

Newton Citizens Commission on Energy
City of Newton

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



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Halina Brown (Acting Chair), Stephen Grody, Michael Gevelber,
Jonathan Kantar, Jon Klein, Ira Krepchin, Eric Olson, James Purdy, Puja
Vohre, Ann Berwick (*ex-officio*)

Advisory Members:

Cory Alperstein, Daniel Cotter, Edward Craddock, Brant Davis,
Christopher Dunham, Claudine Ellyn, Phil Hanser, William Havemeyer,
Asa Hopkins, Nicholas O'Connor

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

Wednesday November 28, 2018, 7:30 PM
City Hall Room 211

AGENDA

1. Selection of chair and vice chair.
2. Adoption of interim work from working group sessions on the Newton Climate Action Plan.
3. Schedule for December 2018 and January 2019.

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Advisory Members:

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Philip Hanser, Asa Hopkins

Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

Minutes of the Meeting of November 28, 2018

Present: Halina Brown, Ira Krepchin, Stephen Grody, Michael Gevelber, Jim Purdy, Jon Kantar (JK), Jon Y. Klein (JYK), Puja Vohra; Fred Brustman, Jane Hanser

The Commission members all agreed with Halina's suggestion that we should do something to recognize Eric Olson for his years of distinguished service on the Commission; she will take the lead.

The minutes for October 2018 were approved.

1. Selection of chair and vice chair.

Stephen Grody moved that Halina Brown should become the Commission Chair and Jim Purdy become Vice Chair. Approved 8-0.

Halina said that she is working to get Asa Hopkins added to the NCCE by the School Committee.

2. Schedule for December 2018 and January 2019.

It was agreed that the NCCE will not meet in December; the next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday in January 2019. Informal working sessions will be scheduled as necessary to advance the draft of NCCE's Climate Action Plan. The first session will be Sunday 12/2 at 3pm at Jon Kantar's house.

3. Adoption of interim work from working group sessions on the Newton Climate Action Plan.

Halina noted that the MAPC is preparing a five-year Climate Action Plan (CAP) for the City, and their schedule is very tight: it is due in February. We will attempt to get that deadline moved to April and should prepare the NCCE CAP (which has a thirty-year horizon) on a schedule consistent with MAPC's.

A draft of 11/27/2018 was circulated for discussion.

Jon Klein explained an approach to the executive summary and the report. He also said the CAP needs to address cost. Michael proposed that we will need the working group to do a refined estimate after the draft is submitted

Proposed Report Structure:

Overall high level goals: achieve the IPCC targets for 2030 and 2050. The IPCC report on keeping temperature increase to 1.5 C demonstrates this is feasible both in terms of technology and economics..

We need to include the total cost to the community (as opposed to individual investments by residents in EVs and electrification of heating.

Also need to estimate how much GHG reduction we get: it should be expressed as per capita energy consumption to isolate increases from population growth.

MG – we should consider calculating payback periods.

HB – show the percentage decline in GHG by sector per year

JK - include the pie chart of GHG by sector.

JYK – then look at each of the sectors – include a scorecard with strategy, recommendations, performance metrics.

JP – describe Michael’s analysis of home heating and transportation, which leads to major strategy conclusions.

MG – list 4 or 5 major things that have an impact.

e.g., four conclusions:

- 100% renewable newton power choice
- get commercial to 100%
- electrify home heating
- transition to EVs

HB – Do we talk about the most important things first?

MG – Some people will get lost. The property-tax program proposed by Stephen Grody is the most important incentive for existing residential.

JYK – four levers: conversion to EVs, conversion to electric heating, tax incentives for home energy efficiency, and commercial sector measures.

HB – specify the executive (Mayor) and legislative (City Council) responsibility for each item.

JK – and need to recognize roles of each city department

PV – we need to talk about the HOW as well as the WHAT. MG – the HOW includes Stephen’s tax incentive, MassSave incentives, and promotion of energy assessments with Green Newton.

JYK – is a Green Ordinance a “WHAT”? PV yes, but how does it get put together? Who adopts/drafts it? Who implements it?

HB – a green ordinance is a HOW. Because many laws need to be changed.

PV – agree, but how you structure it is important so it’s also a HOW.

JK - but don’t get too hung up on implementation at this point.

MG – who should be responsible for residential energy efficiency?

SG – we should be clear about the objectives of the CAP: calling on our co-citizens to do things with some assistance by the city.

JYK – if so, is the decision to go forward something that deserves a referendum? JK – not necessary; we have a representative system at ward level.

MG- and many other organizations should work to implement the plan's goals: Green Newton, League of Women Voters, Mothers Out Front, 350, etc. Some other cities have gotten their acts together.

HB – tell the citizens “It’s your job.”

JP – we may need more research, but first tell the story with reasonable assumptions, then do research to substantiate

JP – We need to include the city advocating and going to the legislature, state boards, etc. to get changes made – it can happen over time.

JYK – we need to overcome political barriers if we are to succeed, but that’s how you get there over time.

There is a need to recommend a greater staffing for a sustainability department. HB points to Santa Monica.

MG – we need citizen input as part of the process.

HB – the CAP should estimate what we could achieve along the way.

JP – use special permits for detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to require passive house.

JK - Big developments need to be high performance. Maybe the commercial sector needs to develop its own plan.

JYK – our residential building section is good because we spent the time to discuss it; we need to do the same for commercial sector.

JK - and get Peter Barrer in the room to work with MG for that .

HB - transportation section pretty well developed.

Incentives are making it easy to charge and park, financial incentives for EV ownership, and promotion

PV – Eversource will discuss data only through Bill Ferguson

We should try to meet next week.

MG - Municipal sector is mostly the school system– but they’ve barely budged on their energy use despite all the prompting over recent years.

PV – the state has recommendations for schools; we should see if Newton meets them; we’re not unique, others have done 20% improvement

JK – Peter Barrer says there’s potentially \$100k savings per large building that is achievable.

MG – the City needs to lead by example if pressuring hospital and other very big users.

What is happening with the MAPC document?

timetable:

12/3 -12/7 MAPC interviews with City staff

Friday 11/30 Conf call with MAPC on

Weds 12/5 MAPC provides prelim list of actions to Public Facilities Committee

PV – we should give our doc to Jennifer Steel, who can combine with MAPC input and decide what to use.

We seem to be heading for two documents: one by MAPC, one by NCCE

HB - should we share our document with them now?

SG – are we collaborating with them? We need to do that and not submit to their schedule. In the Friday call, are we collaborating?

JK the CAP is a framework for guiding various actions by the city.

JYK - if we're collaborating ask MAPC "What are your conclusions?"

Going forward:

HB – How do we continue work on the document?

SG – a document has to have one voice. Halina should be overall editor.

JP is responsible for drafting the transportation section.

JYK – we need a subcommittee meeting on commercial buildings.

Ira will do the final edit.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Purdy

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Notice of Working Group Session
Thursday November 8, 2018, 6:00 PM
Newton Free Library Conference Room A

Members of the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy will gather to assemble and coordinate NCCE member comments on the City's Draft Climate Action Plan.

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Notice of Working Group Session
Wednesday October 31, 2018, 6:30 PM
Newton Free Library Conference Room A

Members of the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy will gather to assemble and coordinate NCCE member comments on the City's Draft Climate Action Plan.

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday October 24, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room 211

Present: Halina Brown Vice-Chair, Michael Gevelber, Stephen Grody, Jonathan Kantar, Jim Purdy; Ed Craddock

Vice-Chairman Halina Brown called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Minutes of the September 2018 meeting were distributed; Jim suggested that any corrections or revisions be sent directly to him.

1. Personnel change

Chairman Eric Olson is stepping down as chair but will remain a member of the Commission. Halina Brown is therefore Acting Chair. She is willing to accept the position of Chair, but would prefer to operate with a Co-Chair. Jim is willing to take that position if the Commission wishes. Both Eric and Halina are Mayoral appointees, so they will confer with the Mayor on this matter.

Jon suggested that we ask the City Council to adopt a resolution commending Eric for his years of service.

2. Bringing to a closure the discussion on the role of the Energy Commission in setting goals for and producing the Climate Action Plan (the "CAP")

HB said she is disappointed that the MACP staff are not using the traffic data that Jon Klein sent to NCCE. JK – but can't expect MACP to have analyzed this material yet; it only became available in the past three weeks.

JK- Greening the electrical grid is the single most important action. The CAP needs to quantify the results of this.

MG – One problem that people haven't focused on yet is that the local distribution grid is not up to this level of energy use if electric heating replaces gas. There are 32000 residences in Newton, and using electric heating (heat pumps) is a huge load, so analysis is needed. Widespread EV use will also overload some transformers.

SG – letting the change take place gradually is the opposite of telecom industry converting neighborhoods to fiber.

JK disagrees. We should consider a pilot program with state support to switch from gas heating. That can demonstrate its feasibility.

HB – our job is to advise the city on these issues.

MG can do a back-of-envelope calculation; identify the crisis point for planning purposes.

HB and JK are the liaisons to the CAP committee.

HB – Jennifer Steele wants the NCCE to work with MAPC, and she has told them that.

SG – In any innovation project, both bottom-up and top-down inputs meet in a "vortex" and get resolved. We need to state what are the goals of the plan, e.g., what % reduction in GHGs by what year. Need to be specific, e.g., break out home heating and appliances.

HB read from the October CAP committee meeting notes re goal-setting in the CAP.

JP – the report needs to explain what the CAP's purpose is, which is mostly to convince Newton residents and businesses to do things, and make a case for City actions, e.g., zoning changes. An example is allowing vestibules in required setbacks by right.

HB – the CAP needs to provide incentives and eliminate barriers. City staff has the task of creating and later implementing the CAP. NCCE's role is to feed ideas to them.

MG – we should provide input to both the City and MAPC. Our role could be write-ups on opportunities and limitations. E.g., a 20 page document on actions and policies to incorporate that goes to the CAP Committee and to the Mayor and City staff.

HB reviewed the CAP committee's March 2018 list of short term energy actions.

SG please ask MAPC for an outline of the report JK -they've done an outline already. HB will ask MAPC project manager Megan and the City's project manager Jennifer for the outline of the final product and what the report will look like. She will ask them for a meeting on what input NCCE will provide and how to coordinate it.

JK sent a blank spreadsheet to NCCE members after our September meeting. Members need to respond by filling it in with our suggestions. There should be a working session of members to do this.

HB proposed a timetable: everyone should add to JK's spreadsheet by a week from today.

Will have a working session at 7pm on Weds 10/31. Send input to JK by Tues 10/30. JP will get a room.

We can ask Puja to bounce questions off her contacts at Eversource.

We should add notes about what needs to be done - analysis, resources, what others have done, etc.

HB/MG – we need a one-pager on setting goals and their implications (both bottom line and subsidiary goals to get there.)

It was suggested that the City has a separate electric power contract for municipals buildings and should buy RECs to match what will be purchased for residents in the Newton Power Choice aggregation.

EC noted that energy saving vestibules in City Hall are not being used – i.e., the inner doors to vestibules are propped open.

3. Tax incentives for home energy efficiency improvements.

SG distributed his paper on tax incentives and a normal curve to be used as a tool to use in applying incentives. There was a brief discussion owing to the late hour. The paper is attached to these minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Purdy

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AGENDA for Wednesday October 24, 2018 Meeting, 7:30 PM, City Hall Room 211

1. Personnel change
2. Bringing to a closure the discussion on the role of the Energy Commission in setting goals for and producing the Climate Action Plan (Brown)
3. Continuation of discussion on tax incentives to encourage residential energy efficiency (Grody)
4. Brief update on Newton Power Choice re Arlington results and city's purchase perspective (Purdy and Klein)

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AGENDA for Wednesday September 26, 2018 Meeting, 7:30 PM, City Hall Room 211

1. Climate Action Plan for Newton
 - a. How should EC be involved in the production of the CAP?
 - b. What is the role of the City in reducing GHG emissions in Newton?
 - c. What should the CAP say about transportation (beyond encouraging EVs)?
2. Update on the City's energy plans from Bill Ferguson via Eric.
3. Overview of city of Newton's energy use & EE effort (Michael Gevelber)
4. Brief update on Newton Power Choice re Arlington results and city's purchase perspective (Purdy and Gevelber)

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday August 29, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room 211

Present: Eric Olson, Chair, Halina Brown, Vice Chair, Stephen Grody, Jonathan Kantar, Jim Purdy, Puja Vohraz; Ed Craddock, Jane Hanser, Phil Hanser.

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the preceding meeting (June 27, 2018) were approved.

1. Update on Climate Action Plan for Newton (Halina Brown/Jon Kantar)

Halina provided four documents prior to the meeting:

- a summary of the CAP that have taken place under Mayor Fuller's leadership
- a list of nine items for early action with comments on them from Sustainability Director Ann Berwick and Energy Manager Bill Ferguson
- comments on the CAP by NCCE member Puja Vohraz with suggestions for content that should be included.
- the contract between the City and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) which will provide services to prepare the CAP

The City is providing \$36,000 for preparation of the CAP; \$6,000 is going to an intern who has been hired to do research on what other cities are doing; the intern is a graduate student at Brandeis. The CAP includes the inventory of Newton's carbon footprint by source, which was developed three years ago by then- Sustainability Director Andy Savitz; CAP committee member Peter Barrer prepared a pie chart to display this data. Halina said that more data is needed to provide detail in the transportation sector, which is the largest portion of the total.

The contract with MAPC was put in place quickly. Part of their scope is to provide two public workshops, which will take place during the fall. The first workshop will probably be concerned with input to the list of actions in the plan; brainstorming in small breakout groups will probably be a feature.

The committee is aiming at a completed product by the end of 2018 or early 2019.

Jennifer Steele of the Newton Planning Department is the staff project manager.

Puja commented that the current list of potential actions is a valuable start. Jim commented that it is important for Jennifer to pin down the agenda and presentation material that MAPC will provide for the first workshop.

Jonathan Kantar, who is on the CA committee with Halina, reported that the intern is working but the committee has not met since August 2, 2018, and the Planning Department needs more direction on where its work should be aimed. Jim commented that the intern should be tasked to provide weekly reports on progress.

Ed commented that he worries about the Climate Action Plan being separate from the city's Climate Vulnerability Plan, which was also produced by MAPC. Climate mitigation and adaptation are parts of the same subject.

Halina reviewed the list of early action items.

Committee members commented as follows:

Stephen: are the early actions everything that should be done now?

Ed: there should be standards for how EV charging stations should look.

Phil: not sure how low hanging fruit is defined. E.g., the source of the energy for EV charging needs to be defined. Eric noted that the climate impact of EV charging has been well-studied and it is in fact beneficial.

Jonathan: the CAP will be the guide to individual actions.

Puja: the CAP should quantify its effects on meeting the state's climate goals for 2050.

Jonathan has made a Gantt chart informed by members Eric, Halina, and Michael Gevelber as to magnitudes of potential actions.

Jim: this is a valuable tool; the Gantt chart should include detail for the early action items.

Jonathan emphasized that we already know that green aggregation with a high default is the most effective single thing Newton can do, which makes it important to have as high a default as possible.

Ed is disappointed that only four EV charging locations were proposed.

Halina is not sure how to quantify the effectiveness of providing preferential parking and more charging stations. We should get stats from Mass Energy Consumers Alliance if available. Phil cautioned that most penetration rate studies (e.g., for appliances) are not very good. Ed suggested that MAPC may have some of this information

Jim advocated for making increased transit use a major goal of the CAP (since transportation is by far the largest sector. This includes improving the frequency of cross-town bus service that connects to the radial lines into Boston (Green Line, commuter rail, express bus) and extends the walkable distance to transit service (i.e., ½ mile from the bus lines) to a large proportion of Newton residents.

Jane: promotion of transit usage should include a web page that explains how to use the transit system, as many people are probably uncertain about this.

Halina suggested that Jim should write a memo to Ann Berwick regarding transit; he agreed to do this.

Eric: we should also pick out a piece of the CAP for the NCCE to focus our efforts.

There was a discussion of addressing residential energy efficiency by including HERS rating in real estate listings, which would provide an incentive for upgrading efficiency in older construction. Jonathan noted that new construction is required to have a HERS rating, but much of it is larger than older units, so the total energy consumption may be higher than an old unit that hadn't received improvements.

Stephen and Eric proposed that the City could address residential sector by requiring older units to have an acceptable HERS rating before sale to a new owner.

Stephen proposed that the CAP should contain an objective to have \$100mil of private investment in Newton houses to increase energy efficiency. The City should consider taxing homes at rates based on energy efficiency.

Eric noted that we would need data on energy consumption of each house in order to apply this suggestion. Stephen said that this assessment based on energy would be an incentive - a carrot, not a stick.

Jim commented that we need to consult with someone who understands the law on tax assessments and rates to determine if this kind of incentive is consistent with state law.

Halina recommended that the City should just go ahead with publishing HERS ratings for residences listed on the real estate multiple listing service (MLS). Jon noted that Realtor Craig Foley (whom he used as broker for his net positive townhouses in Boston) would likely support this idea. Foley attended a NCCE meeting on this subject a few years ago and was generally supportive of including HERS in the listings.

Puja suggested that National Grid has the data for every property in the City; they have been unwilling to provide this data for specific properties in the past, but she thinks NGrid could be persuaded to do so in the future.

Jon noted that the City has HERS data for all new construction. He thinks this situation is analogous to Same the DEP Title 9 regulations of on-site sewage disposal, which was resisted by owners but has come to be accepted as necessary to avoid water quality impacts.

Eric summarized that we've identified two major areas of energy use that need more info: transportation and residential energy efficiency. The NCCE should work toward providing the information that is needed by individuals to make the CAP work.

Phil suggested that the City website can be an information hub for these issues.

Halina proposed that we should work with the Planning Department to get zoning provisions that will save energy incorporated in the big re-write of zoning that is currently underway. She also suggested that the CAP intern should find examples of how other cities provide this kind of energy information and keep it current.

Stephen imagines a City of Newton energy game that people can play online to compare how Newton fares against other cities.

Jon suggested that we should estimate what it would cost for the City to match the default aggregation goal in the electric power it buys for municipal purposes (i.e., buildings and streetlights).

2. Brief update on Newton Power Choice

Outreach meetings are ongoing and signs and banners are being produced to publicize the program. The Newton Coalition for Climate Action is continuing to advocate for the default option selected by the Mayor to contain 40% Class 1 Renewables on top of the state requirement (which will be 15% next year and will go up by 2% per year under the recent legislation approved by the Massachusetts House and Senate. Approximately 800 signatures have been collected urging the 40% default, including 18 City Councilors and Newton's three state legislators.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Purdy

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AGENDA for Wednesday August 29, 2018 Meeting, 7:30 PM, City Hall Room 211

1. Update on Climate Action Plan for Newton (Halina Brown/Jon Kantar)
2. Brief update on Newton Power Choice

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday June 27, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room 211

Present: Michael Gevelber, Stephen Grody, Jonathan Kantar, Jon Klein, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy; Ed Craddock, Jane Hanser, Phil Hanser.

In the absence of Chairman Eric Olson and Vice Chair Halina Brown, Jim called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the preceding meeting (May 23, 2018) were reviewed and approved with revisions.

Minutes of the April 25 meeting were approved with corrections.

1. Update on filling vacancies on the Commission (Eric Olson)

Jim noted that all vacancies are now filled with the appointments of John Klein and Puja Vohre; Stephen Grody had been appointed by the League of Women Voters in May.

2. Update on Newton Power Choice: Meeting of the Working Group on June 19 2018 (Jim Purdy)

Jim Purdy gave an update on Newton Power Choice and Sustainability Director Ann Berwick's working group, which meets with her monthly to discuss issues and advise on public outreach. Activities are ongoing, including house parties and meetings with community groups (about 30 to date), and a presence at the Farmers Markets at Cold Spring Park and Elm Street. Ann is also looking to find people who would be willing to host a lawn sign in the fall. Jim related the conversations he had at the Elm Street market the previous Saturday.

Ann is currently interviewing consultants to conduct the survey requested by the Mayor. There was a discussion of survey issues, including methodology to provide a valid sample. Phil Hanser, who is a statistician talked about the need to define a survey frame that covers the community and considers key variables, including location (at least zipcode or ward level, and age of respondent. He thinks that there is no chance of doing this with an online survey (apart from the issue of surveying people who do not use the internet.)

Jon Klein reported on the Newton Climate Action work to build support for a 40 percent default level. The letter advocating for this default had been signed by 14 of the 24 City Councilors. 70 signatures came in over the web this past weekend. There are 500 signers so far.

3. Status of hiring intern for Climate Action Plan

A student from Brandeis was hired to assist with the Climate Action Plan. A kickoff meeting was held with her on June 26. She is being managed by Jennifer Steele from the Planning Department.

4. Update on Climate Action Plan for Newton (Halina/Jon Kantar)

Jon Kantar provided an update on the committee's work. They have approached MAPC to help develop the CAP report. Some grants to be used to prepare the Plan have been received via the Planning Department. For assistance in preparing the report the CAP committee expects to contract with Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), which has an experienced staff and is familiar with what cities and towns in Eastern Massachusetts are doing.

Michael asked why MAPC was approached for this work; the City of Cambridge has an energy consultant helping with their plan. Phil suggested that organizations like the Environmental Defense Fund also do this kind of work and should be considered.

There was a discussion of measures that should be addressed in the CAP. Jim commented that many of the needed actions have long time frames and should be started as soon as practicable. For example, transportation requires time to change – transition to EVs by residents and businesses, capital improvements in the MBTA, etc., as well as getting people to change their travel behavior.

Stephen said we should concentrate on generating initiatives for homeowners to take, e.g., the transition to using heat pumps instead of fossil fuels for space heating and cooling. Ed commented that he converted to air source heat pumps some time ago and does not need to use gas in the winter to supplement them. Phil commented that even the most up-to-date air source heat pumps use electrical resistance coils to supplement the thermodynamic heat cycle in cold weather when the delta-T is too great to provide space heating, so there is a question about energy efficiency of 100% use of air source heat pumps. Ed responded that with enough on-site solar generation, this doesn't present a problem.

Michael commented that we should do brainstorming on what incentives will produce the right behavior by residents.

Old business: continuing the discussion of improving performance of public buildings in Newton (Michael Gevelber)

Michael continued his presentation from the May 2018 meeting, showing data that was assembled for Newton North High School from 2011 through 2017 for electric power and natural gas. There was a substantial decrease in energy, particularly electrical, after the first year, then a more or less level profile of use. Stephen commented that at a minimum, the natural gas use should be normalized for the number of heating degree days in each year, which vary widely; this should be straightforward.

There was discussion about how the School Department can better manage the use of energy in the schools. Michael cautioned that, based on his experience with Boston University, outsourcing to outside consultants for recommissioning buildings and managing their energy systems can be very expensive, so the City should try to do as much as possible in-house and put the resources on the specific problems that will be most cost effective. Building operators should be empowered to improve the way energy is used and they should be made responsible to do it.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Purdy

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1. Update on filling vacancies on the Commission (Eric Olson)
2. Update on Power Choice: Meeting of the Working Group on June 19, 2018 (Jim Purdy)
3. Update on Climate Action Plan for Newton (Halina Brown/Jon Kantar)
4. Update on energy intern. (Eric Olson)

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday May 23, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room 205

Present: Eric Olson, Chairman, Halina Brown, Vice Chair, Michael Gevelber, Stephen Grody, Jonathan Kantar, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy, Puja Vohre; Cory Alperstein, Asa Hopkins, Councilor Emily Norton, Nick O'Connor.

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the preceding meeting (April 25, 2018) were reviewed and approved with revisions.

Minutes of the April 25 meeting were approved with corrections.

1. Update on filling vacancies on the Commission (Eric Olson)

Eric reported that he is working to fill vacancies in the Commission. He also urges interested people to attend and participate in discussions, even if they are not members. (They will not be able to vote on any motions that come up, however.) He is happy to meet with people individually or in small groups to discuss energy issues and the work of the NCCE. Stephen Grody was appointed by the League of Women Voters; two vacancies remain to be filled as of the date of this meeting, one by the Mayor and one by the City Council. Members and others in attendance introduced themselves and their backgrounds.

2. Update on Power Choice: Meeting of the Working Group on May 15 2018 (Jim Purdy)

Jim Purdy summarized the role of Sustainability Director Ann Berwick's working group, which meets with her monthly to discuss issues and advise on public outreach. NCCE members Halina Brown and Jim Purdy are members of the Working Group. (For more background on the Working Group, see the notes from the April Energy Commission meeting.)

The City's website explains the aggregation program, and it contains a web link to the Newton Coalition for Climate Action, which is an advocate for a reducing the City's carbon footprint, transition to 100% renewable energy, and adding 40% Class 1 Renewable power in the default option in Newton Power Choice to the state mandated level (currently 13%). The Coalition has a website <http://newtonclimateaction.org/> which has a link back to the City's website <https://masspowerchoice.com/newton>. Ann and working group members are meeting with Coalition members on June 6 to coordinate and discuss issues.

Outreach includes appearances at the meetings of local groups, e.g., Area Councils, house parties, presence at Village Day celebrations, presentations at library programs, and – in the future – lawn signs, presence at Farmers Markets, water bill inserts, etc. The outreach activity will increase closer to the launch date of the program. Newton Power Choice is being reviewed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, which held a hearing earlier in May which did not raise any issues or problems with the City's plan; DPU certification is expected to come late in the fall.

The Mayor intends to conduct a survey of Newton residents concerning willingness to pay for more renewables in the power provided. The Mayor's survey needs to be designed and will cover the same issues as the survey designed by Michael Gevelber and Halina Brown that was sponsored by Green Newton and conducted in Fall 2017; it made statistically significant conclusions about willingness to pay. It is expected that the Mayor's survey will confirm the conclusions of the earlier survey, but it is crucial that the questions are properly worded. Survey consultants have not yet been identified; Ann Berwick will assist in the selection.

Jon Kantar suggested that the City should simply get a peer review of the earlier survey. Cory noted that Councilor Emily Norton had intended to survey her constituents in Ward 2 on the same subject and received advice from the Coalition; Councilor Norton now intends to rely on the City's survey, and Cory suggested that the advice that she provided to Councilor Norton would be applicable to any survey that the City ends up doing.

Michael commented that the original survey was designed to avoid bias and achieved statistically significant results with over 400 responses, so the main value of a separate survey is political credibility.

Jon Kantar noted that a key feature of the original survey was a table that showed the cost of various levels of renewable power, and he doesn't see how that could be done in a phone survey. Eric noted that a professor at Brandeis has offered to review the original survey.

Cory commented on the Coalition's advocacy for a high percentage of renewables.: a 4-month 40% campaign, getting signatures on letter of support. They are taking a multi-pronged approach to outreach, including getting Council members to sign the letter – currently 7 of them did; she hopes a majority of the Council ultimately will.

Their goal is to meet with the Mayor on this. Also getting groups like 350 MA to formally advocate for a 40% default and is doing outreach on this. The Coalition is also establishing a fund to indemnify people who unintentionally end up with the default if the extra 40% is adopted by the Mayor. A presentation is on the NCA website. The Coalition is willing to assist in promoting an opt-up to 100% renewables, but its immediate goal is to build support for the 40% extra.

Halina sent a letter to the Mayor suggesting that the Mayor should choose a cost level to use in setting the default, but the Mayor didn't agree that this is the way to proceed. Asa commented that a dollar driven approach may have undesirable consequences.

3. Improving performance of public buildings in Newton (Michael Gevelber)

City Energy Manager Bill Ferguson proposed an energy audit on the top 3 or 4 school buildings by amount of energy used; (they account for 54.8% of total school dept energy). Michael has some concerns – he is familiar with the companies that do these audits – and using a consultant is not always an efficient use of budget. Bill wants \$200k per building for study and implementation of some improvements.

Two thirds of the total energy used is electricity and one third is gas.

Jon noted that the elementary schools have very different space programs than the high schools; also some schools are campuses, not single buildings.

There are also differences in how the energy use is managed; for example, Day Middle School has central air conditioning that is on 24/7 throughout the summer.

Administrative differences between the Public Buildings Department and the School Department also must be reconciled. Michael would like to encourage a more nuanced study.

Jon commented that the Design Review Commission has included in its guidelines that we should recommission buildings every three years. He said that Building Commissioner Josh Morse believes that this would be useful. So coming to Josh with the DRC recommendation might be the best way to address the issue. Michael suggested that a full recommissioning study can be quite expensive, so preliminary study about the building and how it is operated should be the first step.

Puja commented that MassSave together with Eversource and NGrid can provide funding for engineering analysis as well as building improvements.

Asa asked if performance contracts have been considered – Eric explained that several years ago Noresco did this for 55 buildings and recommended improvements in 13 buildings to improve performance; however, recommended equipment costs were high. It was concluded that assessments could be done cheaper in-house, and the City shifted from the Noresco contract to a preferred vendor program and went that route. Preferred vendor is the program recommended by MassSave; it includes incentives from NGrid and Eversource.

Michael recommends that Bill Ferguson should meet with the School Department to resolve some of these issues. Jon suggested that the Public Facilities Committee could help with this issue.

Eric noted that there are opportunities for meeting with Josh; Jon should meet with Peter Barrer first. He will talk with Michael first about what the ask is.

4. Update on Climate Action Plan for Newton (Halina/Jon Kantar)

Not discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Purdy

Newton Citizens Commission on Energy
City of Newton

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



Eric Olson (Chair), Halina Brown (Vice-chair), Stephen Grody, Michael Gevelber, Jonathan Kantar, Ira Krepchin, James Purdy,
Ann Berwick (*ex-officio*)
Advisory Members:
Cory Alperstein, Edward Craddock, Brant Davis,
Claudine Ellyin,

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Telephone 617-796-1019
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Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

AGENDA for May 23, 2018 Meeting, 7 PM, City Hall Room 211

1. Update on filling vacancies on the Commission (Eric Olson)
2. Update on Power Choice: Meeting of the Working Group on May 15 2018 (Jim Purdy)
3. Improving performance of public buildings in Newton (Michael Gevelber)
4. Update on Climate Action Plan for Newton (Halina/Jon Kantar)

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday April 25, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room 205

Present: Eric Olson, Chairman, Halina Brown, Vice Chair, Fred Brustman, Michael Gevelber, Jonathan Kantar, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy; Peter Barrer, Stephen Grody, Asa Hopkins, Jon Klein, Councilor Emily Norton, Nick O'Connor, Puja Vohre

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the preceding meeting (February 2018) were reviewed and approved with revisions.

1. Changes in the membership of the Commission (Eric Olson)

Eric explained the founding document from 1970 that created the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy. He will send it to everyone by email. He used a projector to display a list of members and their appointing authorities (Three by Newton City Council, Three by the Mayor, and one each from the School Committee, Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce, and League of Women Voters.) Three slots are currently vacant.

Fred is stepping down, and the League of Women Voters has appointed Stephen Grody to fill that slot. The City Council and the Mayor will each appoint a member to fill their slots.

He suggested that people interested in becoming members in the future start attending regularly. Everyone will be heard, but only members can vote on motions.

2. Update on Power Choice: Meeting of the Working Group on April 17 (Jim Purdy)

Jim and Halina are members of this informal group that works with Sustainability Director Ann Berwick on the Newton Power Choice aggregation. Other members are Councilor Deb Crossley, Energy Manager Bill Ferguson, and outreach planner Lily Canaan Reynolds from the Planning Department. Information on the program, which will go into effect in the fall of 2018 can be found at the web link <https://masspowerchoice.com/newton>.

The current work is to provide outreach on the program, through meetings in all parts of Newton. The objective is to reach the Mayor's goal of a hundred outreach meetings. The NPC website lists upcoming meetings. Ann has a \$50,000 direct expense budget for outreach signage, etc.; half was provided by Peregrine Energy, the City's consultant on the aggregation, the rest from the City. The working group brainstormed ways to get information out to the public and the business community.

There is a hearing on Newton's aggregation plan before the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities on May 16 and 2 PM at One South Station. These hearings are generally pro-forma. The aggregation plan is on the website.

Halina provided an "elevator talk" on the aggregation program (i.e., a very short summary for use with interested people.) A key point is that Newton is aiming for a higher percentage of Class 1 Renewables in the default that will be provided to Newton customers unless they opt out; they can also opt down to the state-mandated percentage (currently 13%) or opt up to 100% renewables. The default level will be determined by the Mayor very close to the actual purchase of power when the cost is known.

Jon Kantar said that the Mayor hopes to select a relatively high default value based on the input she receives from the public and groups like Newton Coalition for Climate Action and Green Newton, which are cooperating with Ann in the outreach efforts.

Councilor Norton recommended that talking to individuals outside the library or supermarkets is a better way than house parties or small group meetings. Michael agreed with Councilor Norton that the City needs to take the lead in advocating the highest feasible default; he also recommends that the City website should provide detailed and accurate information about the willingness-to-pay survey that was performed last fall by the Coalition and Green Newton; e.g., that the survey found 86% of those who were asked for their opinion said they would pay more for green power. Eric and Jonathan suggested that more surveying should be done, but Halina pointed out that the survey that was conducted was designed to avoid systematic bias and had a sufficient number of responses for statistical reliability. The Coalition is currently encouraging people to sign a letter to the mayor advocating a 40% default on top of the state requirement.

Eric pointed out that the program will make it easy for people who are not willing to pay more for renewable energy to opt out completely or to opt down to only the state-mandated level of renewables.

3. Improving performance of public buildings in Newton (Michael Gevelber)

[not discussed]

4. Climate Action Plan for Newton (TBA)

Halina introduced Peter Barrer, who is a member of the Mayor's committee to develop a Climate Action Plan (CAP); Eric, Halina, and Jon Kantar are also members of this group.

The CAP group is now in the process of deciding on content, how to use city staff and other resources such as volunteers, Energy Commission members, interns, etc.

Halina said that three pieces of work are now being completed by the committee: the Plan outline, a draft letter on process and timeline for preparing the CAP, and a list of seven early actions that can be taken.

Peter and Eric presented data in a pie chart showing the components of the City's greenhouse gas footprint based on work done earlier by Andy Savitz and Eric; it includes methane leaks expressed as a CO₂ equivalent.

The total of emissions is 982,562 tonnes per year. (A metric tonne is approximately equal to an English ton).

Gas leaks accounted for 8% of CO₂E. Fred thinks that is overstated, but Peter pointed out that methane is much more potent than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas.

There is a very large component that is due to transportation; it is estimated to account for 30% of emissions. Newton's municipal buildings and vehicle fleet account for a very small slice of the total.

Michael feels that the transportation category should exclude thru traffic passing through, since Newton can only address transportation that originates in Newton; Peter noted that there also arguments for including the pass-through traffic. Jim noted that vehicles registered in Newton are responsible for approximately 1 million vehicle miles per day (45 vehicle miles per day by Newton households).

Peter also showed a chart with assumed emissions reductions of 46% overall by 2026.

Newton Power Choice has the potential to cut emissions due to electricity by half if there is a 40% default level of Class 1 renewables on top of state-mandated 13%.

Puja asked what about measures to reduce impacts from new construction going forward.

Halina noted that the mayor suggested also expressing emissions on a per capita basis, since population is expected to continue to increase.

Puja noted that the state requirement under Global Warming Solutions Act is 80% reduction in GHG by 2050.

Emily said that it sounds like the CAP will be addressing more than the city can do on its own. She supports that.

Peter stated that the Mayor is committed to publish the CAP by December 2018. We will need heavy volunteer participation to meet this target.

Each idea in the CAP will flow into an implementation task,

Data must be verified. The committee will engage city staff during the summer to get feedback. They will meet with the Planning Department in early May, then prioritize actions and complete the plan.

Michael noted that they need to act now to hire an intern, as most qualified students are already obtaining summer work.

Peter stated that there are seven early action items being considered:

- Providing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.
- Using the Energy Stabilization Fund to invest the savings from obtained from energy efficiency projects like school retrofits.
- The greenhouse gas effect of capital projects will be given greater weight in prioritizing them in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Providing EV priority parking places.
- Increasing the city's Renewable Energy Credits from solar projects.
- Applying funds from the City's share of the Volkswagen settlement to purchase EV's for the City fleet and to repair the worst gas leaks.
- Applying pressure on the utilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout their service areas. Eversource needs to invest in EV infrastructure. Over the near future, NGrid needs to invest \$25 million for the same purpose (it is the electric utility in parts of Eastern Massachusetts). Both need to work with Newton and other municipalities to reduce methane leaks, which are widespread.

Emily stated that Newton should coordinate and participate with other cities on joint efforts.

Asa said that he assumes the CAP committee will winnow ideas down to pick the best items.

Emily said that the City Council should pass a 100% renewable resolution. The Sierra Club, of which she is chapter president, has a "Ready for 100" team promoting these resolutions.

Michael said that the CAP needs to identify the responsible party and the cost of each item in the CAP.

Emily suggested placing climate warning labels on gas pumps and signage in parking lots.

Jon Kantar advocated providing exclusive EV parking with charging stations.

Asa suggested promoting the use of heat pumps. Jon Kantar suggested the City consider waiving building permit fees for HVAC upgrades using heat pump.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Purdy

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday February 28, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Room 211

Present: Eric Olson, Chairman, Halina Brown, Vice Chair, Fred Brustman, Michael Gevelber, Jonathan Kantar, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy; Cory Alperstein, Ed Craddock, Councilor Deborah Crossley, Asa Hopkins, Jon Klein, Councilor Emily Norton, Maureen Reilly-Meigher

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the preceding meeting (January 2018) were reviewed and approved with revisions.

Items on the published agenda:

1. Dates for the next 6 meetings of EC

After discussion, it was voted unanimously to hold NCCE meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

2. Update on Newton Power Choice: opt-down, brochure, outreach, other (Jim Purdy)

The City has printed a 3-fold color brochure that explains the program. Sustainability Director Ann Berwick is giving presentations at meetings of local organizations like Area Councils and is distributing the brochure. The Mayor has said publicly that she anticipates “a hundred” such meetings before NPC’s launch in the fall of 2018. Halina noted that Ann is finding it challenging to get on agendas and that most of the available slots are very tight for time.

Ann and Emily spoke at Day Middle School PTO about the program. Deb said she has discussed NPC with the Mayor about challenge of conveying a long complex story;

An internal Working Group meets with Ann to discuss how the community voice can be heard and input incorporated. (The Working Group includes Bill Ferguson, Councilors Deb Crossley and Allison Leary, and NCCE members Jim Purdy and Halina Brown.) Deb wants to use the Working Group meetings to discuss how best to introduce and explain Newton Power Choice to the public.)

Michael commented that it is important to get the citizenry to focus on the issue and engage in this discussion, including what people are willing to pay for sustainability.

Jon Klein commented that Ann’s presentation at Dem City committee was very good, but there was not enough time to explain the willingness to pay survey that was sponsored by Green Newton.

Eric commented that he has found it possible to explain the survey and the willingness to pay concept in three minutes.

Deb commented that we need to follow up with the community organizations after these very constrained events. Emily Norton remarked that the City’s consultant Peregrine is the resource to use in this outreach.

Halina said that the working group will evaluate progress with public outreach so far at its upcoming meeting.

Maureen Reilly-Meigher noted that Eric’s discussion of the program on NewTV is available on the Coalition’s website (newtonclimateaction.org), and she suggested additional videos should be added, with web links sent in advance to interested persons.

It was suggested that the City’s Working Group should develop a follow-up document and message with help from the Energy Commission.

Jim reported current thinking in the Working Group about the structure of NPC options. The Working Group recommended three options: the default level to be determined later, opt up to 100%, and opt down to the state-mandated Renewable Portfolio Standard (zero additional Class 1 Renewables.) There was discussion in the

Working Group about whether the opt down should contain, say, 2 percent above the RPS rather than zero, but in the end the majority felt that for the sake of clarity there should be three simple options: zero for opt down, standard options (the so-called default, still to be determined by the Mayor) and 100% for opt up. At a subsequent meeting between Ann, Bill Ferguson and the Mayor a decision was made that there will be two four options: zero, a hundred, a standard/default and another one in-between. The level for the fourth option this option will depend on what default level is chosen by the Mayor prior to launch.

Fred recommended that what we call zero is in fact the state RPS (in 2018 it is 13% of class one renewables) should be the floor, and we need to start thinking about effective communication of all the options. He believes we need to find the default number with the most acceptance.

Michael pointed out that most people stay at whatever default level is provided, without thinking about it.

Emily said that people just want to know what they have to do: do nothing and get the default, opt up to 100% if they're motivated, or opt down to minimize cost.

3. Memo to the mayor re. Power Choice default level (Halina Brown)

A letter to the Mayor was drafted by Halina. In it she points out that we won't know the cost of Class 1 Renewable energy in advance until a few hours before the purchase. So we need to start now to clarify how much extra cost we are willing to accept, e.g., 3% or 5% or 7 or 10%, etc., increase in customers' monthly electric bills. With that established and discussed in public outreach, the City can determine how much Class 1 Renewable energy to provide in the default, once the bids are offered to the City.

Eric noted that in meetings with the Mayor he has suggested that we look at the range of electric rates in the past to help determine the acceptable range of costs associated with the NPC default.

Cory noted that the survey on the willingness to pay presents that information. The survey results are posted on the Newton Climate Action website.

Asa Hopkins commented that the discussion of cost needs to be carried forward to what it will buy in extra green energy.

Deb noted that the Mayor was very enthusiastic and eager to accept input on this matter. She's counting on Ann to lead her to a solution. How NCCE talks to the Mayor about the size of the default is very important.

Halina introduced the recent ongoing effort to develop Newton Climate Action Plan (CAP). It is carried out by a small ad hoc group comprising: Jonathan Kantar, Halina Brown, Eric Olson, Peter Barrer and Deb Crossley. The first three on this list are members of the NCCE. The Climate Action Plan will recommend specific targets for emissions from individual sectors and will recommend a mix of policies that will help to reach these targets. Newton Power Choice and the associated default level will be among the recommended actions.

Jon Klein commented that a high default level is the easiest and fastest way toward that overarching goal.

Jon Kantar noted that the current outreach needs to provide an introduction with the question "Why are we doing this?"

Cory commented that it is the Mayor's decision, but the Mayor looks to Ann for advice. But Cory feels there also needs to be input from the Newton community, as policy making process requires, and that the City needs to be open to advocating and taking leadership in this matter to a greater extent than has been done so far.

Jim commented that we should expect some pushback from some part of the public over the issue of cost. Deb commented that she doesn't expect resistance coming from City Councilors. Cory commented that we need to prepare for the eventuality of pushback, so we can deal with it in the future.

Deb urged that we shouldn't be too critical of the City at this early point in the outreach process.

Michael said that he has some misgivings about the letter, but supports sending it.

4. Update on GHG emission inventory (from Eric Olson)

Eric reported that he looked at the inventory done in 2005 by the Energy Commission and compared it to the inventory that was done in 2015 with data for 2013. The bottom line was that the City's total greenhouse gas emissions declined slightly from 1.1 million tons to 1.073 million in 2013. The target that the Commission set in 2005 was to decrease energy use decrease by 7% (from 13 tons CO2 equivalent to 11 tons).

Jon Kantar commented that overall energy use is the important statistic to watch.

Deb said that we should we get a consultant to update the data set. Ann Berwick has said she favors doing it ourselves and getting Peregrine to review it. We should ask Peregrine's principal Paul Gromer for his thoughts about the data.

Ira noted that energy efficiency has improved since 2005, but the City's population has grown since then.

Eric highlighted the fact that getting to 50% renewable electricity lowers electric sector from 22% to 11% of the City's total footprint; nothing else we can do would have an impact that large.

Asa suggested that we should compare our energy use with statewide statistics to evaluate Newton.

Emily pointed out that lots of communities look to Newton for leadership.

Eric said that he expects to make progress with the analysis by the end of March.

5. Energy Committee vs. Newton Climate Action (formerly known as Coalition for Climate Change) (Jim Purdy)

Jim proposed that while we all support the work being done by the Newton Coalition for Climate Action, including advocacy for a high default level of renewables. But since the Newton Citizens' Commission on Energy is part of the City government, it is inappropriate for the Commission to be a member of the Newton Climate Action, NCA. Jim made a motion to respectfully ask the NCA to remove our name from the list of Coalition members. The motion was seconded and adopted unanimously. Cory Alperstein from the Coalition indicated that she would get the change made on the NCA website and materials.

A related but different question also came up: whether it is appropriate for the Commission to be a signatory supporting the Resolution for carbon-free Newton, sponsored by NCA. The general feeling was that it is appropriate. No motion was made and no vote taken. For now, the Commission's name remains in the Resolution.

6. March 7th Facilities Committee meeting re: energy update for the municipal operations (Deb Crossley)

Deb announced that the Public Facilities Committee meeting on March 7 will include a presentation by the City's energy manager Bill Ferguson on Newton's action to reduce energy use in its own buildings and operations, and the next phase of rooftop solar on City property.

She noted that there are 78 city buildings, and there is \$3.5 million in deferred maintenance, much of which would save energy, e.g., replace steam traps periodically.

7. Newton Vulnerability Plan and Climate Action Plan (Deb Crossley)

Deb reported that a very positive meeting was held by the Mayor on preparing a Climate Action Plan, and another meeting will be held in a month (i.e., March.)

Other Business:

Deb noted that Mayor Fuller is taking a strong lead to ensure that commissions are at full membership; the NCCE has nine member slots, but only six members are active, so three new members are needed. Councilor Norton added that a number of people have come to her attention who are interested in becoming members of NCCE. Eric said that he will work to get members appointed to vacant slots. (Note: different slots are filled by

appointment from several entities: the Mayor, the City Council, the School Committee, the League of Women Voters, and the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce.)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Purdy

Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy

Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday January 10, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

City Hall Cafeteria

Present: Eric Olson, Chairman, Halina Brown, Vice Chair, Fred Brustman, Michael Gevelber, Jonathan Kantar, Ira Krepchin, Jim Purdy; Cory Alperstein, Ed Craddock, Jon Klein

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

1. Community Choice Aggregation (Newton Power Choice) -- Next steps by the City, by Peregrine, by Newton Coalition for Climate Action

Several members feel that as part of the outreach to community groups the willingness-to-pay survey should be presented. Jon Kantar suggested that the NCCE is a resource that should assist with the meetings. He also suggested that people attending the meetings should be polled about their views of the program. Eric added that we could do follow-up phone calls and could develop language to address the presence of a strong environmental constituency in Newton.

Halina is developing a memo to the Mayor representing NCCE's recommendations for Newton Power Choice, in particular how to determine the appropriate default level of Class 1 renewables close to the bid date when the cost is known.

Cory stated that the memo shouldn't spotlight an environmental group as the source of advocacy. Rather, it should refer to "a diverse coalition of groups throughout the community for whom this is an important issue."

Eric noted that there is a surge of people who want to address the green issue. He hopes the survey will be presented as evidence of public interest.

Halina reported that the City's working group is discussing how the options in Newton Power Choice should be structured and it is tending toward (1) an opt down to the Renewable Portfolio Standard without additional renewables, (2) a default level, and (3) an opt up to 100% renewables. However, the opt down could include a small additional increment of class 1 renewables. The City needs to decide on this.

Eric suggested that the default level might be considered in terms of the cost to the consumer, leading to a default level of renewable, as opposed to setting a default percentage of renewables and then calculating the cost.

Jon Kantar stated that NCCE needs to play a major role in helping the City think about what is the appropriate default level.

Halina recommended that the default should be expressed in terms of its cost as a percent increase in the customer's electric bill.

Eric stated that we need crisp, clear narratives. The NCCE should send one to Ann Berwick for consideration.

Cory reported on the Coalition's work on Newton Power Choice. Its goal is to get its website up soon, use it to explain why the problem is urgent, and recommend an action plan and a specific goal to increase the default level of renewables for NPC. The Coalition can provide training sessions for people who want to make presentations.

Jon Klein showed a first page design for the Coalition's website, which will be live soon.

Jim suggested looking at the public process in two phases. First explain aggregation and the need to increase the amount of renewable energy people can get; then discussion of the default level can build on that information and be emphasized later in the process.

Members agreed that information about the survey should be part of the public presentations.

It was suggested that the Coalition should suggest ways to describe what a robust default should be in terms of city values.

Michael proposed that the memo to the Mayor should describe the decision process at the moment when bids are received from suppliers.

Jon Klein suggested that the opt down should be defined as whatever matches the Eversource price on the day of the bid, i.e., “price neutral”.

Halina will draft the memo to the Mayor and circulate for comments.

2. Newton Energy Action Plan 2018 – scope, and what do we know about hard goals? How the Energy Commission can contribute. First step we can help with, updating the energy and emissions baseline with new information from NGrid and Eversource.

Eric presented new data on the City’s overall carbon footprint for all sectors (residential/commercial as well as municipal). Electricity usage is up since 2015 [check date]. However, this is not necessarily bad, since the ultimate goal is to substitute electricity for other energy sources and make the electricity renewable.

Electricity accounts for 22% of the total energy footprint in this data.

3. PV Net Metering Issues. Late 2017 decision on Eversource’s proposal affecting large solar PV arrays and potential impacts on Newton’s existing solar projects. DOER, Northeast Clean Energy Council, UMASS, the Attorney General’s office, the Mass Energy Council and a number of State Senators and Reps have all supported the municipalities’ challenge to the proposed rate change.

Bill Ferguson reviewed the Eversource DPU filing that proposed to drastically drop the net metering rate for municipal solar projects. This would have a major impact on the phases that are already built and effectively shut down future projects by Newton and other municipalities. With the City’s attorney Allen Mandl and Sustainability Director Ann Berwick, Newton formed a consortium with several other municipalities to persuade DPU that rates should not change for these projects. The effort appears to have been successful.

Eric will write a letter to the TAB, Boston Globe, etc., recognizing this effort.

4. 2018 plans in Newton Schools and other buildings for energy related improvements, including new construction (Lincoln Eliot) and retrofit work on-going with Preferred Vendor Programs

A new Preferred Vendor application was just sent to the state just by Bill Ferguson. He reports that the City is considering air-source heat pumps for some projects.

Lincoln Eliot may be next new school to be constructed, pending financing, after the Angier, Zervas, and Cabot school construction..

Jon Kantar reported that Mayor Fuller Is Committed To Developing A Climate Action Plan In The First Year, Including an Energy Action Plan. Jon reports that the Mayor is considering that the City should invest and leverage all savings in energy costs into future projects.

The new administration seems committed to maintaining and expanding current energy efficiency work. Tracking progress and accountability will be ongoing, as well as making sustainability part of the culture across City departments.

5. 2018 plans for additional solar: will the City continue to work with Power Purchase Agreements, that do not allow us to deduct the green electrons from our carbon footprint? Or can we justify at last outright ownership?

Not discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

**Newton Citizens Commission on Energy
January 10, 2018 Agenda**
City of Newton

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



Eric Olson (Chair), Halina Brown (vice-chair), Lawrence Kaufman,
Ira Krepchin, Fred Brustman, James Purdy, Jonathan Kantar
Michael Gevelber, Andrew Savitz/Ann Berwick (*ex-officio*)

Advisory Members:

Edward Craddock, Frank Gundal
Brant Davis, Claudine Ellyin, Cory Alperstein

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

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Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

**The January 2018 meeting of the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy will be held:
Wednesday evening, January 10th, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in the City Hall Room 204.**

Agenda (Any other business properly brought to the Commission's attention)

(Review of November 2017 minutes)

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New Business To be discussed

- 1. Community Choice Aggregation (Newton Power Choice)** -- Next steps by the City, by Peregrine, by Newton Coalition for Climate Action
- 2. Newton Energy Action Plan 2018** – scope, and what do we know about hard goals? How the Energy Commission can contribute. First step we can help with, updating the energy and emissions baseline with new information from Ngrid and Eversource.
- 3. PV Net Metering Issues.** Late 2017 decision on Eversource's proposal affecting large solar PV arrays and potential impacts on Newton's existing solar projects. DOER, Northeast Clean Energy Council, UMASS, the Attorney General's office, the Mass Energy Council and a number of State Senators and Reps have all supported the municipalities' challenge to the proposed rate change.
- 4. 2018 plans in Newton Schools and other buildings** for energy related improvements, including new construction (Lincoln Eliot) and retrofit work on-going with Preferred Vendor Programs
- 5. 2018 plans for additional solar:** will the City continue to work with Power Purchase Agreements, that do not allow us to deduct the green electrons from our carbon footprint? Or can we justify at last outright ownership?