

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday May 31, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Newton City Hall Room 204

Present: Eric Olson (Chair), Halina Brown, Fred Brustman, Michael Gevelber, Jon Kantar, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy; Cory Alperstein, Ed Craddock, Brant Davis, Claudine Ellyn

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

Halina Brown introduced Ms. Claudine Ellyn, an engineer interested in the NCCE's work.

1A. Update on Community Choice Aggregation: recent discussions with Ann Berwick

Ann Berwick is conducting "negotiations" w aggregation consultants; down to two candidates. C The selection committee filling out evaluation forms. She wants input on public outreach. The working group on 100% renewables meeting on June 12.

EO: Decisions are needed on what public outreach campaign will be. CA: Several community environmental groups are interested in this.

EO said that adopting and implementing green aggregation needs to be long process with major outreach: TAB, flyers, meetings, etc. Brant noted that 6 months is needed after selection to sign a contract.

Eric said the City needs to clarify its "ask" to the MA Dept. of Public Utilities, especially the default level of Cal 1 RECs. (DPU asked Brookline if it would be contentious.) The price of RECs declined by the time Brookline's consultant obtained them, so the average household would pay an extra \$2 per month, not \$7 as they originally expected..

Ira and Eric both feel that Newton should provide the 25% green default as Brookline is, at a minimum. There was discussion about how the aggregation plan should be set up to provide a lower cost option for people of limited means. Currently Newton has 1200 households on the utility's R2 low income electrical rate.

At its own option a city can attach a fee structure for energy efficiency. This in excess of the utility's current rate as shown on the electric bill. (That rate is \$0.0005 per kWh, \$150k on 440k MWh.

EO will put Brant in touch with Ann Berwick about broker fees. Brant is working with Worcester. For their 18month contract the total fee is \$2.4 million = \$100/year/resident.

Halina expressed surprise that cost savings are so small. Brant noted that a broker can get a good deal on wholesale price for supply, but can't affect the renewables charge and the capacity charge.

Ed stated that the contract should incentivize the amount of greenness the broker can get for us.

Cory stated that Ann sees this the consultant contract negotiation as an opportunity to write into the contract more money for a public information campaign. Cory also thinks that we need to push the City on the default level of green.

Jon thinks the ultimate default green percentage may reflect a perspective of statewide norms.

Ed noted that there is a high level of commitment in the City Council for green energy: 23 councilors voted for a resolution urging state to enact a carbon fee.

Claudine noted that New York's "PlaNYC" contains a goal of 80% carbon footprint reduction by 2070; Boston's goal is for a major reduction in carbon by 2050.

Michael noted that Brookline says 25% additional Class 1 RECs will cost the average household \$2 per month, and 100% will cost \$12. (The average household in Newton used substantially more power than the average in Brookline.)

Halina said that the NCCE needs to send our position to Ann. Halina proposes that the consultant/broker contract should link their fee to level of renewables obtained.

The City should bargain hard on the agent's fee.

There was discussion of the process: select consultant and then determine default and other features for city council to decide. Eric should speak to Ann about whether the consultant selection is fee-based.

Halina was assigned to prepare a statement of NCCE points for the City to consider

1B. Newton Buildings: Jonathan Kantar on emerging new policy documents re new and retrofit municipal buildings: design, energy use targets.

Sustainability guidelines were approved in draft by the Design Review Commission and the City's Public Buildings Department. The guidelines are intended to push the design envelope toward net zero. They challenge each design team to be 15% better than the previous building. The guidelines lock in performance that is 35% better than code; equivalent to LEED Gold. These guidelines for City buildings can also be given to developers to achieve. The next step is to get a hearing at the Public Facilities Committee. One approved in final form, the guidelines will be implemented by the City's administration.

The guidelines can be used to encourage best practice during negotiation with developers who need a special permit.

The DRC is encouraging the developer of the Assisted Living project on the Clay Chevrolet site to incorporate the guidelines; they were receptive.

2. Current status of Rumford Solar large array and status of "Phase Three". Start date, issues.

Not discussed.

3. Newton Buildings: "preferred vendor" update and Newton North.

Newton North is getting re-lamped this summer under the Preferred Vendor program; it will also include more energy saving controls (which were engineered out in the original design.)

4. Via Jenny Craddock, Ann Berwick, and Bill Ferguson: more insight into the Memorial Spaulding "experiment" and City-wide efforts to incorporate energy and climate education linked to efficiency and student/teacher/staff behavior

Not discussed.

5. Related: revisiting the suggestion to Newton officials to learn from the Acton-Boxborough experiment in school energy savings driven entirely by behavior. The "soft path" approach focus on behavior can be a powerful complement to the work being done on lighting and other "hardware" aspects of our schools.

Not discussed.

6. Geoexchange HVAC in our area – preparing a list of completed projects, seeking data .

The engineer for the library renovation proposed Ground Source Heat Pump. Michael reported that the payback period on GSHP around 20 years, so he is surprised at this recommendation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Jim Purdy.