

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair
Mari Brunner
Terry Clark, Councilor
Gary Lamoureux, Councilor
Larry Dachowski, Alternate (Late)

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planner

Members Not Present:

Megan Straughen
Dr. Chris Brehme

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM. Roll Call was conducted. Chair Shedd introduced Kate Peters and Louise Cook as guests.

2. Approval of April 5, 2017 Minutes -

Mr. Hansel motioned to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2017 with the following corrections: on Page 2, first paragraph, make the correction from the baseline through 2008 was completed by Ms. Brunner, then a student at Antioch University, in 2014. On Page 3, second to last line, change “test” to “audit”. Councilor Clark seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

4. Follow-up Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GGE) Inventory Update status –

Ms. Brunner reported the City has contracts put together and we are waiting for them to be signed. Ms. Brunner also reported the Board of Directors has approved the project. In response to Chair Shedd, Ms. Brunner clarified this is the contract for 105 hours discussed at the previous meeting. Ms. Brunner added the contract has been revised to ensure Planning has a certain amount of money for the current and next Fiscal Year.

While waiting for the guest speaker to arrive Committee members discussed recent events. Chair Shedd commented perhaps for next year’s Earth Day we will be able to have public presentations on the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Update and hold an event to increase

city-wide efforts and weatherization. Ms. Chalice suggested the Committee develop a board to accurately depict the efforts of the Committee and what the Committee would like to communicate to the public. Ms. Chalice advised she has a three-panel board and a template she can send to whichever Committee member willing to work on this. Ms. Chalice also advised she has not received any images from Committee members. She recommended Committee members give this and perhaps quarter sheet flyers some thought.

As the discussion continued Chair Shedd asked if changing the Committee name could be considered as it is quite cumbersome. Chair Shedd suggested something like the City of Keene Climate and Energy Committee which would be easier and relay more information to the public. Chair Shedd asked the Committee to think about this adding perhaps this can be on a future agenda. Councilor Clark and Ms. Chalice advised as this is an official City Committee changing the name would have to go through City Council.

3. Guest Speaker – Kate Peters, Eversource & NH Saves

Chair Shedd introduced Kate Peters. Ms. Chalice asked Chair Shedd to explain the goals of the Committee for Ms. Peters. Chair Shedd explained the goals of the Committee. Referring to the past Committee Retreat Chair Shedd noted the Committee decided to work on broadening the availability and awareness of residential weatherization. This ties in with the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Committee thought Ms. Peters could provide some help with this. Ms. Chalice made note of the brochures provided by Ms. Peters that were distributed last weekend. Mr. Hansel asked if the Committee would be focusing totally on residential. Chair Shedd commented commercial would be great; she added residential accounts for one-third of the City's greenhouse gas emissions. Chair Shedd continued there are programs for commercial and wondered how broadly the Committee could distribute its efforts. Referring to the upcoming Weatherization Summit Ms. Brunner suggested addressing both residential and commercial might draw more people in.

Ms. Peters addressed the positive energy changes going on in the state that may coordinate well with what the Committee has in mind. Ms. Peters explained energy programs have been going on for close to 15 years on a smaller level than surrounding states. Ms. Peters made mention of the funding sources such as rebates to electric bills and RGGI funds. She continued between electric and gas they have been spending a little over 30 million dollars on energy efficiency annually in New Hampshire. Ms. Peters noted the efforts for the state to have an Energy Resource Standard which is a design where the state sets an energy savings goal that the utilities need to meet for efficiency. Here the funding follows the goal rather than just saying we have this much money. Ms. Peters reported last August the PUC approved an Energy Resource Standard for the state, and set an initial set of energy targets for 2018, 2019, and 2020. Ms. Peters said we are in the middle of creating a utilities plan for how the utilities and the NH State Programs are going to meet that energy savings goal over the next three years. We will also be ramping up all the programs. The point of this is that energy efficiency in New Hampshire is on the verge of expanding. Ms. Peters also noted they are watching the legislature.

Ms. Chalice asked if there were particular bills this Committee could be monitoring. Ms. Peters replied the State Budget actually has some language in it that states that the PUC can't spend money on an Efficiency Resource Standard without approval of the Fiscal Committee.

Louise Cook asked if the goals are ambitious or modest. Ms. Peters suggested they are probably modest compared to other states. She added it is a gradual ramp-up and provided information on Massachusetts as a comparison.

Ms. Peters addressed community efforts noting she loves the idea of focusing on trying to do more in a specific area. Continuing Ms. Peters noted most of the referrals we get for the Home Performance Programs are from contractors, and family and friends which demonstrates this really is a word of mouth based program. She suggested more outreach would be done as the programs are ramped-up. Ms. Chalice reported she heard about it through an HR program. Chair Shedd suggested this might be a way to bring in the commercial sector; they could sponsor something like this for their employees.

Louise Cook asked what sources of energy are included in the Energy Savings programs. Ms. Peters replied the goals for the Energy Resource Standard are electricity and natural gas. The programs we run are called fuel neutral; so we provide services for people in these programs that save all fuels. Continuing she noted a big piece of it is weatherization of homes. On the commercial side the focus is more on electric savings.

Ms. Peters said her initial suggestion would be to start the deep effort with one and then move onto the other (residential/commercial) because the programs work differently and you are reaching different audiences. She recommended residential as a good starting point. Louise Cook pointed out there are many renters in Keene. Councilor Clark asked if these programs are available for renters. Ms. Peters noted a renter could decide to do an efficiency program and they would need the permission of the landlord. Although renters can decide to pay for a project we do try to bring the landlord in having them understand it's an investment in their property. Ms. Peters indicated low-interest loans were available to the landlords. Councilor Clark clarified any retrofit for any building savings would go towards the people who are actually paying the bills. Ms. Peters replied in the affirmative. Ms. Peters also noted there is a more complicated conversation regarding split incentives (renter and landlord).

Noting the Committee wanted to hear about communities that have/or are trying this Ms. Peters cited the Seacoast where a number of Energy Committees from different communities got together. They did an RFP and chose a solar contractor and a weatherization contractor to offer discounts for signing up multiple numbers of people. She added they are holding community events to sign people up through this program they created. The bonus is the more people you get to sign-up the lower your costs will be. Ms. Peters noted the rebates are standard and not an extra discount. She explained this is just starting so she is unsure if they've had a lot of installations yet (solar). The success story hasn't happened yet Ms. Peters added.

In response to Ms. Chalice, Ms. Peters discussed the Button Up workshops dealing with residential energy. Keene is on the list for one of these workshops. Ms. Peters reported the contracts for doing the workshops have not been finalized for this year. Chair Shedd summarized the Button-Up programs are more a do it yourself and the NH Saves programs work through qualified contractors. Ms. Peters concurred. Providing an overview of the program Ms. Peters said they come through a set of qualified contractors who come in and do an energy audit of the home. This audit costs \$100.00. The homeowner is provided a list of all the things that

can be done which is called a “whole house approach”. A list of the rebates available is also provided (typically up to \$4,000.00 total) along with the customer’s costs. The customer then chooses what they want to do; all or just pieces. Ms. Peters explained there is a low-interest 2% loan that is available to do the customer co-pay piece. The hope is that people will start doing the comprehensive project all at once.

Continuing Ms. Peters addressed the qualifications for the program noting it is energy use per square foot. The calculator is available on the website or can be done over the phone. As there are limited rebate dollars the programs are focused on the homes with the highest needs. Ms. Peters clarified this applies to heating fuels.

Louise Cook returned to the Button Up workshops and asked about the capacity when the workshops are held. Ms. Peters advised the Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative is the workshop contractor and they do the coordinating with the local groups. Ms. Peters commented starting the workshops and getting the word out some other ways is a good starting point for this Committee. Ms. Peters discussed another model the Better Buildings Program noting some of the lessons learned from this program could be applicable.

Mr. Dachowski asked if NH Saves has data on how many people have already participated in these programs or the effectiveness of the outreach. Ms. Peters explained the number of people who have participated is probably more limited by funding than it is by outreach. She continued we do the programs to about 1,000 homes per year. Advertising of these programs is not done on a broad scale she noted. Ms. Chalice suggested having the information on how many Keene homes have had this done would be useful. Ms. Peters indicated she could get the number for the number of homes for the past five years.

Councilor Clark suggested one of the goals the Committee might set is not actually the number of homes we can get into the program, but how many homes need it. He suggested people could take a little test online. Chair Shedd addressed concerns for the mobile home sector. Ms. Peters noted another important piece to mention is the income qualified program with up to \$8,000 in weatherization projects at no cost for those people receiving energy assistance. This is run through the Community Action Agency. Ms. Chalice pointed this Committee could not do anything about these programs. Ms. Peters concurred. Referring to the waiting list Ms. Peters noted people with electric heat are usually bumped up on the list due to the expense of this heating source. Ms. Chalice asked if there is a brochure put out that explains the income qualifications. Ms. Peters indicated she was unsure if there was a brochure for the lower income programs; because income levels can change we tend not to publish exact income levels. Ms. Peters offered to provide Ms. Chalice with the income levels.

Councilor Clark asked if the literature included with bills sent out by NH Saves is part of their outreach. Ms. Peters replied in the affirmative. Councilor Clark then suggested the company could be able to tailor the information provided as they do have the kilowatt hours used. Ms. Chalice pointed out the company is not aware of the square footage that energy amount is being used on. Ms. Peters added it is tricky because the program is based on heating fuel not electric. She noted previous efforts to identify electric heat users. Councilor Clark noted the City’s Assessing Office does have information on fuel type and square footage. Ms. Chalice suggested

this information could be provided at one of the workshops. Mari Brunner suggested having SWCS involved in this process. Ms. Peters noted that Keene Housing is also doing a lot of work in this area. Ms. Chalice suggested bringing them in for the summit. Chair Shedd also suggested a presentation by SWCS.

Noting the hour Chair Shedd asked if there were any additional questions for Ms. Peters. Ms. Peters noted that Gordon Tuttle manages the Home Performance Program and provided Committee members with his card. Chair Shedd thanked Ms. Peters for coming.

5. Weatherization Summit- Discussion of Stakeholders & Tasks

Chair Shedd noted she emailed/it was distributed a list of stakeholders and others have since been added. For next month Chair Shedd asked the Committee to think about a target date for the Committee's initial event. Ms. Chalice suggested brainstorming to create a list of tasks necessary to create the summit. Chair Shedd reiterated earlier discussion comments regarding this summit being for bigger scope stakeholders to see what programs are available and what obstacles people run into etcetera. Peter Hansel clarified the goal of the first summit is to build a coalition of partners which will lead to the second summit. Ms. Chalice reported Phil Sutter is interested in taking Keene's energy status to the broader public. Louise Cook suggested distributing a brochure using a door-to-door effort might be beneficial. Mari Brunner also suggested bringing Neighborhood Organizations into the picture.

Mari Brunner provided information on upcoming events.

- May 15th-19th is Bike to Work Week.
- Chair Shedd will provide information on the Local Energy Webinar taking place the end of this month.

Ms. Chalice agreed to add Ms. Cook to the Committee's minute's distribution list.

6. Adjournment –Next Meeting, Wednesday, June 7, 2017

The meeting adjourned at 10:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute-taker
May 4, 2017