

MVRF Advisory Committee
November 3, 2021 Meeting notes

Attendees: ETD Chief Nate Forster, DOER Commissioner Patrick Woodcock, Patrick Lawlor (North Andover), Laurie Burzlaff (Andover), Evelyn Friedman, Evan Silverio, Abel Vargas, Susan Almano, Tennis Lilly.

Administrative: moving forward, Advisory Committee meeting slide decks and meeting notes will be posted to the DOER MVRF website for the public to be able to review.

Revised Survey

- The AGO presented on a plan to revise and re-release a residential survey to gather feedback on priorities for MVRF funding. The AGO explained that various community groups and leaders reached out regarding community sentiment over the MVRF planning, restlessness over program spending, and criticism of the original survey's language and overly technical format.
- The group discussed potential questions to ask and language to use:
 - Are you aware there are free/low-cost energy efficiency assistance programs? Set up what programs are available.
 - Conduct EE surveying
 - Use Gratis/Free instead of "no-cost"
 - explain what it means to "improve" a home
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- What are we looking to learn?
 - Ensure that community feels heard – increase resident response.
 - Raise awareness in EE programs in general
 - Feels like Andover/North Andover residents have done audits, taken measures, but Lawrence is behind. This can increase awareness and access.
 - Can we get home usage/load from utilities to target certain customer groups?
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- What can be conveyed through the survey
 - Advertise MassSave, MVRF and other assistance programs

Obstacles to overcome

- Home usage/load to target certain homes or customers?
 - Utilities developed a mapping tool that can help – need to local outreach partners to use this information (by ID census blocks) to work with customers
 - Need to push for tenants, biggest users
 - Non-resident landlords an obstacle – gaining attention, or signature for permits
 - Should program pay "closers" for landlord referrals?
 - Pay out housing subsidies to attract landlords?
- Previous attempts to enroll customers failed to gain attention: the challenge will be to get residents to open new letters. Word of mouth will be important, need to use every resource possible. Education is required too.
 - Make it tangible for community: use examples of specific homes and explain what changes meant to customer bills, comfort.

- Lit/letters need to say boldly: FREE
- Projects that did an audit and chose not to do anything – will they be eligible here, and can we retroactively apply measures under MVERF to the old audit? Need to keep this option open.
 - Want to be cautious on this – want additionality in this space.
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DOER (PW and MM) gave an update on the proposed Mass SAVE 3-year plan – under review by the DPU – order expected by the end of January.

- How will this impact the timing of the RFP/PON for the LMI program? We should work with the PAs to make sure we supplement funding
- Electrification is good – ridiculous it took this long. Expressed frustration that new gas systems were installed after the explosion.
 - Climate Act of 2021 makes gas to electric possible under EE
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Questions about potential Lawrence Community Partnership Application – does anyone know if a group formed, if the new De Peña administration is working on it?

AGO opened a short discussion on geothermal microgrids

- Requested a written explanation/101 on microgrids for future discussions
- Will there be minimum units required to tie into a microgrid? Does this require a new build or can old buildings be retrofitted?
 - Current thinking is to test out a district for many buildings as opposed to one larger multifamily building, but open to other scenarios.
- Will this require the whole street be dug up?
- Where is this happening already?
- Criteria will need to be developed and expert opinion will be needed
 - DOER has some geothermal/renewable energy expertise

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