

## 2021-10-21 NAACP-BCB Environmental & Climate Justice committee

Attendance: Jane Winn, Al Blake, Sue Kelly, Rob Wisenberger, Linda Kelley

- Looking for new members, thank you all for coming tonight! (and a new co-chair) - suggestion possibly a young person from Roots Rising?
- **Roots Rising** - (Sue Kelly presented) employs teens to work on farms and provide food, runs the Downtown Pittsfield Farmers Market, and is launching an urban farm! In Roots Rising teens learn about food justice, budgeting, self-care, and resume building. Youth crews are diverse. Design work to be open, provide gear and clothing, and pay the youth. Active alumni group. Looking at a site right now for their urban farm. It is a little outside of the West Side, but close. Check out [rootsrising.org](https://rootsrising.org). Suggested that NAACP-BCB have Roots Rising speak at our full NAACP-BCB monthly meeting. And could we put a link to Roots Rising on the ECJ part of the NAACP-BCB website?
- Update on the **Peaking Power Plants** (Jane Winn presented)

<https://nofrackedgasbulletins.wordpress.com/put-peakers-in-the-past/>

[Sign the Petition](#) to Put Peakers in the Past

Update on the Put Peakers in the Past campaign to transition the 3 dirty, fossil-fueled electric generating plants that only run during peak demand to clean alternatives like solar plus storage. We are part of a coalition of 25 organizations working on this.

Our Peaking Power Coalition has had very productive talks with the owner/operator of the two very old (50+ and 60+ year old) power plants in Pittsfield and Lee. They actually own a third facility in West Springfield that will also be transitioned. They are looking at solar (in West Springfield) and storage at all 3 locations. They plan to make the transition by 2023.

Last month we reported that after months of writing to the owners of Pittsfield Generating, the big, 3-stack facility on Merrill Road, and holding weekly protests about this facility, and getting our legislators and local Boards of Health to write to the facility - they have finally asked us for a meeting. They refused to meet with the whole coalition, or legislators, or town officials (they claimed they were already talking with them - but not so much.)

The conversation went better than we expected. (We had low expectations.) They started with the idea that they were a necessary bridge as backup generation for peak days. We said no, demand reduction and renewables have reduced the need and new regulations are going to force greenhouse gas emissions down. They now have to buy credits for every ton of greenhouse gas they emit. Their next idea of reducing greenhouse gas emissions was to shorten their start-up time to get their turbines up to speed to actually generate electricity. We said that was not good enough. They started to

suggest transitioning to hydrogen or renewable gas - but as we shook our heads, they realized that was not going to cut it. We put them in touch with [Clean Energy Group](#) and [Strategen](#) for help on making the transition, and they are talking with them. We plan to get back in touch and point out that the other facilities are making the transition by 2023. What is their timeline?

Another piece of our strategy is, they have an air quality permit that they are trying to renew, and we want to put pressure on the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to deny the permit renewal. More to come on this.

- **Community Eco Power** is illegally polluting our community! (Jane Winn presented) Community Eco Power is the trash incinerator out on Hubbard Ave in Pittsfield. It takes all the municipal solid waste from Pittsfield and many other towns as well as other waste. It also supplies steam to Crane paper and Neenah Specialty Materials. Community Eco Power bought the facility in 2019 and 2 years later they are in bankruptcy, and the facility is not functioning properly. It is a huge environmental and health threat. Both the City of Pittsfield and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are aware of the problem. The City is looking for alternatives for trash disposal. DEP is taking legal action against the company. But in the meantime, it is polluting our air! They (DEP and the company) had to go through the bankruptcy court to get funds to try to repair the plant. They did those repairs last week and it made no discernable difference. What can we do about this? Al's suggestion - ARPA funds for an alternative to burning. Jane will talk with AJ & Kamaar to see if they would make the suggestion of ARPA funds to the City. Peter Marchetti is saying that trash is one of his issues, but does he know about this part of the issue? How about getting Ben Garver to fly his drone over the building, and Danny Jin to write an article for the Eagle. Make sure we stress that this directly affects children's (and adults') health.
- Better Bottle Bill - (Al Blake presented) 10 cent deposit & more kinds of containers. <https://masspirg.org/news/map/better-bottle-bill-campaign-launch>
- Williamstown
  - [Williamstown Cool Committee](#)
  - [Greylock together](#)
- Becket Green Committee (Al Blake presented) is looking at putting in wind turbine next to their municipal buildings which they have already greened. At the next zoom meeting, Becket is having Home Works & DOER give presentations. Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting and [here is the link](#).
- Event Announcement (Jane Winn): Berkshire Environmental Action Team is having Mothers Out Front for a Future of Clean Heat action webinar. These are really well-run, fast, take-action events on zoom. Description: Berkshire Environmental Action team is pleased to host an online Action Meeting with Mothers Out Front, Massachusetts on October 27th at 6:00 pm. Mothers Out Front has just launched their "Future of Clean Heat" campaign, targeting the gas utilities as they prepare their reports to show how they plan to comply with the state's mandated emissions reduction targets. This action meeting is designed to tell the local gas distribution companies in no uncertain terms that

we want clean, safe, and affordable energy. At this event, participants will learn about the issue and how they can help get postcards signed and delivered to the CEOs of Berkshire Gas, Eversource, and National Grid, then sign the petition, write and send tweets, and other social media messages, to the companies and their CEOs.

<https://tinyurl.com/BEAT-FutureOfCleanHeat>

Meeting notes submitted by Jane Winn.