

**Newton Citizens Commission on Energy**  
City of Newton

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



**Mayor Ruthanne Fuller**

Halina Brown (Chair), Stephen Grody, Michael Gevelber, Asa Hopkins,  
Jonathan Kantar, Jon Klein, Ira Krepchin, James Purdy (Vice Chair),  
Puja Vohra, Ann Berwick (*ex-officio*)  
Advisory Members:  
Cory Alperstein, Edward Craddock, Brant Davis,  
Philip Hanser,

Telephone 617-796-1019  
c/o Office of the Sustainability Director  
Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton Centre, MA 02459

July 28, 2019

To: Honorable Members of the City Council; Barney Heath, Newton Planning Director;  
Newton Planning Board; Greg Schwartz, Chair of the Land Use Committee

The Newton Citizens Commission on Energy fully endorses the position taken regarding the Northland development in the letter of July 16 by the Green Newton Committee on New Building Standards, our close collaborator on projects related to climate protection. Like Green Newton, the Commission supports the Northland project as currently proposed.

Grounded in the Citizens' Climate Action Plan, which the Commission released on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Commission emphasizes the importance of planning for the timely elimination of fossil fuel use in Newton's buildings. We encourage the City to press for a specific date when the Northland project as well as other large projects in Newton will eliminate fossil fuel use on site project.

The Green Newton Committee's position on the building design, transportation and scale are fully consistent with the Citizens' Climate Action Plan. Specifically, with regard to new construction and transportation the Plan calls for:

**New construction**

- Starting in 2022 adopt the requirement that all built-by-right houses perform to the Passive House standards and that do not use fossil fuels.
- Starting immediately, use the special permit process to require PH performance levels and no use of fossil fuels for all new construction that requires such special permit.

- Revise criterion 5 for granting a special permit to explicitly require a minimum number of measures to reduce energy use and increase efficiency
- Adopt the Green Buildings Principles developed by Green Newton as criteria for evaluating merits of for large development projects seeking special permits
- Satisfy all future demand for housing units through increasing the number of multi-family mixed-use residential buildings.

#### Transportation

- Increase transportation options, including better infrastructure for walking and biking and better bus service
- Consider on-demand ride service for both fixed and flexible routes; consider expanding the on-demand services for seniors using EV vans to all citizens
- Eliminate first/last mile barrier to using public transit
- Eliminate parking minimums and consider parking maximums in villages and near transit.

For more information about the context, rationale and potential impacts of these recommendations please see the following sections of the Plan: For New Construction: 2.2; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4.1; 5.5.1; 6.2. For Transportation: 2.2; 4.4; 4.5; 6.2.

Sincerely,

Halina Brown (Chair)  
Jim Purdy (Vice Chair)  
Michael Gevelber  
Stephen Grody  
Asa Hopkins  
Jonathan Kantar  
Jonathan Klein  
Ira Krepchin  
Puja Vohra

cc. Ann Berwick and William Ferguson, Sustainability Co-directors.  
Alan J. Schlesinger, representing Northland Co.  
Marcia Cooper and Dan Ruben, Green Newton