



Newton Citizens Commission on Energy City of Newton, Massachusetts

<http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/building/projects/energycomm/default.asp>

Halina S. Brown, Chair

Michael Gevelber
Stephen Grody
Asa Hopkins
Jonathan Kantar
Jonathan Klein
Ira Krepchin
James Purdy, Vice Chair
Puja Vohra
Ann Berwick (ex-officio)

Advisory Members:
Cory Alperstein
Edward Craddock
Brant Davis
Philip Hanser

Minutes of the Meeting of March 27, 2019

Present: Halina Brown, Michael Gevelber, Stephen Grody, Jon Kantar (JK), Jon Y Klein (JYK), Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy; Cory Alperstein, Marcia Cooper (MC), Ed Craddock, Ellie Goldberg (EG), Elaine Landis, Dan Ruben

The minutes for February 23 2019 were approved.

Agenda Items:

1. Are we ready to formally adopt the current version of CCAP?

Issues that need correction were discussed:

JYK - Passive House does not imply heat pump, both are needed.

JK - Passive House is about energy budget, not specific to building type. German Passive House is being used at the Winthrop Square Millennium development in Boston.

JYK – The recommendations need to be separable – e.g., the Green Property Tax Program REEP initiative needs explanation and the plan should include alternate ways to do the same thing, but explain why we think this is the best way to accomplish the goal. JK – but we should explain why we think the REEP initiative is particularly good, e.g., relatively low impacts on most people in Newton. JYK and point out that it is a market based mechanism.

SG – But add the nuance that the challenge is not necessarily the financial incentive, but what it is aimed to accomplish in terms of economic velocity.

MG- No fossil fuel in new buildings is good, but by when? It will be controversial to say it should be done by tomorrow, but also not too far in the future. HB – but why not start requiring it for new buildings starting tomorrow? MG - because we need city council to support this requirement. JYK - but there is a 5-year phase-in in the model we used. SG – or use wording to provide some wiggle room in how soon it must take effect.

JK – But don't provide too much wiggle room – there are two very large developments in process right now. MG – need to determine the phase-in through negotiation with the people who would be writing the new regulation.

HB - Special permit immediately, of right later

JK- For new construction Passive House and heat pump are easy to accomplish, requiring these should be a 1-year period from now. James Freas said he thought it could be included in the new zoning that is in process..

A straw vote of members was in favor of a 1-year phase-in, with half of the members for it, but MG, JYK, and SG are against 1-year phase-in.

HB – there are only about 100 new houses built per year, so a three-year phase-in has essentially the same result.

MG – All of this is important and each top priority action stands on its own.

JYK - But need the underlying financial structure to work.

JP – Adopting the plan is not the same as agreeing to implement every recommendation.

JK – Regarding underlying principles, we need to make 100% renewable a basic principle. Also, the 9 recommendations should be listed in order of their GHG efficacy.

MG – Suggest we identify the five recommendations that we most want, and keep pushing on the others later.

CA – but we shouldn't abandon recommendations that we've already identified as important.

The members decided to include the 9 top recommendations in priority order, listing the top five as recommended by MG at the top of the list.

Deb Crossley is working on language for the special permit section of the zoning relative to energy and GHG.

2. Getting on the radar screen in Newton and beyond: the City Council, executive branch, activists, general public, internet, other MA communities, etc.

3. How to have CCAP formally adopted by the City.

HB – This plan needs to go on the web, but we shouldn't rely on people finding the Energy Commission page under Public Buildings. The City's home page would be best.

JK - Shall we meet with some key people first and get their support, e.g., Ann Berwick and Deb Crossley? HB met with Susan Albright who heads ZAP; we have already got Crossley agreement to present to PFC. And we should meet with Greg Schwarz who heads Land Use.

JYK – We should use the strategy that succeeded for power choice – the Coalition for Climate Action and driving other community groups to push it. JK – and get these groups to come to meetings and push the Council to adopt it.

CA – And there is an endorsement process that needs to happen, which needs work to make it happen.

JP – HB should frame the “ask” we want from City Council.

CA – At the meeting on the MAPC plan, the mayor tried to prepare people for getting less than they want.

HB - We also need to clarify the difference between the two plans.

MC – We should explain how CCAP differs from the MAPC/City plan.

EG - MAPC uses vague language “explore”, etc., which is not accountable. The CCAP is all about accountability. This is essential.

MC - The CCAP document is too long to stand on its own – need to use a presentation to convey it. CA – but there needs to be a formal submission to the City. The CCAP gets to the necessary outcome and explains how to get there. We have to do this!

MG – This is the point that the other organizations need to push for.

SG – There is really one point: need to buy in to the IPCC goal. When that is accepted, here is how you get there.

JYK – In summary: there is an IPCC goal and the CCAP is the answer to how to get there. The MAPC plan doesn't do this.

DR – Should mention what other cities are doing, which helps to give it more legitimacy.

JYK – is there another plan that shows how to get to the goal? JP – The official Boston plan (“Carbon Free Boston”) does much the same thing as ours. DR – it hasn't been adopted by Boston City Council yet.

HB – We should disseminate the CCAP to other communities. JP – MCAN serves this function and can help with dissemination.

SG – We should also talk to our state legislators, e.g. Kay Kahn, and get their help.

MC – There will always be hold-outs on the Council, but that doesn't prevent the Council as a whole from adopting it.

The presentation of the CCAP was discussed – how long should it be?

MC – Also, enlist students.

CA - 350MA has organized people by City Ward, and we are getting ready to hold a meeting of the coalition.

Mothers Out Front has a steering committee; we should ask them to endorse, and similarly for the Coalition and other groups.

SG – For the Council committees, assume 3 minutes per slide, a total of 20 minutes of presentation, plus 10 minutes of Q&A.

SG – Also NewTV.

JP - Get the City to print hard copies for the Council Committees.

SG – Some slight modifications to the document; prepare a final draft in two days from today. Then get it put on the Newton website.

JK – Also set up meetings with Deb and others who can help.

HB – Looking ahead, we need to push for implementation: set up subgroups for each topic.

HB – What about the appropriation process to fund key recommendations?

EG – These things get docketed and voted on by council. don't need to go through the overall budget process. Mayor has discretion if a suitable category is in the city budget. CA – We can't afford to wait a year for the budgeting process to run its course.

JYK – We decided at the library to put the cost issue down the road, after we have sold the plan.

EG – Need to prepare job descriptions for the staff positions needed to implement the plan. Legal is also going to be involved.

JP – The CCAP will ultimately be a docketed resolution for City Council action.

JYK - We should consult some people on how to do this – e.g., former councilor, perhaps Brook Lipsett.

JK - Consult with Ann Berwick and Deb Crossley on how to get it adopted, how it has the most impact.
HB will consult both of them.

MG – How should we explain the difference in the two plans? JP – just be diplomatic, explain how the CCAP informs the implementation of the MAPC plan

JYK - Let’s consult some people on how to do this – former councilor, Brook Lipsett

JK - Consult with Ann on how to get it adopted, how it will have the most impact

MG – The MAPC plan is the official plan of the City at this point. How explain the difference in the two plans? CA – the MAPC plan is going to be submitted to the City Council.

HB – Susan Albright was surprised to hear that the MAPC didn’t have numerical goals.

JP – Just be diplomatic, explain how the CCAP informs the implementation of the MAPC plan.

JK – Claire Rundelli can help with getting the CCAP onto the City website.

There was discussion about how to get the NCCE materials up onto the web page. JP said he would get this done.

SG – We need to decide what should we discuss with the utilities. A meeting with Eversource is coming up. Puja is picking up this thread. SG will pursue this with her.

HB – We should keep Puja and Asa on task to proceed with the Green Ribbon Commission.

EC – And work to promote the residential electrification.

SG – are EV and home electrification separate initiatives? Yes. Need to organize ourselves to work with both NGrid and Eversource, and they have internal specialization for various sectors. May be able to get them to support a City energy concierge. Meeting with Eversource on April 11 from 10 to 4.

Discussion of agenda items 4 and 5 was deferred.

4. Organizing ourselves:

- Subgroups around specific topics? For example, CCAP recommendations (we have 9 priority recommendations and 9 NCCE members); types of challenges (political, financial, technical, managerial, interfacing with Green Newton, NCCA, the utilities, etc.)
- Other organizing principles?

5. Leaders for specific implementation steps: green ribbon commission, energy concierge, financial incentives, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Purdy

