

Newton Citizens Commission on Energy
City of Newton

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



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Halina Brown (Chair), Stephen Grody, Michael Gevelber,
Jonathan Kantar, Jon Klein, Ira Krepchin, James Purdy (Vice Chair), Puja Vohra,
Ann Berwick (*ex-officio*)

Advisory Members:

Cory Alperstein, Fred Brustman, Edward Craddock, Brant Davis,
Philip Hanser, Asa Hopkins

Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

Minutes of the Meeting of November 28, 2018

Present: Halina Brown, Ira Krepchin, Stephen Grody, Michael Gevelber, Jim Purdy, Jon Kantar (JK), Jon Y. Klein (JYK), Puja Vohra; Fred Brustman, Jane Hanser

The Commission members all agreed with Halina's suggestion that we should do something to recognize Eric Olson for his years of distinguished service on the Commission; she will take the lead.

The minutes for October 2018 were approved.

1. Selection of chair and vice chair.

Stephen Grody moved that Halina Brown should become the Commission Chair and Jim Purdy become Vice Chair. Approved 8-0.

Halina said that she is working to get Asa Hopkins added to the NCCE by the School Committee.

2. Schedule for December 2018 and January 2019.

It was agreed that the NCCE will not meet in December; the next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday in January 2019. Informal working sessions will be scheduled as necessary to advance the draft of NCCE's Climate Action Plan. The first session will be Sunday 12/2 at 3pm at Jon Kantar's house.

3. Adoption of interim work from working group sessions on the Newton Climate Action Plan.

Halina noted that the MAPC is preparing a five-year Climate Action Plan (CAP) for the City, and their schedule is very tight: it is due in February. We will attempt to get that deadline moved to April and should prepare the NCCE CAP (which has a thirty-year horizon) on a schedule consistent with MAPC's.

A draft of 11/27/2018 was circulated for discussion.

Jon Klein explained an approach to the executive summary and the report. He also said the CAP needs to address cost. Michael proposed that we will need the working group to do a refined estimate after the draft is submitted

Proposed Report Structure:

Overall high level goals: achieve the IPCC targets for 2030 and 2050. The IPCC report on keeping temperature increase to 1.5 C demonstrates this is feasible both in terms of technology and economics..

We need to include the total cost to the community (as opposed to individual investments by residents in EVs and electrification of heating.

Also need to estimate how much GHG reduction we get: it should be expressed as per capita energy consumption to isolate increases from population growth.

MG – we should consider calculating payback periods.

HB – show the percentage decline in GHG by sector per year

JK - include the pie chart of GHG by sector.

JYK – then look at each of the sectors – include a scorecard with strategy, recommendations, performance metrics.

JP – describe Michael’s analysis of home heating and transportation, which leads to major strategy conclusions.

MG – list 4 or 5 major things that have an impact.

e.g., four conclusions:

- 100% renewable newton power choice
- get commercial to 100%
- electrify home heating
- transition to EVs

HB – Do we talk about the most important things first?

MG – Some people will get lost. The property-tax program proposed by Stephen Grody is the most important incentive for existing residential.

JYK – four levers: conversion to EVs, conversion to electric heating, tax incentives for home energy efficiency, and commercial sector measures.

HB – specify the executive (Mayor) and legislative (City Council) responsibility for each item.

JK – and need to recognize roles of each city department

PV – we need to talk about the HOW as well as the WHAT. MG – the HOW includes Stephen’s tax incentive, MassSave incentives, and promotion of energy assessments with Green Newton.

JYK – is a Green Ordinance a “WHAT”? PV yes, but how does it get put together? Who adopts/drafts it? Who implements it?

HB – a green ordinance is a HOW. Because many laws need to be changed.

PV – agree, but how you structure it is important so it’s also a HOW.

JK - but don’t get too hung up on implementation at this point.

MG – who should be responsible for residential energy efficiency?

SG – we should be clear about the objectives of the CAP: calling on our co-citizens to do things with some assistance by the city.

JYK – if so, is the decision to go forward something that deserves a referendum? JK – not necessary; we have a representative system at ward level.

MG- and many other organizations should work to implement the plan's goals: Green Newton, League of Women Voters, Mothers Out Front, 350, etc. Some other cities have gotten their acts together.

HB – tell the citizens “It’s your job.”

JP – we may need more research, but first tell the story with reasonable assumptions, then do research to substantiate

JP – We need to include the city advocating and going to the legislature, state boards, etc. to get changes made – it can happen over time.

JYK – we need to overcome political barriers if we are to succeed, but that’s how you get there over time.

There is a need to recommend a greater staffing for a sustainability department. HB points to Santa Monica.

MG – we need citizen input as part of the process.

HB – the CAP should estimate what we could achieve along the way.

JP – use special permits for detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to require passive house.

JK - Big developments need to be high performance. Maybe the commercial sector needs to develop its own plan.

JYK – our residential building section is good because we spent the time to discuss it; we need to do the same for commercial sector.

JK - and get Peter Barrer in the room to work with MG for that .

HB - transportation section pretty well developed.

Incentives are making it easy to charge and park, financial incentives for EV ownership, and promotion

PV – Eversource will discuss data only through Bill Ferguson

We should try to meet next week.

MG - Municipal sector is mostly the school system– but they’ve barely budged on their energy use despite all the prompting over recent years.

PV – the state has recommendations for schools; we should see if Newton meets them; we’re not unique, others have done 20% improvement

JK – Peter Barrer says there’s potentially \$100k savings per large building that is achievable.

MG – the City needs to lead by example if pressuring hospital and other very big users.

What is happening with the MAPC document?

timetable:

12/3 -12/7 MAPC interviews with City staff

Friday 11/30 Conf call with MAPC on

Weds 12/5 MAPC provides prelim list of actions to Public Facilities Committee

PV – we should give our doc to Jennifer Steel, who can combine with MAPC input and decide what to use.

We seem to be heading for two documents: one by MAPC, one by NCCE

HB - should we share our document with them now?

SG – are we collaborating with them? We need to do that and not submit to their schedule. In the Friday call, are we collaborating?

JK the CAP is a framework for guiding various actions by the city.

JYK - if we're collaborating ask MAPC "What are your conclusions?"

Going forward:

HB – How do we continue work on the document?

SG – a document has to have one voice. Halina should be overall editor.

JP is responsible for drafting the transportation section.

JYK – we need a subcommittee meeting on commercial buildings.

Ira will do the final edit.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Purdy