

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Rm

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Gary Lamoureux, Councilor
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair (arrived at 8:18 AM)
Terry Clark, Councilor
Megan Straughen
Mari Brunner
Larry Dachowski, Alternate

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planning

Members Not Present:

Dick Cornelius, Alternate
Andrew Graham

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM and roll call was conducted.

2) Approval of Minutes – March 2, 2016, and March 22, 2016 (retreat)

Councilor Lamoureux made a motion to approve the minutes from March 2, which was seconded by Councilor Clark. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Councilor Clark made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 22 retreat, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux. The motion passed by unanimous vote

3) Liz Kelly, Local Air Quality and Potential Impacts of EPA Non-Attainment Status

Liz Kelly, Planning Technician from the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC), introduced Henry Underwood, GIS Specialist/Planner. They gave a presentation, beginning with background information about air quality issues in Keene.

Ms. Kelly stated that the greater Keene area is located in a valley and thus subject to temperature inversions, which occur when warm air acts as a lid and holds cold air close

to the ground. Pollutants in the lower atmosphere are then trapped. She explained that PM2.5 (Particulate Matter, 2.5 micrometers or less) is regulated by the EPA, under the Clean Air Act. PM2.5 has a many health impacts that EPA is concerned about. There are many sources of PM2.5 but the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services's (NHDES's) research shows that in the greater Keene area, woodstoves are the highest emitter.

Ms. Kelly explained the respiratory and cardiovascular health impacts of PM2.5. She continued that it is a regulated pollutant so there are implications if an area exceeds the set standards more than three times in a year for three years in a row. Thus far Keene is meeting the standards (i.e. is an "attainment area"), but there have been some nights that the standards have been exceeded. If an area exceeds the standards more than three times in a year for three years in a row, it is an area in "non-attainment."

Ms. Chalice asked how the EPA decides which areas to monitor. Mr. Underwood replies that the EPA looks at any station that the DES owns. He continued that the closest permanent monitoring station is on Water St. Keene is in attainment now for all the pollutants EPA looks at. He listed some of these, and continued that for Keene, the EPA is most concerned with PM2.5, which they are closest to non-attainment status with.

Mr. Underwood showed and explained a list of days when Keene exceeded the standard of 35 micrograms per cubic meter. In 2009 the Woodstove Changeout program was implemented, but there were still four days in exceedance in 2011. There was one day in 2012, a few in 2013, and none in 2014 or 2015. Ms. Kelly stated that she thinks maybe the changeout program is helping. Chair Shedd asked if people in surrounding areas have been changing out woodstoves and thus contributing to these numbers. Mr. Underwood replied that they do not have that data for this presentation. He continued that this is a complicated dynamic. A lot has to do with weather, as well as consumer behavior, and consumer choice in fuel type.

Mr. Underwood continued that the EPA reviews the standards every five years and will next do that in 2017. DES is concerned that they might change to a rolling 24-period instead of midnight to midnight to measure if an exceedance has occurred. In winter 2008/09 there was only one exceedance, based on the midnight to midnight measurement. If a rolling 24-hour period was used to measure it, there would have been 6 exceedances. This could make a difference and they have to keep an eye on it.

Mr. Underwood continued that the EPA does not have controls over what people do in their homes, but they have controls on industry and transportation. If Keene was in non-attainment there would be additional controls on transportation projects and permitting requirements and for industry. Industries and projects would have to demonstrate that the emissions resulting from a new project would not negatively impact the PM2.5 situation.

Mr. Hansel arrived at 8:18 AM.

Mr. Underwood continued that this would be an additional burden/hurdle not funded by the EPA, for planners and developers.

Chair Shedd asked if it would be just for new development, with everything else grandfathered. Mr. Underwood replied that he does not know. He continued that in NH there have been no non-attainment areas. They do not know what plan would be put together. The EPA would meet and create a plan with NHDES, the SWRPC, and probably the City of Keene.

Mr. Underwood and Ms. Kelly spoke about their outreach campaign and partnerships with local groups, to address the PM2.5 issue. NHDES has made it very clear that there is a strong link between woodstoves and PM2.5, so the campaign has a strong focus on encouraging behavior changes. That is one of the best ways to stay in attainment. Additional study is also important. They spoke of the desire to avoid the uncertainty of what would happen if they were in non-attainment. A study from the NHDES correlates poor air quality with the burning of wood, not coal or oil or transportation fuels. They do not know how many dollars non-attainment status would cost the City, or how many days projects would be delayed for.

Councilor Clark asked if it makes a difference whether wood is wet or dry. Mr. Underwood replied yes, people should “burn the right wood, in the right stove, the right way.” Dry, seasoned wood is better than wet wood, and pellets are even better. Mr. Hansel and Chair Shedd spoke about benefits of kiln dried wood.

Per Ms. Straughen’s request, Mr. Underwood described the woodstove changeout program, which is offered to any Cheshire County resident – it is funded at \$400,000 through an agreement with NHDES and the biomass power company. People with old, uncertified wood stoves receive vouchers to help cover the cost of new, EPA-certified pellet stove or gas stove. About 90% of the funding has been used, and when it is gone, it is gone.

Scott Maslansky asked if there is guidance on which fuel is best, from a climate perspective. Discussion ensued about how to compare wood, pellet, oil, biodiesel, etc. Mr. Maslansky asked if the SWRPC recommends no woodstoves at all. Mr. Underwood replied no, they recommend burning wood the right way, which outputs only a fractional amount of PM2.5.

Ms. Chalice asked if Ms. Kelly and Mr. Underwood would be interested and able, if asked, to give a similar presentation to other community groups and/or neighborhoods that a KSC project found high emissions readings in. Mr. Underwood replied yes, absolutely; they encourage anyone interested to contact them. He continued that they have a workshop coming up for neighborhood groups. Ms. Chalice replied that the City could publicize that. Ms. Straughen added that the Monadnock Food Co op can, too.

4) GHG Inventory Update

Ms. Chalice stated that she will remind Samantha Gaudette, one of the interns working on this, to come to these monthly meetings. She continued that Andrew Graham, the other intern, is at the Climate Preparedness conference in Baltimore today. She and the two interns meet monthly. They are updating what was done before. Fortunately, the City has more information this time about the types of fuels purchased. Mr. Graham and Ms. Gaudette established eight different sources/categories they are pulling emissions information from, such as utilities, landfill, wastewater treatment plant, etc. It is going well. A challenge is that the City gathers data on a fiscal basis, July to July, but for the inventory they need information from the calendar year of 2015.

Ms. Chalice continued that there is a program that allows communities to compare GHG emissions information with one another. It may thus be possible to become part of this nationwide program and compare Keene to other cities of its size. Both interns are keeping in mind that this inventory information is for the municipal officials but also for the public. They are aware that the community is making less progress than the municipality, and are thinking of mechanisms to raise public awareness. They are making progress. She will share a schedule/calendar at the next meeting, towards the goal of inventory completion.

Chair Shedd stated that they are gearing towards presenting to the City Council at the end of May or beginning of June. She continued that they will then look at what their expectations are, and what to recommend that the City Council set as reduction goals.

5) Planning for Event with Friends of Open Space: April 12, 2016

Chair Shedd, Mr. Hansel, and Councilor Clark reported that they can attend the event. Ms. Chalice stated that she can get them a tri-fold board. She asked what the CCP wants on it. Chair Shedd showed printouts that she made, with the CCP's members, mission, and primary goals; what the CCP has been doing to work on the City's reduction goals to achieve by 2015; and information about the Climate Action Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan, the 2013 matrix, and the GHG inventory. They might want some of those documents on the table. She will talk with Ms. Chalice offline unless anyone else has further ideas. Ms. Chalice asked about including the CCP's latest goals. Chair Shedd replied that they are not well formulated enough to put out in public.

Chair Shedd stated that the Friends suggest that the CCP (as well as representatives from other groups in attendance) be prepared to give the "elevator talk," a quick talk about who they are and what they are trying to do. Ms. Chalice asked if the CCP wants her to create a quarter-sheet handout with the CCP's mission, meeting dates and times, and either her or Chair Shedd's contact information, for people who might want to join. CCP members replied yes. Ms. Chalice will give it to Chair Shedd.

6) Planning for Keene EarthFest: Saturday, April 23

Chair Shedd reported that Ms. Straughen is coordinating EarthFest through the Co op, April 23, noon to 4:00 PM. Ms. Straughen gave more information about the location. Chair Shedd asked if Mr. Graham offered to staff a table there for the CCP. Ms. Straughen replied yes, but he is also tabling for MAST and leading a bike tour, so it

would be helpful if another CCP member could be there, too. Ms. Brunner replied that Ms. Kelly will be tabling for MAST and offered to watch the CCP table while Mr. Graham is doing the bike tour. Mr. Hansel stated that he will be at EarthFest in some capacity. Discussion ensued about whether/how the tri-fold used at the Friends event could be used at the EarthFest table without blowing away in the wind. Discussion ensued about the availability of a table. Ms. Chalice will check with the City.

7) Follow-up to CCP Goal-setting Retreat of March 22

Chair Shedd distributed copies of a handout she created of what came out of the retreat. She summarized that they discussed many ideas and activities the CCP could undertake to work towards their goals, and boiled it down to these three areas, which they created working groups for:

- In-city and inter-city public transportation
- Community education on action and adaptation
- Increasing energy efficiency and retrofits in existing buildings, and increasing access and incentives

Chair Shedd asked for clarification about “working groups” versus “subcommittees.” Discussion ensued. Councilor Clark stated that working groups are informal and can meet without needing public notice, a Minute-taker, or being concerned with quorum issues. Chair Shedd asked Councilor Lamoureux and Ms. Chalice if this is their understanding as well. Ms. Chalice replied that she will check and report back.

Chair Shedd asked if, per RSA 91-A:3, working groups are allowed to communicate information electronically among themselves, as long as they are not making decisions. Ms. Chalice replied that the sharing of information is always okay; what is not okay is discussing an issue back and forth online without a quorum.

Chair Shedd asked if anyone had questions or follow ups from the retreat. Mr. Hansel asked if the list of topics/activities is prioritized. Chair Shedd replied that each person put a hash mark next to their top choices, so three hash marks indicates that three people voted that topic as a priority. Mr. Dachowski asked if someone from the working group to which he is assigned will contact him. Ms. Chalice replied that it is up to each working group to self-organize.

Chair Shedd asked if everyone is okay with the working group they chose to be in or were assigned to. Councilor Lamoureux offered to help with the transportation group, too, because he has a lot of experience in that area. Chair Shedd replied that people can be in more than one group. She asked that each working group, before the CCP’s meeting in May, talk among themselves about what they hope to accomplish. There is much that they could focus on, but their focus needs to be narrowed down a little, given the boundaries of what the CCP can do and their lack of financial resources.

Ms. Brunner asked if it would be helpful to have a sheet with everyone's name, assignment, and contact information, and if Chair Shedd can send that. Chair Shedd replied yes.

Ms. Chalice stated that she would need the working groups' information at least a week before the CCP's May 4th meeting, in order to include it in the agenda packet. Chair Shedd replied that the working groups might just give verbal reports at the meeting.

8) NH Legislative Updates

Chair Shedd reported that she was unable to find the right information on the NH Local Energy Solutions website. She asked Mr. Maslansky what is happening with net metering. Mr. Maslansky replied that he thinks the bill has not gone back to the full Senate yet. He continued that it is raised to 100 megawatts. The PUC will then work on the new tariff for it, which says how much generators will get compensated for their generation. At that point they will talk about a new cap or lifting the cap. That will be a key piece.

Ms. Chalice replied that the bill has a lot of "gobbledygook" in that part about the tariff, and she has not had any luck finding a translation for the lay person. She asked if Mr. Maslansky has this information, and he replied no. He continued that the NH Sustainable Energy Association may have this. Chair Shedd asked what PUC's timeframe is. Mr. Maslansky replied 10 months from when the bill passes. Discussion continued. Mr. Maslansky gave information about the breakdown of the increased megawatts, between the four primary utilities in the state. He continued that also, some will go to larger projects over a certain threshold and some will go to smaller projects. Ms. Chalice replied that that is the graphic she is seeking, so they can understand the impact of the increased megawatts.

Ms. Chalice asked how much installed solar capacity Keene has. Ms. Chalice replied that she asked the PUC for a list of projects they know of, but it only includes ones in which people applied for rebates – if someone installed solar on their own, the PUC does not know about it. She continued that they might see a more valid picture by looking at the list of 49 construction permits the City has issued for solar installations. She will email the list to the CCP, with people's names removed, for privacy reasons. The challenge is that both PUC's and the City's lists only give information about *proposed* solar generation – no one is keeping track of how much is *actually* being generated. Mr. Maslansky stated that whether the regulations are based on the capacity of the system or its actual generation is a good question, but he would guess capacity, because it is easier to track. Discussion continued, about who is keeping track. Mr. Hansel stated that you cannot turn the switch until you get a commissioning certificate from someone, maybe the PUC. Ms. Chalice replied maybe Eversource – she can contact them. Councilor Clark replied that it might make more sense to email the 49 people who received permits, and he would be willing to do it, if someone gives him the email addresses. Ms. Chalice replied that determining what is actually built, versus only planned, is a challenge, and although the City and the PUC does not have the information, someone must.

Ms. Chalice asked if there is an update on the Co op's solar project. Ms. Straughen replied that they started putting the panels on but it will not be live by EarthDay. She continued that she heard early May. Mr. Hansel added that everything is complete except for the inverters, which will be delivered later in April. Ms. Chalice asked who the contact person is. Mr. Hansel replied Craig Bell of Solar Source, a Melanson division. Chair Shedd, Mr. Maslansky, and Ms. Straughen listed a few other names of contractors who have done solar installations in Keene.

9) AUNE Climate Center Updates

10) Other Climate Group Updates

Chair Shedd reported that Mr. Maslansky is coming to next month's CCP meeting to talk about CPACE - Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy. She asked Mr. Maslansky to send her and Ms. Chalice a link to some background information, which they will pass along to the committee. Mr. Maslansky replied that he will do that. He continued that in a nutshell, CPACE is a financing program to help businesses increase energy efficiency.

Ms. Straughen asked for information about the proposed ban on plastic bags in Keene. Councilor Clark replied that the City Council has placed this item on more time while staff gathers information about what such an ordinance might look like and looks at ordinances from other municipalities. He continued that it will go back to the Planning, Licenses, and Development (PLD) Committee probably in May.

Ms. Chalice stated that she thought such a ban was not possible without enabling State legislation. Councilor Clark replied that the State legislation is to allow cities and towns to make their own ordinances. Municipalities already have authority under the solid waste statutes to regulate what types of substances go into the landfill. Discussion continued.

11) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Shedd adjourned the meeting at 9:06 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker