

## **Project 1: Participate in and Lead the South Shore Node of 350 Massachusetts**

In September 2013, Old Ship's Green Sanctuary Team, out of concern for the rapid advance of global warming and the uneven response nationally and in the community at large, joined forces with 350MA, a growing statewide grassroots network of twelve regional chapters, managed by the Better Future Project in Cambridge, MA. The Green Sanctuary / 350MA group serves as the South Shore Node of 350MA, meeting twice monthly in the Parish House. Our narrative for **Project 2: Support the Work of Fore River Residents Against the Compressor Station (FRRACS)**, which follows, explains some national and global dimensions of our collaborative work: to prevent export of natural gas to Europe, thus reducing the incentive for fracking natural gas out of the ground.

Actions by the SS node in the last two years included working with our local State Rep. Joan Meschino on her proposed bill H.3983, an Act to Create a 2050 Roadmap to a Clean and Thriving Commonwealth. now under consideration in the MA legislature.

The most visible local dimension is Hingham Net Zero (HNZ), which grew out of the Green Sanctuary / 305MA partnership under the leadership of Old Ship's Green Sanctuary members, Turner Bledsoe and Laura Burns, in the summer of 2019. That group, now 67 strong, has already helped the town Energy Action Committee (EAC) to prepare a Warrant Article for the 2020 Hingham Town Meeting (originally scheduled for April 27, 2020, but now postponed until the COVID-19 crisis abates). The Article calls for the Town to create a Climate Action Plan to reduce carbon emissions within all its sectors, thus decreasing the Town's contribution to climate change.

Hingham's electricity is provided by the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant (HMLP). HMLP is owned and democratically controlled by the citizens of the town, making it an excellent target for community engagement towards reducing Hingham's carbon emission. In November 2017, the Hingham Light Board had voted "to take necessary steps to allow HMLP to be able to describe all of its supply as carbon-free" (Minutes of November 10, 2017). In practice, that meant the light plant would purchasing RECs (Renewable Energy Credits) to cover the emissions of the fossil fuel energy we use. On April 1, 2020, the Light Board voted to maintain that carbon-free policy for two more years. Recognizing this is a stopgap measure, the Light Board also committed to HMLP's developing a long-term plan to improve our infrastructure to be ready for a net zero carbon future. However, in a special meeting on April 15, 2020, carbon-free policy was reversed in light of the worsening COVID-19 pandemic; two of the three Board members now agreed that HMLP should generate additional funds by selling its renewable energy to address the financial uncertainty resulting from the pandemic and potentially assist customers who might have trouble paying their light bills. The reversal, of course, disappointed the twenty residents, members of HNZ, who attended the April 15th meeting to support the carbon-free policy. Green Sanctuary members Turner Bledsoe and Laura Burns continue to lead the community engagement with the light plant over its policies.

The Light Board also conferred with HNZ, represented by Green Sanctuary's Laura Burns (who formerly chaired the Board of Selectmen), about EAC/HNZ's proposed Warrant Article for Town Meeting; at issue was HMLP's concern that "if the Article, as currently designed [by HNZ], passes there will certainly be an increase in electric load for HMLP" (Light Board Minutes of January 28, 2020). HMLP further explained that "A new transmission supply source and sub-station is expected to become necessary in connection with the Hingham Net Zero effort and also for added reliability (should a catastrophic failure of a structure/s or incident take both supply lines out of service)" (Light Board

Minutes of February 27, 2020). Maintaining the HMLP's commitment to a carbon-free future is up to the citizens, and Hingham Net Zero will be advocating for climate-friendly policies going forward.

HNZ now plans several actions: to present a series of forums on how Hingham residents can live more sustainably and reduce our carbon emission and impact on climate change; to produce a cable TV show on these topics; to continue to engage the Hingham Light Plant on its efforts to address climate change; and to maintain a Facebook page and website with information for town residents. See <https://www.hinghamnetzero.org/>

HNZ scheduled its first ZOOM chat for April 23<sup>rd</sup>, co-hosted by Old Ship Green Sanctuary member Brenda Black, providing a high-level overview of electric vehicles (EV) and other low-emission vehicles on the market, including driving range and charging considerations, as well as available rebates, followed by a discussion how HNZ can best address residents' questions and concerns with respect to EVs.

It is important to note that Old Ship's Social Justice Council (SJC) voted in 2019 to support the actions of 350MA South Shore Node by regularly providing both information in the monthly newsletter and alerts about potential actions through the Social Justice Alert email distribution. In January, 2019, a Special Plate Collection raised \$496 for 350MA, and in November, 2019, the SJC provided a soup lunch to support the Forum hosted by our Green Sanctuary Committee to understand and begin to address the impact of climate change on our area and ways to further our work as a Green Sanctuary (Old Ship Church Annual Report 2019, pp. 31-33).

Our 350MA South Shore Node voted to support the concept of the Green New Deal proposed by Senator Markey and Representative Ocasio-Cortez in November 2018; its aims deserve our advocacy. In addressing the congregation on March 3, 2019, Turner Bledsoe quoted climate scientist James Hansen: "Witness is insufficient; once you know of the looming danger, action is an obligation."



Green Sanctuary / 350MA South Shore Node meets twice monthly in the Parish House.