Town of Sudbury
Energy and Sustainability Committee (ESC)
Minutes – September 8, 2026

Present in person: None

Present remotely: Olga Faktorovich Allen, Chair; Venk Gopal, Vice Chair; John Keklak, Clerk; Jennifer Dudgeon, Member; Joe Martino, Member; Blair Stewart, Member.

Absent: Mary K. Farris, Member.

Also Present remotely: Dan Carty, Select Board Member; Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director; Eric Simms, Sustainability Coordinator; Lynn Puorro, Sudbury TV staff; Leslie Lowe, Sustainable Sudbury; Tom Yelton, Sustainable Sudbury; Jamie Simione, Sustainable Sudbury; Kevin LaHaise, Ellen Lederer DeFancesco, Kay Bell.

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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 July 2026 ESC Meeting

Motion/Vote:

Motion by Olga to approve minutes as amended for the meeting of July 14, 2026. Seconded by Venk.

Vote: 6–0.

2. Approval of Minutes of August 2026 ESC Meeting

Motion/Vote:

Motion by Olga to approve minutes as amended for the meeting of August 18, 2026. Seconded by John.

Vote: 6–0.

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

Olga reviewed the action items from the August meeting and confirmed that most had been completed or were in progress. **Eric** and **John** had reviewed the EV charging data, with **Eric** to present the results in his upcoming update. **Eric** had also distributed draft bylaw language for battery energy storage, which the committee would discuss later in the meeting. **Jen** and **Blair** had worked on revising the committee's prioritization criteria, also scheduled for discussion. Sustainable Sudbury had submitted its written funding proposal for MassEnergize Community Connections, which **Olga** had circulated to the committee.

The committee also revisited the mission and purpose statements. **Olga** had received feedback from **Blair** and **John** but was still awaiting input from the other members. She will recirculate the draft and asked each member either to provide comments/track changes or explicitly confirm that they have no further comments. This is particularly important because **Olga** and **Venk** are scheduled to provide an update to the Select Board on October 13, and **Olga** would like to present updated mission-statement language at that meeting.

Venk asked whether the committee needed to formally vote on the mission statement before the Select Board presentation. **Olga** explained that the statement would ultimately be finalized through Select Board approval; she did not believe a committee vote was required, although she would have preferred one as a way of establishing clear committee consensus. Instead, she proposed working offline after receiving the remaining feedback, revising and recirculating the statement, and reaching consensus before the October presentation. She felt the committee was close to completing the revisions and that the proposed changes appropriately reflected the committee's current priorities and what it considers important for the town.

4. Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Bylaw Discussion

Eric and **Venk** presented an overview of the effort to develop a battery energy storage systems (BESS) bylaw for Sudbury. Sudbury does not currently have a specific BESS bylaw, and the effort is being prompted in large part by new Massachusetts regulations intended to streamline municipal permitting for solar and energy-storage projects. The state has also established ambitious energy-storage goals. **Eric** and **Venk** emphasized that their work to date is exploratory rather than an advocacy effort or formal recommendation of the Energy and Sustainability Committee.

The state has provided a model BESS bylaw, which Sudbury is using as a starting point. The model addresses permitting requirements by system size, distinguishes primary, accessory, and co-located uses, and establishes standards for siting, design and construction, fire safety and emergency response, and eventual decommissioning. It divides systems into three tiers: Tier 1 for residential and small commercial systems, Tier 2 for larger commercial and stand-alone systems, and Tier 3 for large industrial or utility-scale systems. Sudbury already has Tier 1 systems, while Tier 2 projects are beginning to be considered; relatively little Tier 3 development is anticipated.

A major theme was the need to balance local protections with state requirements. Municipalities can customize the model bylaw to reflect local circumstances, but cannot deviate so far that the local regulations become excessively restrictive. The presenters noted that some Massachusetts communities have attempted temporary moratoriums on battery storage, but these efforts have generally been struck down. **Venk** also emphasized the state's aggressive storage goals and the

limits imposed on municipalities' ability to prohibit these installations. Consequently, the goal is to establish reasonable local guidelines rather than attempt to prevent deployment.

The discussion focused particularly on Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems. The fire and building departments believe that Tier 1 installations are already reasonably well covered by existing NFPA standards and Massachusetts fire codes, while larger systems warrant additional municipal scrutiny. The town currently relies on the Fire and Building Departments for initial review and permitting, and the Fire Department has developed considerable expertise in the applicable NFPA requirements.

Water protection emerged as an especially important Sudbury-specific concern. Because Sudbury relies essentially entirely on wells and groundwater for its water supply, the consequences of a serious battery incident—including fire-fighting runoff or other contamination—could be significant. The Water District has therefore been engaged in the process, and **Eric** reported that its commissioners were very interested and planned to provide additional comments. One potential provision under discussion was prohibiting commercial-scale storage in residential Water Resource Protection Districts 1 and 2. The presenters noted that state environmental regulations already provide some protections, so the question for Sudbury is what additional local protections may still be appropriate.

Other possible provisions include an appropriate fee structure and financial provisions to address consequences of an incident. The Fire Department suggested that the bylaw could provide funds to replace emergency equipment if it were contaminated while responding to a battery-storage incident. The group also wants to engage Eversource regarding the relationship between potential BESS locations and the electrical distribution system. **Venk** proposed working proactively with Eversource's five-year distribution-planning process and its hosting-capacity maps. This could allow the town to identify likely Tier 2/3 locations in advance and determine whether any conflict with wells, conservation areas, or other local constraints before a developer begins the permitting process.

There was also discussion about protecting residential adoption. **Olga** asked whether the proposed bylaw would impose additional burdens on typical residential systems, which **Venk** said are generally below 50 kWh. He explained that the current focus is on larger Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems because Tier 1 installations are already handled effectively through the existing Fire, Building, and solar-permitting processes. The committee nevertheless agreed that it should monitor any future requirements to ensure that the bylaw does not unnecessarily complicate or discourage residential battery adoption.

The committee also considered how much land in Sudbury could actually accommodate Tier 2 systems under the proposed zoning approach. **Olga** pointed out that Sudbury has relatively little industrial land and substantial conservation land and residential development. The group did not yet have an answer regarding the amount of land that would qualify for Tier 2 by-right deployment, and agreed that this was an issue for further discussion with the Planning Board.

Several questions concerned governance and responsibility for developing the bylaw. **Eric** clarified that there was not yet a Sudbury-specific draft; the DOER model bylaw was being circulated to stakeholders for initial review. The intention was to collect feedback, have the Planning Board develop the actual local language, and then circulate the draft again for stakeholder review, with a target of having a solid draft by January.

The committee's role was discussed as well. **Olga** concluded that because zoning will be the primary mechanism for regulating BESS, the Planning Board should ultimately lead the bylaw effort, rather than the Energy and Sustainability Committee. The ESC could facilitate information gathering and, once its members have reached a position, provide a position letter.

Finally, the committee was encouraged to read the background materials and submit questions so that it could eventually develop an informed recommendation. **Olga** suggested that the committee should go beyond simply stating a position and also articulate the opportunity and value of battery storage for Sudbury, including its potential contribution to resilience and energy independence. The goal is to be proactive rather than reactive as deployment expands.

Next steps: continue gathering stakeholder feedback; engage the Board of Health and Conservation Commission as well as other relevant stakeholders; explore water-resource and zoning constraints; pursue discussions with Eversource; and have Planning use the collected information to develop the Sudbury-specific bylaw. The stated goal was to consolidate stakeholder feedback over the next month or two, complete the bylaw by the end of the year or January at the latest, and position it for consideration at the Spring Town Meeting.

5. ESC Prioritization Criteria Discussion

Blair presented a revised rubric for evaluating requests for funding from the Sudbury Solar Revolving Fund, developed with **Jen**. The proposed framework builds on the committee's existing criteria while making the evaluation more structured, transparent, and repeatable. **Blair** suggested separating the initial gate test into two simple pass/fail determinations: whether a proposal meets the applicable statutory requirements and whether it aligns with the committee's mission. Proposals that pass the gates would then be scored from 1–5 against several weighted criteria, with "anchor scores" describing what a low, medium, or high score represents. The criteria discussed included greenhouse-gas or energy impact, cost-effectiveness/economic value, ability to leverage outside funding, community reach, and the effect of the project on the health and remaining resources of the revolving fund. The framework would also retain the committee's voting role rather than automatically committing funds based on the score.

A key feature of the proposed rubric is that it would not necessarily make a close call a permanent rejection. **Blair** demonstrated scenarios in which projects that would fail under the existing rubric could advance or be reconsidered under the new weighted approach. For example, an HVAC electrification project that would fail because of the existing equal weighting of criteria could come close to the threshold under the revised system, prompting further investigation into its leverage, economics, or other factors. Similarly, the proposed recurring $750 MassEnergize membership request, which would score poorly under the existing system, could be reconsidered because of its mission alignment, community engagement, and potential impact. The intent is therefore to use the rubric as a starting point for discussion and improvement of proposals rather than as a rigid one-time pass/fail mechanism.

Committee members responded very positively. **Olga** emphasized that the framework could provide a transparent, objective, and publicly accessible tool for evaluating proposals and could encourage discussion about how proposals might be strengthened. **Venk** noted that it would create an audit trail explaining how funding decisions were reached and could serve as a living framework, with the weighting and criteria adjusted over time as circumstances change. **Blair**

clarified that the basic model could remain stable while the anchor scores or other parameters could be updated as the fund and its circumstances evolve.

Sandra raised an important practical question about the requirement for applicants to quantify projected greenhouse-gas or energy reductions. She noted that facility projects, such as individual HVAC equipment replacements, may not justify the expense of detailed energy modeling, and applicants may only have equipment specifications rather than a quantified energy analysis. **Blair** explained that the proposed rubric does not require a fully quantified analysis in every case. **Olga** added that the level of supporting analysis should be proportional to the size of the funding request: a $750 request should not face the same documentation expectations as a much larger request. Applicants could instead provide reasonable estimates, explain their assumptions, and document their methodology so that the committee can evaluate projected impact consistently and transparently.

Olga asked **Blair** to share the revised rubric with the full committee and indicated that it would be placed on a future agenda for a more thorough discussion. She characterized the work as a significant advance toward the committee's goals of transparency and intentionality in its funding decisions.

Action Item:

Blair will share the revised rubric with the committee.

6. MassEnergize Community Connections upgrade for Sustainable Sudbury

The committee considered Sustainable Sudbury's request for $750 from the Solar Revolving Fund to participate in MassEnergize Community Connections' "Social Media Magic" program. **Leslie Lowe** of Sustainable Sudbury explained that the program would provide a more effective way to reach Sudbury residents with information about clean-energy technologies and opportunities, including heat pumps, heat-pump water heaters and dryers, solar, induction cooking, and electric vehicles. She cited early results from Newton, where participation in the program was followed by a substantial increase in social-media reach and engagement. Sustainable Sudbury currently relies primarily on individual Facebook posts, its website, and twice-yearly newsletters, and **Leslie** said that she, Jamie Simione, and Tom Yelton were prepared to devote additional effort to expanding this outreach. She also emphasized the value of having the program supported by the town and viewed Sustainable Sudbury as the community-facing component of the committee's clean-energy mission.

Before voting, **John** raised a concern about the possibility that publicly funded social-media outreach could inadvertently be used to advocate for voters to support or oppose a particular ballot question or other political position, similar to concerns that had arisen previously regarding yard signs. **Leslie** stated that Sustainable Sudbury does not engage in such political advocacy and noted its 501(c)(3) status. **Olga** agreed that the funded content must be strictly educational and cannot direct voters how to vote or what to support at Town Meeting or on a ballot. She noted that educational outreach concerning clean energy, energy efficiency, and

potential cost savings is consistent with both the committee's mission and the original purpose of the Solar Revolving Fund.

Joe then raised a broader question about whether the committee had clear legal authority to use the fund for this particular purpose. He suggested either tabling the matter or taking a contingent vote subject to review by Town Counsel. **Olga** agreed that a contingent vote was the prudent approach. The committee subsequently voted unanimously to fund the $750 Social Media Magic participation for Sustainable Sudbury contingent upon Town Counsel confirming that the expenditure is an appropriate use of the Solar Revolving Fund. **Olga** took responsibility for obtaining that confirmation and reporting the result back to the committee and to **Leslie** and Jamie.

Action Item:

Olga will obtain Town Counsel's opinion whether ESC has the legal authority to use funds from the Solar Revolving Fund for this purpose.

7. Sustainability Coordinator and Combined Facilities Director Updates

The committee did not have time for the Sustainability Coordinator and Combined Facilities Director updates because of the extended discussion of the battery energy storage bylaw. Olga asked **Sandra** and **Eric** to provide written updates instead. These updates will be included in the meeting minutes and posted as part of the public record.

Action Item:

Eric and Sandra will each provide by email a bulleted list of updates that will be included with the meeting minutes.

8. Next Meeting

ESC members agreed to hold the next monthly meeting on Monday, October 5, 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

The following was received following the meeting in response to the action item for the Combined Facilities Director to provide updates in an email:

From Duran, Sandra <DuranS@sudbury.ma.us> Reply | Reply All | Forward | Archive | Junk | Delete | More

To Energy and Sustainability Green Ribbon Committee <energy@sudbury.ma.us> 9/8/26, 18:59

Subject **ESC Combined Facility Director Updates**

Hi all –
I don' t have a lot to report at this time.

- All canopies. Geotech. We have not received the reports back from the engineers. Many engineering firms are just finishing up their summer projects with school construction. We expect to have a draft report in the next few weeks.
- Nixon and Haynes....Solect is reviewing the drawings and intend to provide options for a PPA and purchase in the coming weeks.

Have a great night!
Sandra

Sandra R. Duran
Combined Facility Director
Town ADA Coordinator
275 Old Lancaster Road
Sudbury, MA 01776
duranS@sudbury.ma.us
978-405-4753 (cell)
978-440-5466 (office)

The following was received following the meeting in response to the action item for the Sustainability Coordinator to provide updates in an email:

Sustainability Project Updates

10.5.26

Eric Simms – Sustainability Coordinator

<u>Current Projects</u>

Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) / Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) Update

- **Continuing to work with Weston and Sampson (W&S) on the deliverables for both products**
- **Currently working to manage the Core Team review and provide feedback on the lists of included assets and the draft HMP chapters**
- **Contract was amended to include an additional $10K from the Solar Revolving Fund for out-of-scope work to include regional inland flooding model data from BSC Group Inc., and a no-cost extension request has been made through at least December 2026**
- **W&S will provide CCVA draft results and adaptation actions by late October, and present final findings and strategies by early November**
- **Will finalize the hazard-related HMP chapters following completion of the CCVA, and intend to submit the draft HMP to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for approval by the end of November**

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program 2.0 Pilot Project

- **Have been working with Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) since late 2025 to develop the Climate Resilience Coaching Program based on a $50K grant from MVP as part of the 2.0 process**
- **Four pilot coaches (residents) were trained via several workshops in Spring 2026 and piloted the coaching and reporting materials with 2-3 single-family home property owners during late Summer / early Fall 2026**
- **Grant included $10K for project manager that has been applied to offset the Sustainability Coordinator position salary**
- **Planning to regroup with the pilot coaches mid-October to finalize the coaching materials and process based on feedback from the coaches from field testing efforts**
- **Exploring with MAPC how to best develop a web presence for the program and digitize the coaching materials**
- **Expect the grant to be wrapped up late 2026 / early 2027**

DOER Green Communities Program

- **Recently completed final reporting to close out current competitive grant award – had received $30K to put towards the purchase of two electric vehicles for the fleet**
- **$15K of the award was used to purchase an EV for the Facilities Director**
- **Other vehicle replacements were researched for the remaining $15K (Building, Health, Conservation) but EV or hybrid options were deemed not to meet the performance needs of the vehicles so the remaining $15K was forfeited**
- **Would like to plan/track this more closely moving forward with capital planning process and budgeting**
- **Currently working to compile Sudbury municipal energy use data for the required annual reporting required by the Green Communities program - due in early December 2026**

DOER Climate Leaders Community certification (Green Communities)

- **Finalizing building data to turn it over to consultant (Power Options) to develop the required Decarbonization Roadmap**
- **Reached out to Wayland to get copies of some of their successful application content for comparison**
- **Currently planning to submit application to DOER in time for the December 2026 deadline**

Electric School Bus Advisory Services

- **Work over the past several months to secure an opportunity for free technical assistance (estimated $50K value) through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (CEC) explore the feasibility of incorporating electric school buses into the SPS/LSRSD shared fleet**
- **Both school districts have agreed to participate and sign a joint letter of commitment to participate in the project, which will result in a non-binding electrification roadmap for the schools**
- **As Sustainability Coordinator, Eric Simms will serve as the project liaison between the schools, the current bus fleet provider (First Student), and Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC, the consultant contracted by Mass CEC to perform the study)**

- **Efforts are underway to secure current fleet inventory and operational data from First Student, and the project is expected to take approximately six months to complete (Spring 2027)**

DEP Regional Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) Hosting grant (solid waste reduction)

- **Successfully secured a 3-year grant from MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for Sudbury to host a regional Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) to assist municipalities to "... increase recycling, composting, and reuse; reduce the toxicity of the waste stream; and foster regional collaboration and innovative approached to waste reduction."**
- **The MAC is a full-time Sudbury employee and works in Sudbury at least one day each week (currently Mondays) but serves 41 communities in the Metro West region and reports to DEP**
- **DEP reimburses Sudbury for all expenses related to hosting the position (salary, benefits, travel, overhead)**
- **Jess Wozniak was hired and started in the role in late September**
- **As a regional host community, Sudbury will have additional access to the MAC position and intend to take advantage of MAC insights and resources to work towards developing a solid waste strategic/master plan for the Town**
- **Related to that, the Sustainability Coordinator met with the DPW Director and staff on site in September to better understand the operational advantages and constraints at the Transfer Station**

Energy and Sustainability Committee

- **Working to finalize a Sustainability Project Tracker spreadsheet, including potential funding resources**
- **Working to help review the status of the Solar Revolving Fund and define criteria for requests for funds**
- **Working to review data regarding the use and financial information for municipal EV charging stations – have received some data from Facilities and am coordinating with John Keklak to analyze and report data**

Solar and Battery Storage Bylaws

- **Continuing work with ESC (Venk Gopal) and the Planning Department to develop a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) bylaw to Town Meeting for adoption**
- **Commonwealth has released new regulations for streamlining municipal permitting for solar arrays and battery storage to support achieving State renewable energy goals, including many 'by right' scenarios**
- **Have been meeting with key stakeholders for input on a BESS bylaw using a model bylaw developed by DOER as a baseline – have already met with Fire, Building, Planning and the Water District – scheduled to mee with the Conservation Commission and Board of Health in October**
- **Plan to work with Planning Department to have a final draft in place by January for a warrant article for 2027 Town Meeting**
- **Also planning to review the existing Sudbury zoning bylaw language re: solar permitting for any possible updates**

Community Outreach

- **Continuing to coordinate with Sustainable Sudbury and Mass Energize to support efforts related to the plugIN project, which supports webinars and events for residents and property owners in a handful of MA communities to promote decarbonization opportunities – recent webinars topics have included Heat Pumps 101, Heat Pump Hot Water Heaters, Induction Cooking, Residential Solar, Electric Vehicles, and Energy Bill Basics – this program will end in late 2026 but opportunities are being sought for additional funding**
- **The Sustainability Coordinator and John Keklak (ESC) will be participating in an episode of Global Village, a Sudbury TV program, on October 8th to discuss rising energy costs and the potential value of property owners considering residential renewable energy (primarily solar)**
- **The Sustainability Coordinator has been participating with a number of other municipalities to investigate the feasibility of a coordinated solar energy campaign, including the development of solar bulk purchasing program RFQ that could be used by participating towns to offer vetted, cost-competitive, streamlined options for residents to procure residential solar – the intent is to build upon the previously successful Solarize Massachusetts campaign that no longer exists**

Sustainability web content

- **Continuing work to develop a web presence for Sustainability on the Town website**
- **Have been working with a volunteer, Sam Pak, to develop a content framework for the pages**
- **Intending to have a draft to share with the Committee soon for feedback**
- **The Town is expected to switch over to a new website platform in early 2027 (Civic Plus) which should improve site layout, navigation, and aesthetics**

SuAsCo Climate Collaborative

- **Continuing to serve as an Advisory Committee member to this regional MVP-funded project that includes Sudbury and 35 other municipalities that fall within the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord (SuAsCo) rivers watershed system**
- **The project has hired a consultant, BSC Group, to conduct a watershed-scale climate change vulnerability assessment (CCVA) to identify critical assets and collaborative opportunities with a regional focus – the CCVA is starting now and scheduled to be completed by mid-2027.**
- **Sudbury is well-positioned to contribute using our own anticipated CCVA results, which will already include inland flooding data from the BSC Group**

Pursuing External Grant Funding and Other Resources

- **Working to position Sudbury to better leverage funding opportunities and resources for capital building projects and fleet replacement, and other programs**
- **Continue to participate in the capital planning process with Town leadership, Department heads, and the Schools to identify opportunities to match needs with resources**
- **Some key resources are provided below, and a more comprehensive list is being created for the Sustainability Project Tracker spreadsheet :**
  - **Annual Green Communities grants ($225K / $500K)**
  - **Green Communities Regional School District Grants (limited time)**
  - **Green Communities Climate Leaders funding ($1M+)**
  - **MVP Program grants**

- **Mass Clean Energy Center (CEC) grants**
- **Utility-based resources (National Grid / Eversource)**
- **MSBA grants**
- **Other State agencies**
- **Existing 'Energy Saving Performance Contract' with Ameresco**

· **Sending out a memo this week to Department heads with a reminder about the new Zero-Emission Vehicle First Policy and the updated Sustainable Purchasing Policy as they actively develop their capital requests and operations budgets for FY28**

· **Have shared the Green Communities Regional School District Grant opportunity several times with L-S leadership and L-S School Committee with the hope of identifying qualifying projects/needs – this funding source is expected to end in early 2027 based on remaining funds**

· **Met with L-S leadership and Facilities Director in September to assess their high-priority need to replace over 300 heat pump units over the next 5 years – researched potential funding sources through the State including the Green Communities program, but replacing existing heat pumps does not qualify (funds are focused on decarbonization of fossil fuel systems) – also reached out to Eversource/National Grid to investigate any funding/resources and am currently assessing their feedback with L-S to see if any incentives, no- or low-interest financing, or technical assistance might be applicable**

Completed

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program Action Grant – 'Locally Grown Sudbury'

· **Completed grant tasks and reporting to the MVP Program and to the Sudbury Foundation – July/August 2026**

· **Future fate of the event is uncertain at this point – pilot efforts supported by the grant emphasized the considerable resources and management required to offer a**

farmers market on a regular basis, which it typically done by a community-based organization and not directly by a municipality

Established a new Sudbury 'Zero-Emissions Vehicle First Policy'

- **Facilitated stakeholder consideration and adoption of a new policy drafted by the Commonwealth that requires municipalities to use a selection process for new and replacement vehicles that considers electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles first before internal combustion engine vehicles.**
- **The policy incorporates the sustainability goals and values of the Town into a prescriptive pathway for the municipal fleet, and also serves as a requirement for the Town to be eligible to apply for Climate Leaders Community certification from the MA DOER Green Communities Program.**

Established a new Sudbury 'Sustainable Purchasing Policy'

- **Replaced the existing 1996 Sudbury 'Buy Recycled' policy with a new one – May 2026**
- **The updated policy also served to meet State requirements for eligibility for certain grant opportunities (e.g., MA DEP 'Recycling Dividends Program' and other DEP waste-related opportunities)**