



Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release

Office of the Town Manager
Town Hall, 1471 Highland Ave, Needham, MA 02492

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, December 2, 2019

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Needham Applies for Green Communities Designation

Plans to reduce energy use by 20 percent, make other changes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

NEEDHAM – Monday, December 2, 2019 – The Town of Needham has submitted an application to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to designate Needham as a “Green Community,” a designation that recognizes the Town’s efforts to lower its energy usage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and positions the Town to receive new grant funding for energy efficiency and economic development projects.

After receiving significant support from Needham residents wishing to establish the Town as a Green Community, the Select Board voted unanimously at its November 12th meeting to submit the application. The Needham School Committee also voted to support the plan.

“We are confident we will meet the requirements set forth by the state to achieve this designation,” said Needham Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. “In fact, much of the work to reduce our energy costs and cut carbon emissions is already underway. We’re very focused on sustainability in all work we do here in Needham and proud of our results.”

The Green Community Designation and Grant Program provides a road map and financial and technical assistance to municipalities that pledge to reduce municipal energy use by 20 percent over 5 years. Communities must also meet four other criteria established in the Green Communities Act, including zoning changes in designated locations for the as-of-right siting of renewable or alternative energy generating facilities, research and development facilities, or manufacturing facilities; expedited application and permitting for facilities interested in locating their facility in a designated renewable zone; purchase of fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use; and reduction in the life cycle costs of new construction (adoption of the Stretch Energy Code).

Thanks to efforts already underway, Needham is already over 40 percent of the way to its goal of reducing its energy use by 15 percent by Fiscal Year 2023. The Town has outlined quantifiable ways it will reduce its energy use by 15 percent. This work includes the LED streetlight conversion project, replacement of equipment like motors, controls and boilers in municipal and school buildings and the

purchase of energy efficient fleet vehicles. The Town is targeting an additional 5 percent through additional studies and energy reviews.

At a Select Board hearing held in October, over 100 residents packed the room in favor of the designation. The Needham Green Communities Working Group and stakeholders have worked hard over the last year to ensure that the Town can meet the ambitious goals it has developed in preparing to apply for the designation. The Town particularly appreciates the work Cecilia Simcheck of the Needham Department of Public Works and Nick Hill, an energy professional who generously donated his time and shared his expertise to help craft the final plan.

If DOER grants Needham a Green Community designation, the Town would join 240 other Green Communities and be eligible to receive an estimated designation grant of \$147,000.

Learn more about Needham's Green Communities plan [here](#).

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