



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Katie Griffith, Chair

Raina McManus, Vice Chair

Regina LaRocque

Laura Robert

Nancy Braun

Brandon Schmitt, Director

Telephone: 781.431.1019, Ext. 2298

Website: www.wellesleyma.gov/NRC

Wellesley Natural Resources Commission Declaration of Climate Emergency

WHEREAS, it is the consensus of world climate scientists that less than 12 years remain for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree of additional warming will significantly worsen the risk of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people.

WHEREAS, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that we need to cut global greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and entirely by 2040 to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change¹.

WHEREAS, carbon dioxide emissions from U.S. fossil fuel combustion rose by 2.7% in 2018, the second largest annual increase since 2000².

WHEREAS, climate change poses risk to species, ecosystems, biodiversity, and the natural resources that humans rely on³.

WHEREAS, climate change, combined with other stressors, is overwhelming the capacity of ecosystems to buffer the impacts from extreme events like fires, floods, and storms⁴.

WHEREAS, timing of critical biological events, such as spring bud burst, emergence from overwintering, and the start of migrations, has shifted, leading to important impacts on species and habitats⁵.

WHEREAS, landscapes and seascapes are changing rapidly, and species, including many iconic species, may disappear from regions where they have been prevalent or become extinct, altering some regions so much that their mix of plant and animal life will become almost unrecognizable⁶.

WHEREAS, 11,000 scientists and hundreds of governments of various sizes around the world, including New York City and the European Union, have stated clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency.

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5C <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

² <https://rhg.com/research/final-us-emissions-estimates-for-2018/>

³ Fourth National Climate Assessment; <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/7/>

⁴ Fourth National Climate Assessment; <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/7/>

⁵ Fourth National Climate Assessment; <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/7/>

⁶ Fourth National Climate Assessment; <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/7/>

WHEREAS, the primary cause of global warming is human activity, most significantly the burning of fossil fuels to drive cars, generate electricity, and run our homes and businesses.

WHEREAS, Massachusetts is already experiencing the effects of climate change in rising sea levels, plummeting bird and insect populations, and loss of biodiversity.

WHEREAS, the Town of Wellesley is already experiencing the detrimental effects of climate change from invasive species, increased heavy rainfall events, flooding, prolonged drought in the summer, loss of trees, and the expenditure of resources to prepare for and counter those effects.

WHEREAS, declaring that the climate crisis is an environmental emergency is crucial to generate public awareness and is a compelling way to engage our community and elected officials around the need to shift into climate emergency mode;

RESOLVED, the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission affirms that the climate crisis is an environmental emergency.

RESOLVED, the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission commits to educate the public and Town Government about the environmental impacts of climate change, to include the climate emergency as an agenda item at every Commission meeting, and to explicitly consider the climate emergency in all its decision-making.

Signed on 12-19-2019,

Katie Griffith
Raina McManus
Regina LaRocque
Laura Robert
Nancy Braun