



# NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

## APPROVED MINUTES

AUGUST 26, 2021  
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

**Location:** Virtual meeting

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**Members present:** Wayne Feiden, Chair, Louis Hasbrouck, Alex Jarrett, Rachel Maiore, Gordon Meadows, Ashley Muspratt, Richard Parasiliti, Ben Weil

Wayne Feiden opened the meeting and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

**Public comment period:** Adele Franks: Climate Action Now is hosting two forums, one for mayoral candidates and one for at large City Council candidates on September 21 and 23 respectively. You can send questions for the candidates in advance to Adele ([adele.franks@gmail.com](mailto:adele.franks@gmail.com)).

Lilly Lombard: Interested in Ben's presentation. On behalf of Main St for Everyone, we find that the current options are not acceptable and we continue to forward science-based positions that are relevant, urgent and necessary.

James Lowenthal: On behalf of N'ton City Lights, we continue to forward positions that are relevant, urgent and necessary. We have not gotten the traction for city decisions around lighting to be made holistically. We reiterate an offer to meet city officials on site after dark to look at lighting.

**Review/approve minutes of 6/24/21 meeting:** Alex moved and Ben seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2021 NESC meeting. Motion passed unanimously with one abstention.

**Prepare to discuss most effective and strategic NESC roles:** Wayne presented a draft agenda for September's NESC retreat. Louis: we need to add short term goals to the medium and long term goals in the CRRP. Ben, identify mechanisms that are implementable. Gordon, address city's accountability of actions and advise. Alex, beware of too much. Be ready to run over into a second meeting. Ashley, this won't be in person – too bad. What tools can we use to make this interactive? Wayne, open to suggestions. Gordon, wants the commission chair to be set by City Council from the at-large members. Rachel, consider adding a youth seat to the commission.

**Future-proofing downtown for a low carbon energy future** Ben gave a presentation (attached) on district heating and the idea of designing into the underground utilities below Main St enough space to hold piping for a future district heating system. He felt this would need to be included in the December 25% design of subsurface utilities. He requests that the city add this to the scope of work for Toole Design Work and suggests they could subcontract for expertise from HEET or MEP. Wayne stated that he and Chris will reach out to Toole and request such a quote. Ben Moved and Gordon seconded a motion stating that the sense of the Commission is to request that Toole Design Group be instructed to provide the city with a quote for the cost to design into the subsurface utility space, room for a future district heating pipeline. Motion passed with Wayne voting nay and all others yea. Ben asked the commission to consider using the Energy & Sustainability Revolving Fund to pay for ssuch added work.

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**Voting Members:** Wayne Feiden, Chair • David Pomerantz, Vice Chair • Jonathan Flagg • Alex Jarrett • Rachel Maiore • Gordon Meadows • Ashley Muspratt • Richard Parasiliti • Tim Smith • Ben Weil

**Staff advisor, non voting:** Chris Mason

Ben moved and Wayne seconded a motion stating that the commission felt it would be appropriate to use said revolving fund for such design work, if adequate funds exist in the revolving fund. Motion passed unanimously.

**Cooler Communities in N’ton Schools:** M. J. Eustace with Ener-G-Save presented on their Cooler Communities program. While showing a YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5luXzJsRPZQ&t=6s>) on the program MJ explained that the program relied on students doing research and developing presentations on topics relevant to the community, which they will then present at a school-wide fair in the spring, MJ announced that several Northampton teachers at many grade levels are likely to use this program to help them teach to Massachusetts standards this school year and that projects can range broadly in complexity and on what learning standards they address. Everything from science & technology topics to descriptive artwork and communication. She asked commissioners to send her ideas on topics relevant to the Northampton community that have to do with climate resilience and regeneration and/or suggest other organizations that she could reach out to. Ideas can be sent to MJ via email: ([maryjaneustace@ener-g-save.com](mailto:maryjaneustace@ener-g-save.com)). She also invited commissioners to help promote and engage in the fair and offered the following links for more information:

<https://community.massenergize.org/Coolercommunities/actions>

<https://community.massenergize.org/agawam/actions>

<https://coolercommunities.org/>

**Roundhouse and Gare Garage lighting:** Chris presented plans for Roundhouse lot and Gare Parking Garage lighting and described how the City adhered to the five principles of outdoor lighting. Key points at Roundhouse Lot: changed specific fixture to one with a higher efficacy and lower glare rating (which now matches the glare rating of the fixture recommended during public comment last month), minimum illuminance set at lowest recommended level from the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) (which was lower than a 2020 recommendation by the International Dark Sky Association (DSA)), light directed toward the center of the lot, maximum illuminance (2.1 fc) and average illuminance (1.25 fc) well below city requirements and IES standards, fixtures will dim at night, and color temperature is within acceptable range of the DSA. Chris paused for public comment.

James Lowenthal shared portions of his slide deck presented at last month’s public comment period and expressed skepticism that the city had met the five principles.

Chris, regarding parking garage: Key points: changed bulb selection for outdoor lights to a broad-beam downlight with a color temperature of 2,700K, re-lamping inside will not move fixture locations and will use the only 3000K water-tight lamp available, maximum lamp outputs will vary depending on ceiling height (lower ceiling, lower light output), the new lamps will aim light downward where existing lamps have a “batwing” throw pattern meant to illuminate the edges of the parking area, and lamps will dim when no motion is detected. Chris compared lighting illuminance to the best-case example provided in the parking garage lighting guide recommended by James Lowenthal. The City’s plan will result in lower average illuminance, lower maximum illuminance, and lower minimum illuminance. Being below the recommended minimum was deemed acceptable because these dimly lit areas all fall in portions of the garage that are not regularly used by pedestrians, the outer edges of the north and south sides of the garage.

Discussion: Rachel, why not use our local lighting expertise? Requested NESC form a subcommittee on lighting. Chris, the city does not see James as a lighting expert but as an individual with strongly held opinions. Gordon: find someone who is an expert. Louis, felt the photographs in James's presentation were taken from angles that were meant to show a strong bias. Alex, can we work with Smith College and their lighting experts? How can we front-load input on city lighting plans?

**Commissioner's Reports:** Tabled

**Ongoing City Department Projects Status:** Tabled

**Action Items:** Wayne and Chris will reach out to Toole to request a quote for added work to set aside space for a potential future district heating system.

The Committee adjourned at 6:00 PM.