

NRC Participates in “Sustainable Wellesley” Climate Protection Event on Oct. 9, 2010

NRC Director Janet Bowser and NRC Chairman Neal Seaborn worked with the Sustainable Wellesley Organization and the Municipal Light Plant to organize this event that focused on educating residents about climate protection and simple energy conservation measures that they can make at home. At the event, the NRC encouraged residents to join the NRC's Green Wellesley Campaign by pledging to live a more sustainable lifestyle and distributed information on sustainability. A network of organizations interested in climate protection evolved from this event and it is the NRC's goal to further develop its Green Wellesley Campaign by collaborating with these other organizations. This event was one of thousands held across the world as a part of the international climate campaign 350.org founded by Bill McKibben in recognition of the 350 parts-per-million carbon dioxide limit that is being recommended of for the health of the planet.

NRC Supports Town-Wide Sustainable Energy Plan

The NRC continues to support the Green Ribbon Study Committee's Sustainable Energy Plan through implementation of the NRC's Green Wellesley Campaign. Recognizing the importance of developing and adopting local sustainable practices to reduce energy use and the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions, the 2008 Annual Town Meeting commissioned the Green Ribbon Study Committee to develop a sustainable energy plan for the Town that identifies policies and actions that will increase energy conservation and efficiency, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions at both the public and private levels. Based on the Committee's preliminary work, the 2009 Town Meeting set a goal to reduce emissions to 10% below 2007 levels by 2013. In order to reach this target at least 440,500 tons of CO₂ must be eliminated from the Town's emissions over the next four years. Ms. Gibson stated that while this goal may appear to be relatively modest, in the context of increasing energy usage and emissions, it will require the concerted efforts of the Town's residents, businesses, institutions and municipal government to attain. The Town's Sustainable Energy Plan outlines measures that the Town has already undertaken and outlines actions that the Town is encouraged to take in order to reach the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target by 2013. While the overall goal is 10%, the Plan established a target reduction in overall municipal energy use of 20% by 2010. The recommended actions in the plan include increasing energy efficiency and conservation in buildings and in infrastructure, reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing vehicle fuel efficiency, improving management of solid waste, and purchasing electricity from renewable resources. The next step, as approved by Town Meeting in April 2010, included prioritization and evaluation of the measures proposed in the plan and the creation of a Town Sustainable Energy Committee to work together with Town Departments and Boards, such as the NRC. One of the key components of the plan is an education and outreach campaign that will strive to build general awareness and sustain program support, as well as using traditional media tools and creating a committee to promote awareness. The NRC looks forward to continuing to work with this Committee to promote educational awareness on natural resource protection and sustainable programs and practices, such as sustainable ecological practices and land management practices to adapt to and reduce CO₂ emissions, to protect bio-diversity, to adopt green practices and operations that will reduce the Town's carbon footprint and to look at water consumption and water quality issues as they impact sustainable practices.

The NRC's “Green Wellesley Campaign” Promotes Town-Wide Sustainable Practices and Green Building Design and LEED Standards

The NRC is committed to working with all Town Officials, departments and residents to create a sustainable community. In FY11, the NRC continued to educate residents about what they can do to make their homes and lifestyles more environmentally friendly and advocated for the construction of “Green” municipal buildings in collaboration with the “SMART” environmental citizen’s organization. NRC Members and the NRC Director were active in advocating for maximizing green building design elements in the new High School Project.

The NRC adopted the following statement urging the Town to support Green Building and “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design” (LEED) Standards for the design and construction of the new High School:

“The Natural Resources Commission strongly recommends that the Town of Wellesley take action to seriously address the very real threats posed to our Town and our world by global warming. Towards this end, the NRC urges Town officials to take all steps available to improve our energy efficiency and reduce our carbon emissions including the adoption of Green Building LEED Standards in the design of the renovation and expansion of the High School. Taking action now will improve our quality of life, save money, and make our Town a healthier, cleaner place to live and set a good example for future generations.”