

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday February 28, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room Cafeteria

Present: Eric Olson (Chair), Michael Gevelber, Jon Kantar, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy; Ed Craddock, Cory Alperstein

(Cory is a Green Newton Board member and a participant in the 350 Newton node, which is supporting a goal of 100% renewable energy.)

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the January 2017 meeting were reviewed and approved.

1. Community Choice Aggregation

There was discussion of upcoming efforts to implement Community Choice Aggregation. Brookline is close to implementing a plan that has a default of 25% additional Class 1 RECs (43% including the state mandated Renewable Portfolio Standard, which is 12% this year.) Brookline also has an option level of 100% Class 1 RECs and an option to stay at the RPS level of 12%, which is expected to be less expensive than Eversource basic service.

Brookline did survey work in preparation for the proposal to Town Meeting and discovered that there was a breakpoint at \$7 per month (i.e., most respondents considered that a reasonable amount to pay for increased green share, but \$8 per month was considered too much to pay by many.

Michael argued for a larger default level of Class 1 RECS, even if there were a slight increase in their monthly electric bill. He noted that the cost of power is currently 21 cents per kWh and that a REC currently costs 2.65 cents per kWh. A typical Newton household uses about 10,184 kWh/year 849 kWh per month, so the cost of power for 100% Class 1 renewable would be about \$22 more per month (14%). To do what Brookline did would cost this household a quarter of that amount. And many larger Newton homes use closer to 800 kWh per month.

It was suggested that the NCCE should do a survey similar to the one done in Brookline. It would also be relevant to know how many Newton residents subscribe to MassEnergy's programs to support renewables.

It was also noted that 100% Class 1 renewable power would cost about the same as a large premium quality pizza, which most Newton households could easily afford. However, Jim noted that many Newton households receive food assistance and would not elect to buy more green; however, they would probably save money on their electric bill if there was an option to stay at the Massachusetts Renewable Portfolio Standard. Jon noted that some Newton residents would oppose any increase in renewables for ideological reasons.

2 Patrick Roche (Energy Coordinator, Metropolitan Area Planning Council) slide presentation about Community Choice Aggregation. We obtained a copy of this Feb 16 presentation and will skim through the slides

Eric urged all NCCE members to attend the City Council's Public Facilities Committee meeting on March 8.

3. Greening with Aggregation: the meaning of RECs

Eric noted that the a recent story in the Newton TAB claimed that municipal solar projects to date resulted in a green share of 25 percent of the City's municipal electric use (which is approximately 3 percent of the power used by all sectors in the city). This is not correct, because the photovoltaics mounted on municipal building roofs and on the ground at the Rumford Avenue site were developed through a power purchase agreement with the contractor Ameresco. As such, the contractor, not the city owns the RECs. To claim them for the City would be double-counting.

4. Jim Purdy to present Survey Form for Home Energy Audit households

Jim gave a brief report on finally getting the survey out to people who did Home Energy Assessments in the period from November 2015 through February 2016.

5. Communication from Buildings Dept. updating Deb Crossley on Energy Efficiency Program Results

Not discussed.

Other items:

Jon Kantar described the Boston Neighborhood Development Agency project that Sage Construction Co. is building on Fort Hill in Roxbury. The four-unit development is Net Positive owing to very robust air sealing and insulation and uses air source heat pumps for heating and cooling. It has a HERS rating of minus 30 (90 points lower than the state building code's requirement of no higher than +60.) Jon noted that the project uses a heat recovery ventilation system to minimize energy loss while meeting the standards for ventilation in the state code.

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