Town of Sudbury
Energy and Sustainability Committee (ESC)
Minutes – October 5, 2026

Present in person: None

Present remotely: Olga Faktorovich Allen, Chair; Venk Gopal, Vice Chair; John Keklak, Clerk.

Absent: Mary K. Farris, Member; Jennifer Dudgeon, Member; Joe Martino, Member; Blair Stewart, Member.

Also Present remotely: Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director; Eric Simms, Sustainability Coordinator; Lynn Puorro, Sudbury TV staff; Leslie Lowe, Sustainable Sudbury; Tom Yelton, Sustainable Sudbury; Kay Bell; Indrani Ghosh, Weston & Sampson; Eliza Jobin-Davis, Weston & Sampson; John Boldec, Weston & Sampson.

---

1. Call to Order

A roll call having been taken, the meeting was called to order at approximately 5:35pm by Chair **Olga Faktorovich Allen**.

2. Approval of Minutes of September 2026 ESC Meeting

Due to a lack of a quorum, approval of minutes was postponed.

3. Update on Follow-Up Actions from the September 2026 ESC Meeting

Solar Revolving Fund rubric: Blair shared the revised rubric with the committee. **Olga** will work with him offline on additional comments, with the goal of bringing the revisions back for discussion at the next meeting.

Mass Energize Community Connections program: The Town Council's opinion on whether the Solar Revolving Fund can support the Social Media Magic Program, operated by Sustainable Sudbury, remains pending.

Sustainability coordinator and Combined Facilities Director updates: **Eric** and **Sandra** submitted bulleted updates, which **John** incorporated into the meeting minutes.

With these follow-up items reviewed, the committee proceeded to the climate change vulnerability assessment update from Weston & Sampson.

4. ESC Mission Statement Revision Endorsement

Due to a lack of a quorum, a vote to endorse the revised ESC mission statement was postponed.

5. Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) — Weston & Sampson Presentation

Weston & Sampson (W&S) presented an update on Sudbury's Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA), explaining its relationship to the concurrently updated Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). Although the two efforts have different methodologies and requirements, they share the goal of improving community resilience by identifying risks to public health, infrastructure, and community assets and prioritizing actions to mitigate climate hazards. The CCVA is intended to be a data-driven, living tool that helps the Town allocate resources and make informed decisions.

The W&S team consisted of Indrani Ghosh, Eliza Jobin-Davis and John Boldec.

The W&S team sought committee feedback on the list of critical assets, the climate-hazard exposure analysis, and the proposed vulnerability and risk assessment methodology. The intent was to incorporate feedback before completing the full assessment, with results and next steps anticipated at the following month's meeting.

The committee reviewed the proposed asset list and identified several areas requiring clarification or additional information.

Town-owned buildings: The committee agreed that the Water District building should be included because of its importance to the drinking-water supply. The W&S team also noted that the Community Center and Goodnow Public Library serve as emergency shelters and may warrant higher consequence ratings.

Schools: **Olga** questioned why the list included Willow Hill and Corwin-Russell School but omitted other educational institutions. She recommended applying consistent criteria: conduct the more detailed vulnerability assessment for town-operated schools and consider a broader review of other schools for exposure. **John** and **Venk** supported the concern that the existing selection appeared arbitrary.

Water infrastructure: **Venk** Gopal asked whether the assessment included the drinking-water wells serving the Sudbury Water District. The W&S team confirmed that the wells had been identified and could be included in the exposure assessment, although they had inadvertently been omitted from the presentation slides.

Natural resources and community parcels: **Olga** emphasized that certain parcels, particularly Haskell Field, are important community resources and should be considered for a more detailed vulnerability assessment rather than exposure analysis alone. The discussion also identified Sewataro as a resource that should be checked for inclusion.

Historic buildings: The committee supported considering historic properties because of their cultural significance and potential vulnerabilities. **Olga** specifically asked about the Wayside Inn, which was missing from the existing list. Members suggested consulting the Sudbury Historical

Society to identify missing properties and provide insight into the vulnerabilities of older buildings.

The W&S team explained that the existing historic-property list had been carried over from an earlier Hazard Mitigation Plan and that the Historical Society had not necessarily been directly engaged in developing it.

The W&S team agreed to revise its spreadsheet to distinguish between assets receiving an exposure assessment only and those receiving a full vulnerability assessment. The team would populate the proposed classifications based on the discussion and return the spreadsheet to the committee for review.

Eric explained that he was also compiling comments from the Town's departmental core team. He planned to share the asset list with relevant planning staff and seek input from the Historical Society. Weston & Sampson requested a consolidated set of comments from the committee and Town staff to avoid conflicting or duplicative feedback. A shared SharePoint spreadsheet was discussed as a practical way to coordinate revisions.

The team described an assessment of five climate hazards: riverine flooding, extreme heat, extreme precipitation, winter weather, and wildfire. The analysis uses present-day/2030, 2050, and 2070 planning horizons to evaluate how conditions may change over time.

The assessment draws on several data sources, including the BSC Group's site-specific inland flood model, state and federal climate projections, Cornell University's precipitation data, and federal wildfire data. The W&S team emphasized that exposure is evaluated using GIS analysis and a 100-foot buffer around building footprints, rather than simply determining whether a building itself lies within a hazard area.

Two limitations were raised:

Drought: **Eric** asked whether extreme heat could serve as a proxy for drought, given Sudbury's reliance on groundwater and wells. The W&S team explained that the available state-adopted projections do not provide sufficient drought data for this assessment. A more detailed study could examine rainfall, soil moisture, groundwater conditions, and water-supply availability, potentially through future Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant funding.

High winds: **Olga** asked about assessing high-wind risks. The W&S team explained that the available climate projections do not provide sufficiently localized wind data to assess individual assets reliably. Additional modeling could be considered in a future project.

The W&S team acknowledged that publicly available data impose limitations and invited the committee to identify areas requiring further analysis.

The W&S team explained that vulnerability combines three components:

Exposure:Whether an asset is subject to a particular climate hazard.

Sensitivity:How significantly the asset's functionality could be affected if exposed. Sensitivity indicators include building age and value, the presence of electrical or mechanical equipment in basements, the scale of potential disruption, and historic designation.

Adaptive capacity How well the asset can respond to or cope with the hazard's impacts. Adaptive-capacity indicators include backup power, redundancy, emergency-management plans, and resilience investments identified in the Capital Improvement Plan.

The methodology relies on available public data, tax-assessor records, survey responses, and GIS analysis. The W&S team invited the committee to identify additional Town datasets or suggest changes to the indicators. The W&S team also committed to providing clear definitions and a glossary in the final report.

The proposed risk framework combines the likelihood of an asset being vulnerable with the consequences of its failure. Vulnerability scores are rated on a scale of 1–4, with scores of 3 or higher classified as high vulnerability in the example presented. Consequences are assessed qualitatively, considering economic, social, and environmental impacts.

The W&S team emphasized that the resulting priorities are adjustable based on the Town's understanding of each asset's importance. For example, the Goodnow Public Library and Community Center received high consequence ratings because they serve as emergency shelters.

The committee was asked to review the proposed consequence ratings and identify any that did not reflect the Town's understanding of its assets. The ratings and methodology are intended to support decisions about where limited resources can have the greatest impact.

Venk suggested routing follow-up questions through **Eric** or another designated Town contact to facilitate coordination.

The presentation concluded with the following action items:

Action Item:

Weston & Sampson: Revise the asset spreadsheet to distinguish exposure-only assessments from full vulnerability assessments and incorporate the committee's feedback.

Action Item:

Committee and Town staff: Review the spreadsheet, identify missing assets, and submit consolidated comments through the proposed shared SharePoint workspace by October 13.

Action Item:

Eric: Continue compiling feedback from Town departments and coordinate input from relevant planning staff and the Historical Society.

Action Item:

Committee members: Review the proposed vulnerability indicators and consequence ratings, including whether the highest-priority assets have been identified appropriately.

Action Item:

Weston & Sampson: Incorporate the feedback, complete the vulnerability and risk assessments, and proceed to developing options and priorities for the final report and presentation, anticipated at the following month's meeting.

6. Sustainability Coordinator Update -- Battery Energy Storage Systems By-Law

Eric reported that efforts to solicit stakeholder input on Sudbury's proposed battery energy storage systems (BESS) bylaw are continuing. Discussions with the Conservation Commission and Conservation Director, as well as the Health Director and Board of Health chair, are expected in the coming weeks. **Eric** will also follow up with previously consulted boards and committees, including the Water District, to request formal comments. The goal is to complete stakeholder outreach in October, collect feedback by November, and work with the Planning

Board to produce a Sudbury-specific draft by January, in time for the Town Meeting warrant process. **Eric** will confirm the schedule with Planning and prepare a timeline showing key deadlines.

The need for a bylaw has become more urgent following the implementation of new state requirements for streamlined solar and energy-storage permitting in October. A developer has submitted a proposal for a battery storage installation near the TJ Maxx shopping center on Boston Post Road and is seeking to proceed under the new permitting process. Eric explained that some projects may be permitted by right, limiting the Town's ability to prohibit them outright. In the absence of a local bylaw, the Town must rely primarily on state and federal fire codes and recommendations from individual departments. A bylaw would provide clearer procedures and guardrails and help articulate Sudbury's interests. The specific permitting process for the proposed project, including Town Counsel's involvement, was not clear and would be better addressed by Planning.

Olga emphasized that the ESC should develop a position letter explaining how battery storage fits into Sudbury's climate strategy, decarbonization efforts, energy transition, and energy independence. She noted that other stakeholders are already addressing fire safety, public health, and water concerns, and argued that the committee's particular contribution should be to articulate the opportunities and broader energy-system implications, along with relevant cautions.

Venk proposed working with **Mary** to draft a position paper and develop an FAQ addressing common questions, potential risks, and the opportunities battery storage presents. **Eric** agreed that battery storage can play an essential role in the energy transition and that communities should understand its benefits as well as its risks. He also cautioned against assuming that developers are acting in bad faith. The committee agreed that clearer local regulations would be beneficial.

The discussion also addressed the timing of engagement with the Select Board. **Venk** suggested providing an interim briefing rather than waiting until the bylaw and the ESC's position are finalized. **Olga** agreed that the Select Board should be engaged soon, given the limited time before the January draft deadline. **Venk** proposed working on two parallel efforts: developing the ESC's position paper with **Mary** and updating the existing stakeholder presentation to incorporate feedback received to date. The goal is to have preliminary materials ready by the November ESC meeting so that the Select Board can receive a progress update. **Eric** supported this approach and agreed to confirm the timeline with Planning.

Eric will continue stakeholder outreach, request outstanding comments, and coordinate with Planning on the bylaw schedule and a timeline of key deadlines.

Venk and **Mary** will work on a draft ESC position paper for circulation to the committee, while **Venk** and **Eric** will update the stakeholder presentation.

The committee will aim to prepare a work-in-progress briefing for the Select Board by the November meeting. Members were also invited to identify any additional stakeholders who should be consulted before outreach concludes.

Action Item:

Eric: Obtain input from the Conservation Commission and Conservation Director, and the Health Director and Board of Health chair.

Action Item:

Eric: Follow up with previously consulted boards and committees, including the Water District, to obtain formal comments.

Action Item:

Eric: Confirm the bylaw development schedule with Planning and prepare a timeline graphic with key deadlines.

Action Item:

Venk and Mary: Draft an ESC position paper and circulate it to the committee for feedback.

Action Item:

Venk and Eric: Update the stakeholder presentation to incorporate feedback received and identify any outstanding input.

Action Item:

ESC and Eric: Prepare an interim update for the Select Board on stakeholder engagement and the ESC's developing position.

Action Item:

Eric: Continue developing the Sudbury-specific battery storage bylaw with Planning.

7. Combined Facilities Director Update

Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director, provided updates on several municipal solar projects, school and town-building HVAC studies, and the ongoing decarbonization study.

At Haskell Field, geotechnical drilling was completed on August 11, but the geotechnical report remains outstanding. Eversource is also reviewing the engineering work required to support the electrical infrastructure, which is expected to inform the Interconnection Service Agreement (ISA). Completion of that engineering work was anticipated by the end of October. Although the power purchase agreement (PPA) has been signed, the lease cannot be finalized until the engineering costs are better understood. Detailed designs also depend on the geotechnical findings, which will determine the foundation requirements. **Sandra** plans to provide an update at the October 19 Park and Recreation meeting. She has asked the vendor, Solect, to develop a construction schedule that identifies the necessary approvals and lead times for Planning, Park and Recreation, the ESC, and potentially the Select Board and Finance Committee. As of October 5, she could not confidently confirm a construction start in June 2027 because too much information remains outstanding. She emphasized the need to preserve schedule flexibility and avoid an overly optimistic timeline.

At Curtis Middle School, the ISA was completed in March, and the geotechnical report received on September 9 contained no unexpected findings. The report indicates that either drilled piers or shallow spread footings could support the proposed solar canopy, allowing Solect to proceed with design work. The design must account for existing utilities in the parking lot and ensure that school buses can turn safely around the canopy. **Sandra** also raised the possibility of locating the canopy closer to the school rather than nearer the trees, potentially preserving the basketball area for students. The proposed location and bus-turning geometry will need to be demonstrated on paper and reviewed with the schools and Town before proceeding. Planning Board site approval is still required. As at Haskell Field, the PPA has been signed but the lease remains outstanding. The Town's new legal counsel may recommend changes to the standard lease terms. **Sandra** hoped to provide more detailed information at the following month's meeting, with construction targeted for the following summer.

At the police station, the geotechnical report is still outstanding, delaying development of a design suitable for review by the Historic Districts Commission (HDC). **Sandra** reported that preliminary discussions with the HDC identified some design preferences that could substantially increase costs and potentially require revisiting the PPA economics. The ESC had previously voted to support the first five years or so of the project, and **Sandra** wants to keep the design within that financial framework. Solect is exploring alternative designs, including a potentially more streamlined product from MeLink, an out-of-state company whose ability to install in Massachusetts is being evaluated. Once the geotechnical findings and design approach are sufficiently developed, the Town will re-engage with the HDC. The numerous utilities in the rear parking lot also present a design constraint. **Sandra** expressed concern that the time available to prepare for construction next year is shrinking.

For the Haynes and Nixon school roofs, roof replacements completed or undertaken over the summer incorporated structural components intended to support solar installations. Solect is now reviewing the structural drawings and developing potential designs. **Sandra** had hoped to have the designs ready by the October 5 meeting, but they were not yet available. She expected preliminary designs and PPA rates by the following month, with the School Committee to receive the information first and the ESC subsequently briefed on the opportunities. **Sandra** also indicated that solar canopies at schools are being reconsidered. Rising utility costs make solar an increasingly attractive way to offset electricity expenses, even though the Town has a favorable utility contract.

Sandra reported that engineers have completed an assessment of existing HVAC conditions across the schools and an electrification study examining which systems could be converted to all-electric operation. The study includes recommendations, but its preliminary conclusion is that electrifying some of the older buildings is not recommended. **Sandra** hopes to schedule a formal presentation by the engineers at an upcoming ESC meeting, likely the following month or the month after. Meanwhile, the Town is incorporating potential electrification opportunities into its current capital planning, particularly when equipment is being replaced or buildings are undergoing reconstruction.

For Goodnow Library, the Town has engaged NV5 to design replacements for rooftop HVAC units that are nearing the end of their service lives. The Town intends to select the most efficient equipment feasible, while recognizing that the new units may be heavier and require structural analysis. The engineering work may also be extended to rooftop units at the Department of Public Works that were previously identified for replacement but could not proceed because of insufficient funding. **Sandra** expects NV5 to provide preliminary cost estimates in time to inform the current capital plan.

Sandra distinguished these immediate engineering projects from the broader HVAC study intended to support the Town's 15-year capital plan. That longer-term effort will examine HVAC systems comprehensively and identify opportunities for coordinated replacements rather than relying primarily on individual repairs or equipment-by-equipment upgrades. She emphasized the value of planning for the long-term needs of buildings that the Town expects to use for decades.

Sandra also updated the committee on data collection for the Town's decarbonization study. Charlie Flynn has been inventorying equipment and gathering detailed information, a labor-intensive task that must be fitted around his other responsibilities. He has committed to

entering the information into a spreadsheet and providing it by the end of October so that the study can advance. **John** offered to help as needed.

Action Item:

Sandra: Continue pressing Solect and its vendors for the outstanding Haskell Field and police station geotechnical reports, while advancing design work and clarifying project schedules.

Action Item:

Sandra: With regard to the Curtis canopy design, when prior requirements are complete, resolve utility conflicts, demonstrate adequate bus turning space, and secure Planning Board approval.

Action Item:

Sandra: When prior requirements are complete, share preliminary solar designs and PPA rates for Haynes and Nixon with the School Committee and ESC.

Action Item:

Sandra: Arrange a presentation to ESC on the school HVAC electrification study.

Action Item:

Sandra: Obtain preliminary NV5 cost estimates for the library and potentially DPW rooftop units.

Action Item:

Sandra: Incorporate electrification opportunities into capital planning.

Action Item:

DPW/Charlie Flynn and John Keklak: Deliver the decarbonization-study equipment data by the end of October.

8. EV Charging Data and Goodnow Resident Fixer Program

John reported on the performance of the Town's EV charging stations, using data provided by **Sandra** for Goodnow Library. Over the past year, the Goodnow stations delivered approximately 4,300 kWh of charging, compared with an original projection of 9,000 kWh annually. This generated about $1,800 in revenue against approximately $1,300 in costs, plus a 214–215 revenue share paid to Ready, the installation company, leaving a net profit of roughly $252. The profit is being used to fund a maintenance contract. **John** expected similar results at Fairbank,

with proportionally smaller figures for the Police and DPW installations. He noted that the stations are operating profitably, although usage remains below the original projection, and expressed hope that usage will increase. He also credited **Sandra** for her role in getting the installations completed.

John's second item was to publicize the Resident Fixer program at Goodnow Library, an extension of the Fixit Clinic. Following a successful first session, residents can bring broken household items to the library on Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. for help repairing them. Examples include toasters, blenders, and other small appliances. The goal is to return usable items to service, reduce waste sent to the transfer station, and keep items out of landfills.

8. Next Meeting

ESC members agreed to hold the next monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 17, 2026.

9. Conclusion of Meeting

With no further business before ESC, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15pm.

Submitted by: John Keklak