



Newton Citizens Commission on Energy City of Newton, Massachusetts

<http://www.newtonma.gov/government/climate-and-sustainability/citizens-commission-on-energy>

Halina S. Brown, Chair

Cory Alperstein
Michael Gevelber
Stephen Grody
Philip Hanser
Asa Hopkins
Jonathan Kantar
Jay Snyder
Ann Berwick (ex-officio)
Bill Ferguson (ex-officio)

Advisory Members:
Beverly Craig
James Purdy
Philip Vergragt
Puja Vohra

Summary of the meeting on January 25, 2023

Present: Halina Brown, Cory Alperstein, Jonathan Kantar, Asa Hopkins, Michael Gevelber, Jay Snyder, Stephen, Phil Hanser

Jim Purdy, Philip Vergragt, Julia LaGuette, Chris Alt, Jon Slote, Liora Silkes

Agenda: Discussion about the strategic plan for residential housing

Announcements:

- February 16, Public Hearing on Specialized Stretch Code. A suggestion is made that the Commission writes a letter of support. **Halina will follow up with the Building Standards Committee.**
- **Halina will be away on February 22nd, our next scheduled meeting.** We will decide between two options: a meeting on the 15th or, if that creates a scheduling conflict, Cory will moderate the meeting on the 22nd.

Halina articulated the expected outcomes of this meeting: The Asks for the City; Framing of the strategy document; Allocating tasks. She suggested framing that links retiring the gas infrastructure with insulation and electrification of houses. Concerns are raised by some that that may deemphasize the main goal of the strategic plan, which is to insulate and electrify residential homes. Caution will be needed in drafting the text.

The discussion draws on the first draft of the Strategic Plan which was distributed prior to the meeting.

- First and foremost, we must ask for a radical improvement in data flow and management. That involves ISD, IT and Assessor's offices. Some expressed doubts if the ISD has the capacity and will to make the necessary changes in that regard. The formal letter to Jonathan Yeo (see below) produced a positive email.
- Trust among consumers in heatpump contractors is low. Mistakes, misjudgments and inadequate training are indeed common among contractors. We will **request the City to institute a requirement for an inspection before the job commences and after it is completed.** This will gradually build consumers' trust. Assuming about 100 installations per year, a part-time inspector will suffice for now (*is it an administrative or legislative decision?*). Additionally, Liora has prepared a list of questions that homeowners should ask before embarking on electrification. This list will be handed out by the inspector.

- Targeted outreach to 179 homeowners, as described in the Draft, has been developed by Working Group 2. It will require resources to plan the details and to execute. **We must ask the City for these resources.** With regard to **motivating individuals**, a suggestion was made for further consideration to take Angie's approach: a forum for contractors and homeowners who have already installed heatpumps, or want to install.
- At this point we should **prepare a budget** for additional resources in the Sustainability Office to enable the actions above. A subgroup will take on this task: **Halina, Jonathan, Phil and Cory.**
- Cory reported that Green Newton is in the process of developing plans for the residential sector. She/GN is developing a list of consultants who have developed similar projects for municipalities.
- **A letter to the Mayor will be prepared** in which she will be briefed on the plans we are making and the necessity for additional resources to refine and implement them. The letter should be widely publicized. It should start by giving the Mayor credit for supporting BERDO. **Halina will write the first draft.**
- We did not cover all the action items in the Draft strategic plan. The discussion will continue next time we meet. Halina will continue drafting the plan.

Jonathan Yeo
Chief Operating Officer
City of Newton

January 2, 2023

Dear Mr. Yeo,

Members of the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss how to improve access to and effective use of the data collected by the City, which can help implement the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

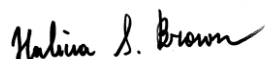
During the past several months, we have been working with Liora Silkes on implementing the CAPs goals for the residential housing sector. Our focus has been on augmenting Liora's current 4OF campaign to mobilize homeowners to weatherize and electrify their homes. As you know, Newton's residential sector is the most significant single contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

While developing new approaches and plans, we have consistently encountered problems with the Assessor's database. Therefore, the purpose of the meeting with you is 1) to better understand the data flows within the city operations as related to

the housing sector, 2) to present you with the ideas we have developed for facilitating house retrofits, and 3) to discuss how to improve our ability to access and effectively use the data collected by the City for that purpose.

With the New Year, we are energetically poised to find ways to reduce emissions from private residences. We are eager to work with you toward that goal. I would appreciate it if you could set up a meeting in the immediate future with Commission members to discuss these points.

Sincerely,



Halina Brown
Chair, Newton Citizens Commission on Energy

cc. Anne Berwick
Liora Silkes
Bill Ferguson

From: Jonathan Yeo <jyeo@newtonma.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 2, 2023 11:51 AM

To: Halina Brown <HBrown@clarku.edu>

Cc: pvergragt (pvergragt@outlook.com) <pvergragt@outlook.com>; Jon Slote <slotejon@gmail.com>; asahopkins@gmail.com; cory.alperstein@gmail.com; Halina Brown <HBrown@clarku.edu>; Jay Snyder <jdsnyder02@gmail.com>; Jim Purdy <jcpurdy02464@gmail.com>; Jonathan Kantar <jonathan@sagebuilders.com>; Michael Gevelber <gevelber@bu.edu>; Phil Hanser <pqhanser@verizon.net>; 'Stephen Grody' <stephen.lwvn@onevideo.com>; Liora Silkes <lsilkes@newtonma.gov>

Subject: [EXT] RE: meeting request with NCCE

Hi Halina,

Happy New Year!

I love the term “energetically poised”. Yes, we will work with you to schedule a meeting.

Back in touch soon,

Jonathan

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86759000778?pwd=aFprV2xvY0p5a0phYjFLZndVR3hGZz09>

Meeting ID: 867 5900 0778

Passcode: 611317