use in determining the strategy. The list could be broad enough to not be suggestive of the right priorities.

**Consultant Tim Woolf:** Agree that a survey can keep the issues open but also provide a framework. Any other reactions, around working groups perhaps?

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** I mentioned the working groups as something that can be used by the GMAC to work on priority topics over the next four years. I recognize that "working group" is like a swear word in this sector these days.

Consultant Tim Woolf presented the proposal for the September GMAC meeting and long-term strategy development process.

**Councilor Kyle Murray, Acadia Center:** Okay to strongly encourage members to attend this meeting in person. EEAC has an in-person meeting every six months. Asking one in-person thing is not a huge hurdle and the quality of discussion is higher when people are in person. On the three-hour question, I don't know if we will have three hours of stuff to talk about. Small group discussions tend to go well and can draw people out of their shell if they haven't been contributing as much.

**Consultant Tim Woolf:** As a reminder, meetings typically have half an hour for public engagement, meeting agendas etc. So, there may not be three hours of discussion but two and a half.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** If there is more iteration before the September meeting, the three-hour meeting may not be necessary. Is the thought that after the September meeting, we will have a good idea of the strategic plan? If there is iteration after the in-person workshoping, there may be more work afterwards.

**Consultant Tim Woolf:** Synapse would write down what was heard during the September meeting. There could be a meeting to finalize the plan afterwards. We are asking you all for ideas of how to put these topics on paper.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Unless we design it to be an iterative framework. The strategic plan could not stand for four years. The landscape can change over four years. So, there could be a tighter plan for one year and broader plan for four years. Also, there will be some turnover in GMAC members during this process.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** Not related to the September meeting. If a new member comes on, do we have an intro course or something comparable for new members? It would be overwhelming to come into this without tracking everything that's going on.

**Consultant Tim Woolf:** We don't but we could put something together. We have the topic briefs and slides. But it could develop into more.

**Councilor Chris Modlish, Attorney General Office:** Don't have specific thoughts, echo what has been said.

Consultant Tim Woolf presented more on how to engage GMAC members.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Respecting getting member input, you could ask for this information in a survey that is prior to the meeting, or at any point. These questions [slide 8] could be queued up. Example: do you have any issues that you want to raise? Would you like to hire outside facilitation? This could be more of a temperature check and conducted every quarter.

**Consultant Tim Woolf:** Surveys could be on process or substance.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Agreed.

Consultant Tim Woolf presented on Synapse potentially drafting a plan for the September meeting.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Recommendation on point 4 [of slide 8]: coming back to the idea that we don't want to bake too much into the plan. Potential topics are what should be in the plan, what the plan should cover, etc. It could also depend on where the conversation goes.

**Consultant Tim Woolf:** Are you suggesting an outline and scope of the plan?

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Yes, I think so.

**Consultant Tim Woolf:** Should we discuss the next steps?

**Aurora Edington, DOER:** Next steps should be a survey of the interest areas of GMAC and a short introduction of materials presented in these slides. After getting that response, DOER and Synapse can go into small group meetings. We can develop a spectrum of engagement of where members want to engage. A little more guidance is needed and things to react to.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** I like that idea of spectrum of engagement. Here's an area like geothermal networks throughout the state. How should GMAC be involved? For example, GMAC could get updates during the monthly meeting or get more involved.

**Aurora Edington:** Totally agree. I think an iterative process makes more sense. The GMAC needs to know what are you excited about, what are you looking to influence, what are your concerns and questions? Perhaps taking the EEAC model, where there are subgroups. There are different ways to go to grip people's interests and create a less overwhelming ESMP process.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** I think it makes sense to present GMAC members with what their vision is of the GMAC and compare it to what it is today. What does GMAC look like as an entity as a process going forward? How do we think it should be? The EEAC has gone through lots of three-year plan cycles. I think the perspective is helpful to what the GMAC can have in mind.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** The importance of this vision is big enough that we think that the vision for the next year should be brought to a vote.

### **3. Review of Upcoming GMAC Agendas**

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy discussed meeting agendas for May 2025 through December 2025 meetings.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** Have we discussed OET's work? It's all about grid financing.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** All those things, like decarbonizing the peak, are relevant. Do we have a meeting to bump, or should we introduce it in January 2025?

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** I think the January 2025 meeting would make sense.

### **4. GMAC Website Design Update**

Julia Fox of DOER discussed an update on the GMAC website design.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** I want to ensure that we can copy links on this website and send them out. The DPU did not implement this in the DPU file rooms.

**Julia Fox, DOER:** I will let the design team know about this. Please send me any more feedback by the end of the day today.

**Aurora Edington:** A reminder that all the content will be migrated to this nicer site.

## **5. Other Discussion Areas**

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** We at DOER believe that we should extend the contract with Synapse for another year, which is allowed per the contract. If anyone has any questions or concerns about this, let us know. That should allow us to operate smoothly at this time.

No one provided additional comments on this topic.

## **6. Close and Next Steps**

The next GMAC meeting is May 1, 2025 from 1 pm – 3 pm. The next ExCom meeting is June 5, 2025 from 9:30am – 10:30 am. The next Equity Working Group meeting is July 11, 2025 from 10:00 am – 11:30 am.

## **7. Adjourn**

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy adjourned the meeting at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Aidan Glaser Schoff, Synapse*

### **Meeting attachments:**

- Meeting agenda
- Meeting presentation slides