



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 May 22, 2019

Present: Halina Brown, Michael Gevelber, Stephen Grody, Asa Hopkins, Jon Kantar (JK), Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy, Puja Vohra; Cory Alperstein, Ed Craddock, Phil Hanser

The minutes for April 24 2019 were approved.

Agenda Items:

Progress on implementation of the CCAP

1. MOU with utilities

Puja has been working with Bill Ferguson and Ann Berwick to develop a list of bullet points for key items in the City's partnership with the utilities. Phil proposed that we should take a more collaborative approach with utilities and need to create an official position for liaison with them. Puja recommended that we get the concept for the agreement set up and phase in city participation. A fund needs to be set up to hold money saved, rebates received, etc.

Funding the energy concierge position is still unresolved, apparently for budget reasons. Jon noted that the fund should be used to leverage future projects, so don't use it for the concierge position. Cory noted that the resolution passed unanimously by the City Council was to set up the concierge office. The concierge position would report to Bill and/or Ann. It could be Ann's new project now that Newton Power Choice is up and running.

The concierge job description should be part of the MOU because the utilities would be paying for part or all of it.

Puja is working with Bill Ferguson on the MOU, but doesn't need any more input now. There is a meeting scheduled for next week with Halina, Bill, Puja, and Mark Rooney from Eversource. We need to assess the proposed quantitative goals of the agreement.

Phil expressed some concern about maintaining independence from the utilities – we want their contribution but not their control.

Jon recommended that we should get the utilities to fund specific expenditures.

Halina posed the question of how to keep independence while getting funding from the utilities. Phil likened it to a faculty position funded by outside source.

Puja noted that the concierge position should include project management, not just technical information and outreach.

Jon cautioned against filling the position with a self-identified expert who lacks the relevant experience.

Phil suggested that we should check with other cities that have such a position before we finalize its scope of work. For example, Cambridge has two people doing outreach in their office of sustainability. Northampton created such a position with NGrid financing. Other examples are Portland and Santa Monica.

Cory stated that it needs to be about building partnerships with people in the community.

Puja will send the proposed job description to NCCE members for review.

It may be a month before we get funding numbers from the utilities

Phil said he would like to see more specific criteria to measure and evaluate progress under the MOU. Halina suggested that Phil should talk directly to Ann and the utilities about this.

2. Communication with City Council

Halina said it is remarkable that four councilors joined in presenting the resolution to establish an energy concierge.

We need to identify what CCAP issues need council action.

Phil recommended that we need to look to the Zoning and Planning committee for leadership on zoning issues, also the planning department – James Freas and Jennifer Caira.

Halina asked that while she is away for most of June, members should continue contact with individual councilors. (She will meet with Vicky Danberg next week.)

- talk to the few that she didn't talk with
- continue with Albright et al
- meet with James Freas and Planning Director Barney Heath
- Jon Kantar volunteered to meet with Councilors Rice and Gentile.

3. Presentations

We should provide a technical package on the CCAP for the Zoning and Planning Committee and the Public Facilities Committee. Explain the two climate action plans, and focus on things that need to be done, and identify upcoming work in the committees relevant to the CCAP.

Cory suggested that we invite people to the upcoming presentations on Passive House by Nick Falcoff (Auburndale Builders) on 6/12 and 6/27.

4. Coordination with Other Communities

Halina reported that Ann Berwick thinks it's a good idea to work with other communities to explore research and specialization. Phil suggested that this should include talking about how they address the various market segments in their communities, e.g., low income single household head families; new adopters, etc.

Cory suggested that MassEnergize (based in Wayland) has things to share.

Jim noted that some of the Eversource people who participated in our meeting seem to understand marketing to various segments and could be resources for us.

5. Electric Vehicles

Halina will meet with Nicole Friedman.

Cory met with GreenSpot, a company that does EV sharing and charging, and has a fleet of EVs for use in a manner similar to Zipcar.

Jim proposed that we need the ability to charge EVs for every tenant in multifamily residential development, such as Northland's Needham Street project. [Note: Northland subsequently said it is committed to providing this.]

Stephen noted that there are automated systems that could provide parking and EV charging for large developments. He also suggested that we should create Newton-specific web page on EVs.

Phil suggested that we create a database on EVs.

Cory has talked with Green Energy Consumers Alliance about EV promotion. Belmont has a volunteer program to do outreach on EVs.

6. REEP – nothing to report.

7. There is an email conversation about heat pumps – Asa Hopkins, Nick Falcoff. We need to capture this knowledge and get the concierge to provide it. Like a consumer help desk.

PH – the consumer service person who answers incoming questions is the smaller part of the concierge job; outreach is the larger portion. We should create a node with connections to sources of specialized knowledge.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Purdy