



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)

Minutes of the Meeting of June 26, 2019

Present: Michael Gevelber, Stephen Grody, Jon Kantar (JK), Jon Y Klein (JYK), Jim Purdy, Puja Vohra (by phone); Cory Alperstein, Ed Craddock, Phil Hanser, Jane Hanser, Bill Ferguson (by phone)

The minutes for May 22, 2019 were approved.

Advisory Members:

Cory Alperstein

Edward Craddock

Brant Davis

Philip Hanser

Status of agreement with Eversource and National Grid. (Puja)

NGrid has a \$40k grant for Newton that can be used for anything beyond MassSave incentives; we received a similar grant a couple of years ago. There is a wide variety of eligible things to use the money for in the residential sector.

Bill reported that we have \$41k in a city account in the now, and we can get the second \$40k early in 2020. NGrid has no problem using it for an energy coach/concierge position.

Puja reported that on the Eversource side, we haven't heard back on how they would structure it; Eversource's manager Mark Rooney said we can submit a proposal, including an energy coach; we could apply the Eversource grant to the commercial sector including a Green Ribbon Commission.

Phil asked what limitations apply to use of the money and what are the reporting requirements. Puja will circulate a list of planned meetings with the utility.

There will be a call-in on electric vehicles (EVs) tomorrow; Michael and Phil are attending. They will establish what the current offering is for EVs and what else could be done. Phil asked if there is any offering for non-residential EVs. Bill replied that Eversource does have money for chargers at apartment buildings. Phil asked they need DPU approval; Bill said yes. Eversource will be going forward with the MakeReady program soon; then we can come back with a revised program, perhaps in two years, including charging facilities for small multi-unit residential buildings.

JK asked if the energy coach idea be used to reach out to the community to advise about EV charging stations; and partially subsidize charging points in private buildings. Bill replied that we need to carefully define the Energy Coach job description, and provide it to Eversource; but it can include EVs – Eversource is open to this.

Ed noted that Newton is unique because most trips are made within the Rte 128 area, so most Newton residents will need only a single level-2 charger at home.

Phil said that we should be concerned about the need to upgrade home electrical service of EV charging. There is already a program to subsidize electrical for heat pumps, but it is not clear whether this kind of support is applicable to home electrical upgrades for EV charging.

Cory added that we need to consider all the things that a consumer needs to adopt an EV. Michael pointed out that Eversource is interested in promoting smart chargers, so they do have some control.

Puja reported that there is a Green Ribbon Commission meeting on July 15. The City and NCCE need to figure out the energy coach's role and what parts can be covered by the utility. We also need to set quantitative goals for the MOU. The utilities want to propose the goals; the City can respond to that and work it out.

Puja reported that they didn't work out the term of the agreement with Eversource; three years seems to be a good period to set goals for.

Phil asked about goals set by other cities? Puja agreed that she'll pursue that topic with Rooney.

Cory asked, why not share our CCAP goals for outcomes. Puja said that the utilities have the links to the Newton documents. We need to set the three-year goals. If you have ideas, submit them to Puja.

Phil asked who will specify the Measurement and Verification (M&V) rules? Puja suggested that they will probably use projected and calculated numbers. PH – but will they do verification? PV – probably just projected numbers. But we could do a post-analysis.

Bill added that Massachusetts DPU requires the utility to do M&V, so they do random studies. It is easy for them to report measure-by-measure, e.g. residential insulation, on quarterly basis (maybe even monthly), and they can estimate the energy savings achieved. Puja noted that this kind of analysis is based on sampling. Perhaps they could do billing analysis to see results at dwelling unit level.

Jim said that NCCE should discuss our goals for the MOU. Puja agreed but said the July meeting would be too soon to have that discussion.

Cory commented that the utilities focus on energy efficiency, but we need to also consider conversion of building systems to all electric.

Michael noted that this is easier to do, because MassCEC has online data on EVs and heat pumps. Bill agreed that they can track these monthly. Michael added that it needs to be Newton-specific.

There was general agreement that our goals should include electrification, and incorporate this goal into our presentations.

A working group was formed to develop the energy coach description : Cory, Phil, Jim, and Jon Kantar. Cory recommended that we don't let the utility constrain what the position can do. Phil will be contacting Seattle, Santa Monica, and Cambridge MA to ask about their energy coach position. Bill commented that we need a very specific draft of the job description and how it will help Eversource meet its goals. We need benefit/cost ratios on every measure.

Phil asked how much do cost adders affect their goals and benefit/cost calculations.

Jim suggested that we should get the utilities' goals so we can see how we relate to them in our goals.

Puja asked for Stephen's update on REEP. He suggested that it can wait for the MOU to be done. Bill said the Mayor is not ready to move on REEP, and both utilities reluctant to provide customer data; this is a long-standing issue with them. We would need to get the Mayor behind this effort. He proposes to work to get the Mayor on board. Stephen reported not getting any cooperation from Mark Rooney at Eversource, and NGrid has followed Eversource in this.

Michael commented that we need the billing data to determine the mean energy consumption in Newton. Stephen has done a few slides on this. He thinks there is a way to make the numbers work without the utility billing data. JYK suggested that we can easily create a portal for data of people who have opted in. We have had conversations about REEP with some City Councilors; we will include it in the presentations to key Council committees. We also need to get Newton legal department to address it.

2. Report on Green Newton Building Standards Committee (BSC) and the Northland and Riverside developments

Jim gave a brief update on Green Newton BSC discussions with the two major developments. Northland is further along and has been willing to invest in a top consultant on Passive House (Stephen Winter). They have committed to PH for three of the major buildings and are still doing studies on five more buildings. They are also planning to limit natural gas to hot water and commercial kitchens. Apartment kitchens are to be all electric. One of Northland's design team members has attended a conference on embodied energy. And Northland has a very aggressive shuttle system to Newton Highlands Green Line station, and it is proposing a ratio of one parking space per residential unit.

3. Research on factors in EV adoption decisions

Michael reported on the work of a colleague at Boston University, using an advanced statistical analysis to identify the strength of various factors in consumer decisions to buy an EV. The analysis concludes that battery range is a strong factor, but that the availability of public charging stations does not have much weight.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Purdy