



Newton Citizens Commission on Energy City of Newton, Massachusetts

<http://www.newtonma.gov/government/climate-and-sustainability/citizens-commission-on-energy>

Halina S. Brown, Chair

Cory Alperstein
Michael Gevelber
Stephen Grody
Philip Hanser
Asa Hopkins
Jonathan Kantar
Jon Slote
Jay Snyder
Ann Berwick (ex-officio)
Bill Ferguson (ex-officio)

Advisory Members:

Beverly Craig
James Purdy
Philip Vergragt
Puja Vohra

Summary of the meeting on April 26, 2023

Present: Asa Hopkins, Bob Persons, Cory Alperstein, Nathan Phillips, Jay Snyder, Phil Hanser, Stephen Grody, Halina Brown

Cory and Nathan presented to NCCE three proposals for action and led the discussion.

Next meeting is on May 31 at 7PM

1. *An endorsement letter for the mission of the recently approved City Council [Resolution for a Future Without Gas and with Clean Heat](#), which calls for a city-wide plan for repair and retiring the gas infrastructure; also, an endorsement for the Working Group that is being formed for that purpose ([proposed plan content drafted by AFWOG](#))*

Discussion focused on the feasibility and content of the plan, Although it would not have legal power, it would have social impact.

The main questions were: what scope should the Working Group consider and what expertise it needs and currently has among its members. The general observation was that developing the plan would be well beyond the capacity of such a group of volunteers.

Some participants emphasized the potential role for DPU, which could request such a plan from the utilities. Also, if the Working Group was designated as Intervenor, it would be able to add its voice to public input into DPU's actions and would qualify for expert support.

The outcome of the discussion was that the Working Group should develop a *framework* for such a plan rather than aim for the plan itself. NCCE will seek a volunteer among its members to serve on the Working Group.

Decision: NCCE will draft the letter. Cory Alperstein will prepare the first draft.

2. *A letter of support for ['Empowering Municipal Voices'](#) bill ([H.3137](#)) which is currently before the state legislature. The bill seeks to reduce obstacles for municipal officials, legislators and concerned citizens engaging in planning for the future of gas.*

Decision: NCCE will draft the letter. Cory Alperstein will prepare the first draft.

3. *A letter to DPU requesting a full investigation of the recent manhole explosion on Walnut Street.*

Nathan Phillips has done some initial research based on publicly available documents, which suggests that this was a significant event that may portend more such events in the future. Several ideas were also discussed about how to respond to the situations of multiple leaks in a small geographic area, such as this one. This has a potential to become a case study in responding to such situations, to be scaled up and emulated in the future.

Decision: NCCE will draft the letter. Cory Alperstein will prepare the first draft.