

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Rm, City Hall

Members Present:

Jennifer Risley, Chair
Robert Kelley, Vice Chair
Thomas Powers, Councilor
Dr. Ann Shedd
Megan Kennedy

Staff Present:

Karen Purinton, Planning

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Danny Veercamp
Richard (Dick) Cornelius, Alternate

1. Welcome

Chair Risley called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted.

3. Approval of Minutes – February 4, 2015

Mr. Kelley made a motion to approve the minutes of February 4, 2015. Councilor Powers seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4. Update on Communication With Other Committees (Adaptation Planemail)

Ms. Purinton reported that the CCP's email was sent to the Planning Board, Agriculture Commission, Conservation Commission, and Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA). She continued that the Planning Board will discuss it as one of their topics, the Conservation Commission will address it during their retreat, the Agriculture Commission will discuss it at their meeting on Thursday, and it will be on the ZBA's agenda in April. This was a good step from the CCP and everyone responded positively to the CCP's message.

5. CCP Membership

Chair Risley introduced new member Megan Kennedy. Ms. Purinton reported that new members Danny Veercamp and Dick Cornelius (alternate) were not able to be here today. She continued that Mr. Cornelius has been sworn in and Mr. Veercamp will be. The CCP still has room for one more member and two more alternates. Discussion ensued about whether CCP members need to be Keene residents, and Ms. Purinton stated yes, the charge says so. Discussion continued about potential new members and where to look for them.

6. CCP Retreat in April

Chair Risley suggested having the retreat right after the CCP's regular meeting in April, for an extra hour or two. She asked Ms. Purinton for thoughts on how much time they should allow, and she asked the committee for their thoughts. Discussion ensued, and they agreed to meet for two hours after the April 1 meeting, in a separate conference room either in City Hall or elsewhere. They decided that discussing the CCP's priorities and goals would be a good use of their time, and that that would be a good amount of work. Ms. Purinton stated that it will be a public meeting, publicly noticed and with minutes taken, but it is not a public hearing so the CCP does not need to recognize public input unless they choose to do so. Chair Risley asked the CCP members to think about whether they would be interested in leading some segment of the retreat.

7. Presentation to PLD Committee in March

Ms. Purinton stated that the CCP's presentation to the Planning, Licenses, and Development (PLD) Committee will be March 25. She continued that each committee is being asked to give a verbal report each year to a standing committee of the City Council. Chair Risley will present.

Chair Risley distributed copies of a draft presentation she wrote, with a brief history of the CCP, the functions and guidelines, and more. She went through the draft and asked the committee for their thoughts.

Ms. Purinton suggested Chair Risley mention the City's partnership with the Climate Preparedness and Resilience Center. She continued that it is not necessary to report on every function and guideline in the CCP's charge, if there are ones that the CCP is not currently working on – instead of saying “Not Applicable” they can just skip those items, because there is plenty that the CCP *is* working on.

Discussion continued on the draft report. Chair Risley asked what everyone thought about the CCP recommending that the City create a community outreach and education plan. Ms. Purinton replied that it is a good goal, as is (former intern) Mari Brunner's recommendation for the CCP to have a community outreach plan. She continued that she is not sure who in the City would create a community outreach plan for the City, but having both of these as goals is good.

Discussion continued about the CCP's role as an Energy Commission. Ms. Purinton stated that she is not sure if the City has formally added this to the CCP's charge, so Chair Risley could say something like, “Energy Commissions in other communities have [A, B, C] and we haven't been able to keep up with this yet.” Dr. Shedd replied that the software Ms. Brunner recommended should help with this. Ms. Purinton replied yes, if they continue with their ICLEI membership, they can use ICLEI's upgraded software – they are lucky to have the continuity and the ability to compare between years. She hopes to get an intern to help with that.

Chair Risley asked for more feedback on the draft report. Jim Gardner stated that he has observed that Keene is not very quick to adopt the most recent research and knowledge in regards to climate change. He continued that the best they have now is the Fifth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). That goal of reducing emissions by 80% from 1990 levels is no longer considered to be the ideal goal. If Keene is going to try and meet the best science out there that has to be worked in. Chair replied that that is part of rewriting their Climate Action Plan and all plans to make sure they are aligned with the best and newest. Ms. Purinton suggested Chair Risley add to the presentation, “For additional

information, look to the most recent report of the IPCC.” She continued that there is also, on the CCP’s website, a Southern NH Climate Assessment, which came out of the University of New Hampshire and is locally-focused, whereas the IPCC’s report is global.

Chair Risley noted that what the City gets from its ICLEI membership would be a good topic for the retreat. She asked if the CCP can have a subcommittee planning the retreat. Brief discussion ensued on what a subcommittee and/or working group can and cannot do without publicly noticing meetings and taking minutes. Ms. Purinton clarified that it is okay for the CCP to have a working group that designs an agenda for the retreat, since the retreat itself will be noticed and open to the public. Ms. Kennedy stated that she would be interested in joining the working group.

8. Letter to the Editor Initiative

Dr. Shedd reported that she submitted the letter to the Keene Sentinel three weeks ago but has not yet seen it published. Discussion ensued. Dr. Shedd stated that she will resubmit it via email and drop off a paper copy today, too. She continued that she added a line at the end, saying that the CCP wanted to acknowledge and congratulate the City Council on taking a strong stand on the EPA’s Clean Power Plan and other issues on climate change.

Chair Risley asked if anyone has ideas for the next letter. She suggested the topics of the Mayor being invited to present in Washington about Keene’s sustainability, or the greenhouse gas inventory. She asked if anyone wanted to take on those letters or another. Hearing no response, she continued that this item will stay on the agenda.

9. Updates on City Activities of Interest from Liaisons and Staff

Ms. Purinton reported that they voted last month to ask the City Council to take a position against HB208 (which proposes to repeal NH’s interest in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative). She continued that she prepared a memo. All City staff has been asked to identify legislative issues they think are important. This memo will go to the PLD Committee, but the City Clerk wants this to wait until next week when a whole batch of legislative issues will go to the PLD Committee for their consideration. Discussion ensued about the process. Ms. Purinton noted that a flaw is that sometimes, by the time a memo like this gets through a committee then the full City Council, it ends up being too late to get a communication out on the legislation.

Ms. Purinton reported that the greenhouse gas project at the transfer station will be moving forward next month. She continued that it will be a topic at the Planning Board meeting on the fourth Monday in April at 6:30 PM. Once the information becomes public it will be part of the agenda packet, and anyone interested can look at the plans and narrative describing the project.

Chair Risley asked about the east side forum. Ms. Purinton replied that it was last Tuesday and approximately 100 people attended. She continued that a person from Antioch facilitated an exercise looking at ideas for the vacant buildings on the east side of Keene, such as the former YMCA, former middle school, and the Kingsbury property. There were many good ideas and City staff is now working on summarizing the information. Many property owners were at the forum, too. It is good to see the community excited about this.

Chair Risley encouraged people to check out Mind Mixer - all the major ideas are there, and you can vote and comment on them. She continued that the period for discussion is another month or

so. She enjoyed hearing people's ideas and feeling the energy around them. Ms. Purinton added that the website is keene.mindmixer.com, and gave more information about what Mind Mixer is.

10. New or Other Business

Dr. Shedd reported that Saturday, March 21, is the Local Energy Solutions Conference in Concord. Chair Risley reported that the New England Regional Gathering of Resilience and Transition Groups will meet in Keene that same day.

Dr. Shedd reported that the Southwest Regional Planning Commission's (SRWPC's) annual meeting last month included a presentation from Peterborough's Department of Public Works Director about what Peterborough has done to increase energy efficiency. She continued that it might be interesting to have him present to the CCP sometime. Councilor Powers replied that in Keene, that type of work falls under the Code Enforcement Director/Health Director, not the Public Works Director. He continued that the City has done a number of things to increase energy efficiency, and there are plans for more, but they are expensive.

Ms. Purinton reported that the City has been working with the Conservation Commission on issues related to the West Street dam. She continued that West Street Hydro, a non-profit organization, is looking to put a hydro power facility at the dam. At the last meeting the Conservation Commission finalized funding for the study that would be needed for them to move forward with licensing via the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. West Street Hydro contributed a third of the cost and will have a consultant do the study and report the results to the City Council, working on the recommendation that the Conservation Commission has for the dam – the question is whether to remove or leave the dam. Dr. Shedd added that the funding is for hydrology studies that would look at how the stream would be impacted if the dam was left as is, versus putting in a hydro power facility and thus raising the water level by a foot, versus removing the dam.

Mr. Kelley asked who gets the electricity from the hydro power facility. Ms. Purinton replied that the facility will not be large enough – it would be more of a demonstration project, an educational tool. She continued that she is not sure exactly, but maybe it would run the pump house/control building. Dr. Shedd replied that if it generates surplus capacity the revenues would go into conservation funds.

Chair Risley stated that one theme at the east side forum was about water storage and the possibility of using some of the properties to mitigate that issue. She continued that some people say "There's nothing we can do" but there *are* possibilities. Ms. Purinton replied yes, the City is actually doing a number of projects that they do not share enough with the community – for example, she is doing a project to manage flood storage in one of the cemeteries. She continued that they should explain what they are already doing better so people can understand where their efforts would be most helpful. Chair Risley replied that information about water storage projects would be a great press release for the spring. She continued that she will work on that with Ms. Purinton.

Mr. Gardner asked if this project distinguishes between water storage and retention. Discussion ensued, and Ms. Purinton gave more information about the project, which she said is best described as retention. She continued that there are some projects in the upcoming CIP that will take a broader look, such as looking at the Beaver Brook watershed in general, and look at where

the City has opportunities to provide storage and retention. The Planning Department has proposed a vulnerability assessment.

11. Next meeting – Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 8:00 AM

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 AM. Ms. Purinton will send a Doodle poll online to schedule the CCP's retreat.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker