

Respondent: Ted Gross

Office sought: At-large candidate for City Council, Ward 6

What are the 3 most important aspects of Newton's Climate Action Plan? (100-200 words)

The 3 most important aspects the plan appears to present are as follows: First, The Plan is a clear, concise and well written explanation of the issues involved in identifying Newton's ongoing contribution to climate change. Second, it recommends and carefully explains the most effective corrective action available to Newton Homeowners. It avoids double speak, half-truths and false promises. It identifies energy savings and how they might be obtained. Third, it sets achievable goals

What are 3 items you would like to see prioritized in the update to the CAP? (100-200 words)

The 3 items that should be prioritized in an update plan should be: First, since Newton is a residential city and updated plan should contain a section identifying the reduction in carbon emissions resulting from actions by home owners and builders since the publication of the first Climate Action Plan. Second, If the city improves its web site and allows dedicated space, an updated plan should present information on access and availability of the information on the web site. Third, the city should have an employee, familiar with the Climate Action Plan and programs available to provide homeowner and builders with savings and assistance, to review proposed applications for building permits and offer recommendations to the applicants. If established, this position should be highlighted in any update of the Plan.

What other ideas, plans, or proposals do you have that will support Newton's Climate Action Plan? (100-200 words)

Other ideas to support Newton's Climate Action Plan. I would recommend negotiating with a contractor to provide an additional discount to groups of 15 or 20 Homeowners who make a group purchase through the city. Homeowners would be able to make individual adjustments with the contractor. Such a contract will allow the city to maintain quality control over the equipment installed, over construction and uniformity of price.

Do you support the waste reduction goals passed by the City Council in 2022?

Yes

Which of the recommendations of the Sustainable Materials Management Commission's report "Setting the Path to Zero Waste" do you support? (100-200 words)

The study has several different recommendations rather than select one of them, they should all be reviewed. Since Newton's 20-year solid waste disposal contract with the Wheelabrator Waste-to-Energy (WTE) plant in Millbury will expire in 2028, we should first compare the successes achieved by the current plan with the established goals and revise the plan accordingly. We should consider returning to a policy the city had in the 1960's that prohibited mixing organic material in trash. We also should look into the availability of specialty collection contractors; that is contractors that collect specific items of trash for the purpose of reuse or recycling. There is a growing world-wide market for recycled materials. We should determine if collection methods, proven in other countries, might be adoptable in Newton.

Do you support efforts to encourage National Grid to retire rather than replace existing gas pipe infrastructure?

No

Would you support efforts requiring National Grid to repair rather than replace leaking gas pipes?

Yes

Do you support the elimination of the "2-foot rule" that National Grid uses to avoid Grant of Location applications for installing new gas pipes?

Yes

Provide any additional comments on the above. (optional)

Cost of replacement to homeowners is what will delay the replacement of our gas infrastructure. Until we have a reliable reasonable priced replacement for gas then we will have to allow that system stay in place. It is my understanding that the "National Grid two-foot rule" refers to the "tolerance zone" when excavating near buried utility lines. It requires using hand tools, not power equipment, within a specific distance of marked underground utilities to prevent damage, with the exact distance varying by state; and the Eversource "two-foot rule" is a safety procedure related to downed power lines, which instructs people to shuffle or hop away with their feet together to avoid serious injury from a ground-level electrical current. I am not aware of any arguments in favor of changing these rules.

Do you support the city moving to electric school buses as quickly as practical? (100-200 words)

Yes

Do you support the city adopting guidelines that are protective during heat emergencies, i.e. cooling centers? (100-200 words)

Yes I also support the preparation of a plan to adopt guidelines to protect residents and assure the availability of food and medicine in the event of other emergencies such as a storm, a loss of heat and electricity in the cold weather seasons and, unfortunately, the federal imposition of martial law.