

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 6, 2018, 8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair
Terry Clark, Councilor
Jake Pipp, Member
Jessica Baum, Member
Chris Brehme, Member
Larry Dachowski, Alternate
Aperr Naadzenga, Alternate

Staff Present:

Michelle Chalice
Mari Brunner

Guests present:

Wes Cobb

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

2) Approval of May 3, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Clark moved to accept the May 3, 2018 minutes, Mr. Naadzenga seconded and the motion passed unanimously with the following amendments:

Page 6, under heading number 6, remove bold heading “Renewable/Sustainable Energy Plan Status.”

Page 5, fourth line from the end of the first full paragraph, change “National and Regional Planning Commission is an aggregate” to “Nashua Regional Planning Commission is an aggregator.”

3) Discussion about a Keene Energy Plan Proposal

Chair Shedd stated that last month she and Vice Chair Hansel drafted an energy vision statement and asked for members’ thoughts. The language for the draft vision statement is included on page 7 of the May 3 minutes:

“By the year 2030, the City of Keene will have reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% community-wide compared to its 2015 greenhouse gas baseline. Approximately half of that reduction will come from the transportation sector through the use of more efficient vehicles, public transportation, ride sharing and alternative transportation, as well as infrastructural changes such as complete streets, roundabouts, EV charging stations, etc. The other half of the reduction will come from a combination of energy conservation measures, the production of renewable energy and the purchasing of energy for heating and electricity from sources that produce little to no greenhouse gases.”

Vice Chair Hansel said the 50 percent number is arbitrary and was intended to be used as a

framework to start the discussion. He said that the transportation sector is responsible for about half of all of the community's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which is why the draft vision is calling for half of all reductions to come from that sector. He noted that changes are already happening within the transportation sector with the increase in use of hybrid and electric vehicles, so he doesn't think a 50% reduction from transportation is a stretch. Councilor Clark agreed that this is a good approach.

Mr. Cobb asked if the energy plan includes all of the community. Vice Chair Hansel replied that it does. Councilor Clark informed Mr. Cobb that the ECC has been focused primarily with the municipal sector; however, municipal operations only account for about 2% of all emissions from the community. Furthermore, the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report (GGE) demonstrated that the community fell short of the GHG reduction target; therefore, the goal of this plan is to do more outreach with the community at large.

Chair Shedd stated that the committee has deferred discussing setting new targets for the City while the GGE Report was being completed. The original GHG reduction targets were for the 1995 to 2015 timeframe, which has now passed. She noted that the draft vision mentions 2030 as the next target. She asked whether the new target or targets should align with the State's 2010 Climate Action Plan, which established an 80% greenhouse gas reduction target by 2050 for New Hampshire. Councilor Clark stated that those goals are out of date. He noted that there is a group in the community that is promoting the "Ready for 100" campaign which calls for 100% of the community's electricity to come from renewable energy. The ECC should anticipate this and consider adopting that goal as well. Vice Chair Hansel stated that he intentionally focused on GHG emissions instead of renewables in the vision statement because that is how the issue has historically been framed and there is already a baseline for emissions in the GGE report. However, renewable energy will be a big part of achieving a reduction in GHG emissions. Councilor Clark replied that the City has several large electric bills which contain a lot of carbon, for example, the \$7 million library project will be completely dependent on fossil fuels for electricity and heat.

Ms. Baum suggested that the vision include community engagement such as education, outreach and advocacy. Vice Chair Hansel said that would be good to include in a mission statement. Chair Shedd stated that the term "greenhouse gas" covers a lot of territory. A lot of GHG emissions come from fossil fuels, and some come from non-fuel sources, like agriculture and animal husbandry. She suggested an outline for the plan that would include a section on energy sources and a section on non-fuel sources of GHG emissions. She noted that if the group is aiming for an 80% reduction in GHG emissions, a lot of that will come from a reduction in fossil fuel use, and therefore the renewable energy goal and the GHG reduction goal are both going in the same direction. The difference is in how the issue is framed.

Chair Shedd said that she and Ms. Brunner had a discussion about the importance of soliciting community input throughout the development of the plan. She asked Ms. Brunner to clarify what role the community could have in developing an energy plan. Ms. Brunner explained that in developing a plan, it is always good to have community engagement from the onset of the process. Ms. Baum stated that members had previously talked about passive engagement ideas, for example, community art projects that would passively engage people in unique ways as formal meetings are limiting. Ms. Chalice shared that the City has a precedent for a passive art engagement project through the use of visual exhibits which solicited feedback about community issues. Mr. Naadzenga said that he agrees with a lot of what has been said and that he thinks it is a good idea to align the City targets with the state's GHG reduction target. He suggested that the ECC develop a clear timeline for collecting community feedback to make it transparent for people to participate in the process.

Mr. Pipp stated the passive opportunities are a good idea, however, the locations themselves are self-selecting and the committee needs to keep that in mind as well. Members named different sectors of the community such as the Public Library and the Keene Recreation Center as potential venues for passive engagement of the community. Chair Shedd noted that the City's website could be used to solicit feedback. Ms. Baum suggested the City's Facebook page as well. Mr. Brehme said that a public meeting and a passive engagement project do not need to be mutually-exclusive and having both would be effective. He also said he agrees with the goal being set for 2030 as opposed to 2050 because the 2030 timeframe is more immediate. He added that the 50% reduction number is a good number that people can relate to well. He suggested changing the language in the statement to "the community of Keene" to avoid confusion with the municipality and the City proper.

Ms. Brunner asked how the Energy Plan might be different from the Climate Action Plan, where a goal was set for the community and the community fell short. She noted that the community is not directly under the City's control like municipal operations are. Councilor Clark replied that one of the goals is to engage the community and get them on board with the goal. The City does not want to force anyone to do anything through rules or regulations, but rather get buy-in from residents and businesses. The City could play a role in engaging the community; possibly the Sustainability Coordinator could take this on if that position is approved. Chair Shedd said the Energy Plan can highlight ways that the City can facilitate and incentivize changes that reduce GHG emissions. No matter how aspirational the GHG goals may be, market trends are going in the direction of renewable energy. She said if they are focusing on policy, the City can help institute decisions that will help the community take advantage of those market trends to get closer to the Energy Plan goals. Mr. Hansel stated that ECC should also consider coordination with other groups seeking similar goals and work together.

Chair Shedd announced that the Antioch University Community Service Initiative (CSI) requests will come out at the end of August and a proposal will need to be submitted by the beginning of September. She asked members if they should try to get public input before developing a proposal for a CSI team, or whether public input could be part of the CSI project. CSI projects start in January so that would be six months down the road. Ms. Brunner said she spoke to Mr. Lamb about the Energy Plan and he suggested that ECC develop a proposal with a timeline first and then figure out what role Antioch students could play in supporting the plan. She noted that, as in the past, students would be signing a contract with the City of Keene. Mr. Naadzenga said if they had a proposal, he could talk to the instructor of the CSI course to possibly engage students on this topic during the class if the CSI Project is adopted by the University.

Chair Shedd one of the more immediate tasks to perform over the summer is to work with Mr. Lamb and the Planning Department on the proposal. Ms. Brunner recommended that the ECC create a draft and Planning staff can provide comments. Ms. Chalice said that they do not need to reinvent the wheel as there are several other New Hampshire Energy Plan examples that they can draw from and Ms. Brunner can send those plans out again. Vice Chair Hansel asked if they should do that before the community is involved. Ms. Chalice said the proposal should include the broader scope of the process and ask other cities with Energy Plans, for example, Concord, what the component pieces of the process is for creating a plan and then outlining the CSI project for the Antioch students. Ms. Brunner added that it would be helpful to think about what the finished product of the plan will look like while ensuring community engagement from the beginning of the process. Ms. Chalice said the Goose Pond Stewardship Plan committee is performing a similar community-informed plan and they could use that as an example as well.

Chair Shedd asked Ms. Chalice what the immediate tasks should be to move the process forward. Ms. Chalice suggested that ECC should first decide who will contact key individuals within the communities with existing Energy Plans about what their process was like and after that Ms. Brunner can send out the Goose Pond project scope as a structural example. She said the entire committee could look at the steps as a whole and decide which pieces to move forward. Ms. Brunner emphasized that it is ultimately the committee's decision about how to approach the plan and staff is only providing suggestions. She said coming up with a proposal would provide the City with a framework to work with using the timeline to define the overall scope of work. She said the City may choose to hire someone to work on the plan but that will have to be decided. Chair Shedd said that the process will take a lot longer than they had first anticipated as energy is an important issue for all sectors of the community. She asked members how to get work done and get the process moving forward.

Ms. Brunner said that the Bicycle Pedestrian Pathways Advisory Committee is currently working on a Bicycle Pedestrian Plan for the City, and they are using Google Drive to share their plan. She asked the committee whether a Google Drive folder would be useful to view working documents. She pointed out that under NH RSA 91A there are rules around public meetings so no decisions can be made online, however, Google Drive is a useful way to share working documents that the committee is working on. Mr. Brehme said that the BPPAC plan is managed by Mr. Schoefman, the Staff Liaison, and he directs members to view the document to glean more information. Vice Chair Hansel asked if members of the committee have access to Google Drive and Ms. Baum replied that anyone with an email address can have access to it as the person creating the document invites people through their respective email addresses. She said it makes sense to have a library of documents in different labeled folders. Ms. Brunner said she would be willing to create a Google Drive or Dropbox folder for the committee. She said Dropbox has a size limit that is associated with your email and does not allow multiple people to view and edit a document at the same time, and Mr. Pipp agreed that Google Drive is easier to use. Ms. Brunner said that Google Drive can be used collaboratively and in real time. Mr. Brehme agreed that it does facilitate communication for a working group. Ms. Baum said that she likes Google Drive as it becomes a privately held website that stores all information and all changes can be saved. Chair Shedd agreed that Google Drive is great for co-editing and is user-friendly. Vice Chair Hansel said he thinks they should do it.

Chair Shedd stated that the proposal for an Energy Plan is the central focus in the life of the committee right now and every member's feedback is valuable, therefore, Google Drive could expedite the proposal process. She asked members to provide thoughts about the process to Ms. Brunner and that would be a permissible communication. Ms. Brunner said she can send out information to the committee as long as discussions do not lead to decisions. Chair Shedd asked what steps they should take before the July 5 meeting. She asked which members are dedicated to the Energy working group. Ms. Baum said she could no longer commit to participating in a working group. The working group is composed of Chair Shedd, Vice Chair Hansel and Mr. Pipp. Ms. Chalice stated that she will no longer be staff liaison for ECC and will be handing it over to Ms. Brunner. Chair Shedd thanked Ms. Chalice for her years of service.

Members agreed that a project timeline should be the very first component to have completed by the July 5 meeting. Mr. Brehme suggested coming up with a timeline and a plan for baseline data that they would be collecting. For example, solar installations data, traffic counts and generally identifying the data they will need. Ms. Chalice asked what the timeline is for professors to incorporate data collection needs for students into their courses. Mr. Brehme replied the middle of the preceding semester; however, independent studies are circulating all of the time. Ms. Chalice said she would also talk to a professor at Franklin Pierce University's Environmental Studies department to determine if there are any professors with relevant backgrounds to add as professional resources and

deliver the information to Ms. Brunner. Mr. Brehme said that his colleague advised him that carbon dioxide sensors are available but the seasonal fluctuation of the gas due to vegetation changes makes the information unreliable.

Ms. Baum stated that as an energy and climate committee, they should aim to address soil health and green spaces and suggested creating space in the plan for making recommendations to the City to sequester carbon that is already in the atmosphere. She said research shows that carbon sequestration is equally or more important as reducing emissions. Chair Shedd replied that the Climate Action and Adaptation Plans have sections on agriculture and natural resources and they could easily incorporate sequestration and resilience adaptation in the Energy Plan as well. Vice Chair Hansel said other groups such as Friends of Open Spaces are interested in similar issues and they could develop questions for those groups to answer and attempt to coordinate with them. Ms. Baum said they could also highlight the other groups to incorporate them and tie them together through the Energy Plan.

4) Public Information/Engagement around Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report

Ms. Brunner shared that the City Manager asked for a video to showcase the GGE report and she is working on making a video in conjunction with Public Works. The video will be tweetable. Chair Shedd stated that October is officially National Energy Awareness Month and they should keep that in mind and possibly aim to share weekly updates in the newspapers about the accomplishments of the City during that month. Vice Chair Hansel suggested creating a working group on communications and marketing. Mr. Brehme suggested working with Friends of Public Art in designing a mural which will grab attention. He said he will look into connections with the artist community. Ms. Brunner said every May is mural month and Friends of Public Art might be interested in showcasing sustainable energy. She said she would be happy to invite someone from that group to the July or August meeting.

5) Updates:

Sustainability Coordinator Request Status – Councilor Clark informed the committee that the vote on the request will be tomorrow night at the City Council meeting. He said the vote for the budget amendment is pretty close as there are Councilors wavering in their support of the amendment. He said that there has been a surprisingly large amount of effort on both sides and a number of media outlets have spoken out against it. Councilor Clark said he is optimistic and they did everything that they could to present the arguments. Mr. Dachowski asked if would be useful to have people in the audience. Councilor Clark said the public cannot speak but it may be beneficial for Councilors to see people in the audience and people can talk to Councilors before the meeting starts. He said that the argument that the City already does enough energy and climate work is not necessarily true and he believes there is a moderate commitment to sustainability in the City of Keene. For example, the public library is not being built sustainably, the Marlborough Street building will only be 500 kilowatts and the City installed LED street lights instead of solar lights. Chair Shedd thanked Councilor Clark for all of his effort in advocating for the Sustainability Coordinator position and she said if it does not happen this year, they can pursue it after their Energy Plan is fleshed out and the scope of the position becomes clearer.

Monadnock Energy Hub update- Chair Shedd announced that there is now an official Monadnock Energy Hub (MEH) and an anonymous donor donated funds for a part-time staff position. She is on the steering committee and they have already conducted a number of interviews of ten applicants and they hope to announce a hire shortly. Chair Shedd said there is a general meeting on June 18th at Nubanusit Neighborhood and Farm hosted by the Peterborough Energy Committee that will include a tour of the facility at 5:30 pm and a 6 pm potluck. One of the tasks the MEH staff person will take on is a solarize campaign. She said she will send an email with more information.

New Hampshire Ten Year State Energy Strategy- Chair Shedd said that there were public input sessions through the late fall and winter on the three year update of the state's energy strategy and encouraged members to visit the link provided in the agenda packet. She said the goals are heavy on renewable energy but more broadly defined, and the state continues to identify fracked gas and nuclear as important renewables. However, the energy efficiency component is a good step. She said the committee should keep the document in mind throughout the process of developing the Energy Plan.

Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Funds- Chair Shedd stated that several years ago, Volkswagen was caught tampering with the emissions monitors in their diesel vehicles and were fined heavily. She said New Hampshire's share of the settlement money is about \$400 million and the Governor has allocated \$15 million to electric vehicle infrastructure and steering municipal fleets to cleaner vehicles. She asked how the City would obtain its share. Councilor Clark said they should look into writing a letter to make a bid for some of that money. Ms. Brunner said she could look into how to apply for the money. Ms. Chalice suggested Ms. Brunner call NH DES. Chair Shedd said they might not be accepting applications yet but they should stay on top of that process.

6) Committee Membership

Chair Shedd stated that there is still one seat on the committee that they have not yet filled. She has not been able to get in touch with Ms. Duffy at Keene State College. Ms. Brunner will follow up on suggestions. Chair Shedd stated it would be preferable to have someone with knowledge of energy policy.

Chair Shedd asked if there were any announcements. Ms. Brunner said that there is a group called the Elm City Compost Initiative that is trying to start a curbside compost service in Keene. She noted that one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gasses is organic waste in landfills. The compost group will provide containers and pick up to five gallons of compost up which is a great service for renters and residents who cannot have their own yard compost. It is very affordable starting at \$15 per month. Chair Shedd proposed that they look into multiunit housing as well. Ms. Baum said they are accepting compostable plates, meat and bones and that they plan to bring the compost to Brattleboro.

7) Next Meeting: Thursday, July 5, 2018

Respectfully submitted by,
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Mari Brunner, Planning Technician