

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday January 25, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room Cafeteria

Present: Eric Olson (Chair), Halina Brown, Michael Gevelber, Jon Kantor, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the August 2016 meeting were reviewed and approved.

1. Summary by Halina Brown on the hearing held by Planning and Development Board regarding Washington Place Development.

New Ecology is the developer's environmental consultant. Jon and Jim were impressed by their presentation to the Land Use Committee. Ed questions whether enough parking provided; the development should not depend upon parking on the street. Jim noted that Green Newton's board considers this project to be sustainable development and has voted to support it.

A hearing will be held in Council chambers on Tuesday February 28.

2 LED street lighting, update on possibilities. Ira Krepchin.

Ira has been consulting with a company that is re-manufacturing street lights from HPS to LED; this process retains the original fixture and thus reduces cost. They are looking to do a pilot program. Ira will talk with Andy Savitz. The industry is also developing LED color temperature controls.

Michael asked if it makes sense to go from T8 fluorescent tubes to LED. Ira replied that this would achieve perhaps 30% savings. NCCE could recommend making this change in school retrofit projects.

Jon observed that the school department energy cost is on the order of 1percent of the total school budget.

Burr, Mann, and Memorial Spaulding are planned for the next round of energy efficiency improvement; March 3 2017 is the deadline for submission under the DOER Preferred Vendor program.

3. Rapid progress now expected on the push for Community Choice Aggregation, the Mayor is supportive. Mark calendars for informational meeting with presentation by Patrick Roche, Energy Coordinator, Metropolitan Area Planning Council. WHERE: City Hall Basement Cafeteria, WHEN: February 16, 7:00 - 8:30 PM.

Eric explained the structure of community choice aggregation. Virtually all Newton residences and many small businesses would be included (only a small proportion typically opt out). If the default program includes an additional 5 percent of Class I RECs, the resulting investments in the New England grid would be approximately in 3MW of new wind. Michael noted that 1 REC is worth approximately 3 cents/kWh.

All present agreed that we should push for a higher price default level with a modestly higher cost to the consumer, as is being done in Brookline, and help to convince the City Council to do this. Brookline did a survey of residential customers and concluded that there is support for a default that increases the average monthly electric bill by \$7, but much less support for a renewable percentage that results in a monthly average increase of \$8 or more. Based on this their default case adds 25% to the renewables already in Eversource basic service. Brookline also will offer a cheaper opt-in plan with only the RPS level of renewables and a second opt-in plan that provides 100% renewable energy for extra cost.

4. City of Newton Energy/Climate Updates: Update on Rumford and carport solar; Solar Shares initiative; Transportation and Vulnerability Assessments

Eric showed photos of the solar canopies at Elliott Street and Newton South. Michael would prefer to spend the same money on energy efficiency improvements in city buildings.

The solar array at Rumford is expected to be in service the first week in February. There are 6678 modules there, producing 2.136 MW on 6.69 acres of land.

A typical house uses 6500 mWh per year, so the Rumford site produces the equivalent of power for 437 houses.

Michael asked how much imbedded energy there is in the solar array.

5. Energy Return on Energy Invested (ERoEI) for photovoltaic, discuss the true cost/feasibility of rooftop solar, in light of the true cost of continued burning of fossil fuels. Does the Newton EC have a consensus on the role of nuclear power?

Not discussed.

6. Updates relevant to the City of Newton Action Plan

Not discussed.

7. Hope to have an update on Memorial Spaulding Elementary School Energy and Behavior, City of Newton initiative. Memorial Spaulding Principal Tom Morris is supportive.)

Sustainability Director Andy Savitz has obtained a grant for encouraging behavioral change to reduce energy use. Some of this will be incorporated in the fifth grade curriculum, as has been discussed at past NCCE meetings. The principal is very supportive.

Michael recommends involvement of Kate Crosby, who runs a similar program in the Acton Boxborough schools.

Jon noted that Newton's new schools have many energy features that could be taken advantage of for teaching. In Cambridge the new MLK school has Plexiglas windows in the walls so the wall section and mechanical room can be seen. Students teach the subject and use the building as an object lesson.

At Zervas there are supposed to be circuit breakers that monitor power being used by each classroom. This feature could be used to provide a competition among classes for best efficiency. Could have an iPad available to the students in each classroom displaying energy use.

Jon also shared data on projected energy use at Newton's three new elementary schools.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Jim Purdy.