

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 4, 2017, 8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair
Mari Brunner, Member
Chris Brehme, Member
Gary Lamoureux, Councilor
Sarah Brock, Guest
Larry Dachowski, Alternate

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planner
Rhett Lamb, Director of Planning

Members Not Present:

Terry Clark, Member
Dick Cornelius, Alternate

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Shedd called meeting to order at 8:04 am and roll call was conducted.

2. Approval of August 2, 2017 and September 6, 2017 minutes

Chair Shedd moved to accept August 2 minutes with revisions, Vice Chair Hansel seconded and it passed by unanimous vote. Revisions will be sent by Ms. Kassamali-Fox (minute-taker) to Ms. Chalice by email.

Vice Chair Hansel moved to accept the September 6 minutes with revisions, Mr. Dachowski seconded and minutes were passed by unanimous vote. Revisions will be sent by Ms. Kassamali-Fox (minute-taker) to Ms. Chalice by email.

3. CCP Committee long-term structure, function, and goals, Rhett Lamb

Chair Shedd shared that Mr. Lamb has agreed to share his knowledge and perspectives about what the future of CCP might look like. She stated that during last meeting or two there was encouragement from upper level City

administration that CCP take responsibility for developing a renewable energy plan for the community, partly as a response to the questions raised about Liberty Utility's gas project and development of an alternative to that energy project. She said Vice Chair Hansel and herself had a meeting with the Mayor, the City Manager and Councilor Jacobs in July and presently, CCP does not have the manpower or the budget to take on that scope of work as they already have existing documents and aim to develop an energy plan that they can fit into the existing action plan. She also said that the Mayor suggested that CCP redefine itself and not the City.

Mr. Lamb shared that when the City began its first discussion of climate and energy they developed a relationship in 1997 with ICLEI. He said that the first climate action plan was written in the early 2000s and was probably the first in NH. He stated that since then the statute has been adopted authorizing the community to have an energy committee as they had previously done it under their own general authority. He said in 2008-2009 they made some changes to the charge of the committee to make it look more like what had been adopted in the statute, so as far as committee goes, he sees their role as fulfilling the original climate and energy goals and adapting those goals to the statute. He emphasized that the challenge of the committee has always been implementation of ideas that they generate and that it is not always easy to prioritize goals. Mr. Lamb said over the years he has observed a mix of community interests in a variety of different projects, however, he thinks it is far more useful for CCP to choose a project like they are doing now or a project related to updating target areas and plans for renewable energy.

Mr. Lamb also said the City is currently evaluating the status of the relationships between City staff and committees, referencing the surveys that committee members completed a couple of months. He said that the purpose of the surveys was to determine how the City serves committees as they are a lot of work for the department and that Chairs will be invited to discuss the status of the relationships soon. He said there will be a new Planner Technician hired in the Planning department who will take on more of the regular planning work and that will allow planners to do more long-term planning work and special projects that came out of the 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan.

Mr. Lamb emphasized that once the Greenhouse Gas report is published and with all of the momentum around the Liberty Utility project and the Paris Agreement, that CCP will be poised pursue new targets and plans for the next ten years. He said he thinks that CCP's goals should center on what the community thinks about its role in terms of the targets, which brings up the question of whether or not the committee is an advocacy or advisory committee. Mr. Lamb stated that CCP could become a driver of a renewable energy plan working with City staff. Chair Shedd stated that they have not set a new target until they receive the results of the 2015 report to which will help inform new directions for the committee. She said it would be very helpful to have Mr. Webler on the committee but the Mayor

did not allow it because he lives in MA. Mr. Hansel added that maybe CCP should have a different structure so that they could engage with members of other communities and not be so restricted by the City rules. Mr. Lamb said that is a great point because City rules are pretty strict. He used Pathways for Keene (PFK) as an example of a successful advocacy group which fundraises and pursues their initiatives external to any of the rules that guide nonprofit organizations. He pointed out that on the other hand, the Bike Path Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPPAC) is an internally designated group by City Council and they are constrained by the expectations of City Council. Mr. Lamb said he thinks the combination of PFK and BPPAC has been very useful in development of bicycle and pedestrian paths. He suggested that perhaps the first thing to do is to conduct outreach to see how the community feels about renewable energy goals of committee as it has been a long time since he has heard feedback from the community. He also said that there has not been any significant pushback from community but he still is not sure if they are still the same community-oriented committee that they were when they started so he thinks that is a critical element as they move into longer range goals.

Chair Hansel asked if BPPAC and PFK are a good example of having a City group and a non-City group working together. Mr. Brehme agreed that it is very effective as he sits on the BPPAC committee and he believes that the two groups work well synergistically. Chair Shedd suggested that perhaps they could develop a renewable energy advocacy group in addition to CCP. Ms. Brunner asked if Monadnock Progressive Alliance already has a Climate Action Team and Chair Shedd said that they do, however, their renewable energy campaign is moving slowly. Vice Chair Hansel added that some people may view them as too political. Chair Shedd asked committee their thoughts on how to best move forward with these ideas. Mr. Lamb suggested that one approach might be to create subcommittees that would be tasked with addressing these questions alongside members of the community to decide whether or not to remain just one committee or divide into an advocacy group or something similar. Mr. Lamoureux responded that they would first need to ensure that the upper administration of the City would allow subcommittees to be established. Mr. Lamb agreed that subcommittees should be comprised of group members first to determine whether there is enough interest to form an advocacy group. Chair Shedd added that Al Gore's new documentary is being shown at the Colonial on Friday at 6 pm with a panel discussion afterwards. Ms. Chalice said that would be a great space to broach these subjects.

Mr. Lamb summarized that CCP should seize the opportunity that the Mayor and Manager has given them and organize a work session on how the City might write a renewable energy plan, explore the methods, and then take that information to City Council. He said in the meantime the weatherization work they are planning will launch them into a momentum and they can then garner support around that. He said he fully supports writing a renewable energy plan. Chair Shedd added that there are a couple of action steps to be taken such as coordinating with Antioch on

the leadership level. She said she sees it as a subset of the Climate Action plan and that they should pursue a working session with a more defined focus to explore how to move forward. Vice Chair Hansel also suggested changing the committee name and Mr. Lamb agreed as the name is outdated and that the new name should align with the vernacular of today. Chair Shedd thanked Mr. Lamb for his time with the committee.

4. **Sarah Brock, Energy Program Manager for Vital Communities**

Chair Shedd introduced committee to Ms. Brock, Energy Program Manager for a nonprofit organization in the Upper Valley called Vital Communities. She said that Vital Communities coordinated a residential Solarization campaign a couple of years ago and most recently just completed a cycle of a residential Weatherization campaign. Chair Shedd stated that instead of CCP reinventing their own weatherization campaign, she thought it would be useful to learn from existing models.

Ms. Brock invited members to contact her after the presentation as there are many details they would not be able to go over at the meeting. She said Vital Communities is a nonprofit that received a grant in 2013 from a funder who was particularly interested in seeing the solarized model be transferred to northern New England, as it was primarily piloted in MA and CT. She said Vital Communities ran the program for two years and within that time frame they doubled the number of solar homes in their region, and also emerged from the program with a renewed focus on weatherization as a means to reach out to more residents in a cost effective way. Ms. Brock stated that they used the solarized model and transferred it to home performance contracting to build demand among residents who were investing in thermal energy efficiency at a residential level. She said the scale involved having professional contractors perform an average of \$7,000 (range \$3,000-\$12,000) worth of air, ceiling and installation work with an average savings of 15-30%. Ms. Brock stated that they achieved a significant savings margin and that the range is within the costs of what most homeowners should be able to finance. She also stated that the New Hampshire Saves program has funds reserved for households with high BTU per-square-foot energy usage, however, cut offs can shift and budgets are decreasing over the next 3 years because of the recent energy resource efficiency standards. She said now is a good time to plan ahead for a weatherization program within the next year or so.

Ms. Brock explained that the NH Saves program allows for up to \$4,000 of the costs, 80-90% of qualified participants move forward with the program and that is more reason to promote it as it is not marketed to the public. She said her organization was motivated to bring the program to NH to raise awareness of the program and to reach out to households that did not qualify. She said that the Upper Valley region and other regions are focused on the “magic mix” of solarized and weatherized campaigns to be very effective. She said the “magic mix” is centered on a combination approach of putting together a dedicated

volunteer team that performs community outreach and negotiating with contractors who will conduct \$100 audits and consistent pricing for home performance within a limited time frame to those homeowners that do not qualify for the utility program. Ms. Chalice introduced Mr. Lamb who entered the room late and asked Ms. Brock to provide a brief synopsis of what she is presenting. Ms. Brock restated that her organization, Vital Communities, is working on a program that promotes home performance projects in the residential sector by trying to get as many people as possible into the utility program as possible, but more importantly, to provide an alternative path for residents who do not qualify for the NH Saves utility program's \$4,000 rebate.

Chair Shedd asked Ms. Brock if the first step for residents is to determine their eligibility for the NH Saves home improvement program by using the calculator available on the NH Saves website. Ms. Brock replied that the approach they are taking in the Upper Valley is *refer to the program as a Weatherize campaign to get as many residents as possible to invest in thermal efficiency improvements in their home and to recognize that some people will be lucky and get some extra help and others will instead receive a free audit and fixed pricing from contractors that her organization has negotiated with*. She added that it was not difficult to negotiate with contractors as they see the program as a way to build new business. Ms. Chalice asked if Vital Communities used the NH Saves contractor list to identify participants. Ms. Brock replied yes and stated that in the state of NH, contractors who are Building Performance Institute (BPI) certified are qualified to do this work. She said some of them take the extra step to sign onto the utility program, however, not all contractors do because the utility program is currently still relatively small. Ms. Brock stated that for her program, they decided to recruit contractors early enough that they had to get onto the utility list first so that customers could select pre-approved contractors if they qualify for program, and in that way, they could ensure quality assurance to those who do not qualify for program by listing qualified contractors and not interfering with the customer-contractor relationship.

Chair Shedd stated that there are no contractors on the Eversource list of qualified contractors that are from Keene, and that the closest qualified contractor is located in Hancock. She said that an important part of CCP's anticipated outreach to the commercial private sector would be to find local qualified contractors. Ms. Brock replied that the first step for CCP other than pulling a volunteer team together that can do the weatherization outreach is to bring the contractors together. She said they should have a conversation with the contractors and state to them that team is comprised of dedicated and enthusiastic community members who are serious about promoting the industry. She recommended doing this early into the process, perhaps 6-9 months before anticipated launch date. Ms. Brock said that CCP is welcome to use the Upper Valley and Seacoast 360 approach as precedent examples for their own project. Mr. Hansel asked Ms. Brock about her own volunteer member organization. Ms. Brock replied that they have had groups ranging from 1 volunteer all the way up to 8-12 person committees. She said often

times committees will form a small task force for outreach or an ad hoc citizens group that is not officially associated with the town and recruit volunteers for a specific project for a period of time. She said that they will also recruit citizens from other neighboring towns to assist with their goals. Ms. Brock also stated importance of having Keene community members represented well in group because residents know best how to get the word out to their own communities. She said that the trick to campaigns like this is to plan ahead so that by the time program is launched everything is set in the planning calendar.

Mr. Hansel asked how to approach landlord owned and not resident-owned communities. He said a good proportion of units (upwards of 60%) in Keene are not-owner occupied. Ms. Brock replied that the program works best when targeting single family homes, however, landlords who pay their properties' heating costs could be incentivized although it is challenging to get landlords on board. She suggested getting a baseline for the number of units that are not owner occupied and that there are other commercial programs targeting landlords. Chair Shedd said envisions multiple cycles for the weatherization program. Ms. Brock agreed that over time relationships will develop and word will spread as trust of utilities and reliability of program is established.

Mr. Hansel referenced the Vital Communities flyer and asked how New Hampshire project is faring. Ms. Brock said NH program is about to launch. She said the utility in Vermont is called Efficiency VT. Ms. Brock stated that because Vital Communities is grant-funded, they are open source, and that documents can be borrowed verbatim, for example she encouraged CCP to contact her for a request for proposal when that time arrives. She said the key is to contact contractors early if CCP is serious about building the home performance industry in the region. Chair Shedd expressed that the Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce could be tremendous allies as they already have conducted a regional issues energy presentation this past winter. Councilor Lamoureux said Southwestern Community Services has a program for winterization and asked who they use for contractors. Ms. Brock said Eversource will be able to get the lists as they run that program as well. Ms. Brock strongly suggested contacting Frank Melanson and Gordon Tuttle <http://www.repa-nh.org/content/repamembers> who have been very supportive of her program in the Upper Valley. She said they can access all kinds of data and identification of contractors. Ms. Brock also stated the importance of having contractor workshop and that she found from her experience in Vermont that Monday morning is a good day to hold such workshops. She reemphasized that the first step is to contact Mr. Melanson at Eversource and to use the BPI website. She said she would send committee a link for that website.

Ms. Chalice stated that it is not easy to find dedicated volunteers and Chair Shedd suggested that CCP reach out to different groups of people like retired contractors or homeowners. Ms. Brock agreed and encouraged them to emphasize the package of what they are working for and outlining the hours required. Chair

Shedd pointed out that there is a clause in the Master Plan that specifically points to a community wide weatherization program so that is the avenue they are pursuing. Ms. Brock said it has been a great way for communities she has helped mobilize to inspire public action and to get community together. She said that once NH program numbers are finalized that she will share those talking points with the group so they can use the language for their own promotional materials.

5. 1995 – 2015 Greenhouse Gas Report – Status

Ms. Brunner said she has completed the breakdown for the community sectors and met with Mr. Watson to finalize solid waste sector and she is confident about her numbers. She said she arrived at a decrease in emissions of 1.2% for the transportation sector, a decrease of 14.4% in the commercial and industrial sector, an increase of 12.8% in the residential sector and a decrease of 34% in the solid waste sector. Ms. Brunner said she met with Mr. Watson to figure out the waste figures from 1995, along with a report from 1996 that detailed all of the waste from 1995 which she said was also helpful, as well as using the numbers from 2015. She said she changed how the numbers were analyzed a bit to account for differences in how the City calculated waste collected from other towns and categorized them. She said she just started working on the municipal portion of the report and she will touch base with Ms. Chalice with questions. Vice Chair Hansel said the community data are the largest portion anyway so that is impressive in and of itself. Ms. Brunner agreed that the municipal and community data are two separate entities as the community data is publically available data narrowed down to the City level, and the municipal data is much more detailed, big picture data. She said she researched examples of how other communities have conducted their inventories and she found that some communities do updates of municipal data every four years, community data every four years, and then stagger each data set every two years to keep community abreast of the data and asked if maybe the City of Keene was interested in that idea. Chair Shedd asked Ms. Brunner if it would be helpful to move this item up for next month. Ms. Brunner replied that the City and Southwest Region Planning Commission extended their contract was extended so she will have more time to put towards the project and can update committee at November and December meeting.

6. ButtonUp workshop: Final details

Chair Shedd asked committee how many people could make it to the ButtonUp workshop on Saturday. Mr. Hansel informed committee that he did not write a letter to the editor as he was not that impressed by the Bush administration proclamation. Chair Shedd stated that they will be open to the public on Saturday at 9:30 am, Ms. Chalice said she will pick up the key on Friday and will bring two projectors to event one hour before doors open. Chair Shedd asked committee members to be there by 9 am and she will pick up donation from Bagel Works and they are providing the paper goods. Chair Shedd reminded Mr. Brehme to pick up the cider from Co-Op. Ms. Chalice said there will also be a representative

from Eversource present at workshop as well. Chair Shedd asked if they could have name tags to identify themselves and Ms. Chalice said she would bring stickers for name tags. Ms. Chalice said they are also required to have a sign-up sheet and asked if someone is willing to staff a table to ensure participants sign in. Chair Shedd said that people she spoke to about the weatherization campaign recommended gathering contact information as soon as there is interest to use for future purposes so she created 3x5 cards to gather that information. She asked if Vice Chair Hansel and Ms. Brunner would still be available to break down after the event and they agreed. She said she went to a NH Saves presentation in Claremont and only four participants attended so she is confident that their workshop will have a better turn out. Mr. Dachowski asked how he could participate and Chair Shedd and Ms. Chalice asked him to please be there by 9 am and he could man the sign in sheets.

Ashuelot River Dam Project for Comment

Ms. Chalice stated that CCP was given the opportunity to provide comments on the Ashuelot River Dam Project and Chair Shedd asked her to please make sure that the project is still available for comments as the deadline appeared to be 30 days from August 7. Ms. Brunner asked for clarification about the project and why it is important to CCP and Chair Shedd replied it is energy related as it is a proposed hydroelectric dam project and their role would be to speak to the energy aspect of the project and it may already be too late to respond. Vice Chair Hansel informed Ms. Chalice that he would be available to respond if they still were interested in accepting comments.

7. Adjournment – Next Meeting, Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Chair Shedd adjourned meeting at 9:12 am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute-Taker

RESOURCES:

Vital Communities, Energy: <http://vitalcommunities.org/energy/weatherize/>
Energy Transitions Research Lab: Dr. Thomas Webler, KSC

www.energytrans.org

Sierra Club Ready for 100% Renewables campaign:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100/about-our-program>

Pathways to 100%:

<http://www.mc-group.com/pathways-to-100/>