



## **ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA**

Wednesday, December 4, 2019, 8:00 AM

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor **Committee** Room, City Hall

### **Members:**

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair  
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair  
Terry Clark, Councilor  
Chris Brehme  
Jake Pipp  
Ken Dooley

Cary Gaunt  
Anna Schierioth  
Rod Bouchard  
Andrew Dey  
Zach Luse

### **Staff:**

Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community Development Director  
Mari Brunner, Planner

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of November 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes
3. Presentation: Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) - [www.neep.org](http://www.neep.org)
4. Energy Plan
  - a. Institutional Focus Group: Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 8:00 AM
  - b. Consultant Status and progress
  - c. Community Energy Conversations (meeting-in-a-box activity)
  - d. Success Stories: [www.ci.keene.nh.us/sustainability/success-stories](http://www.ci.keene.nh.us/sustainability/success-stories)
5. New Business
6. Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 8, 2019
7. Adjourn

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

**ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, November 6, 2019**

**8:00 AM**

**Second Floor Conference Room**

**Members Present:**

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair  
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair  
Jake Pipp  
Ken Dooley  
Cary Gaunt  
Anna Scherioth  
Andrew Dey  
Zach Luse  
Rod Bouchard

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Terry Clark, Councilor

**Guests present:**

Scott Maslansky, CDFA  
Pat Martin  
Nancy Gillard  
Caroline Jones  
Charles Daloz  
Chuck Weed

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Dr. Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM.

**2) Approval of October 2, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Shedd moved to accept the October 2 meeting minutes with revisions, Mr. Bouchard seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Revisions are as follows:**

**Page 7, second paragraph, line 5, change:**

*“Chair Shedd replied that she thinks that is one element that Katie from Clean Energy New Hampshire is sharing.”*

*to*

*“Chair Shedd replied that she thinks that is one element that Clean Energy New Hampshire is sharing.”*

Dr. Shedd proposed that the committee delay the Wednesday, January 1, 2020 ECC meeting to January 8, 2020. Ms. Brunner agreed, however, she said they would need to meet in another room on the second floor as there is another committee that meets in the conference room on that date.

***Mr. Pipp moved to accept delaying the Wednesday, January 1, 2020 ECC meeting to January 8, 2020, Vice Chair Hansel seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.***

### **3) Energy Plan**

#### **a. October 22<sup>nd</sup> Community Workshop de-brief**

Dr. Shedd stated that the community workshop was attended by several committee members, as well as 35-40 members of the general public and three break out groups. Ms. Brunner said she was curious to hear what other members thought of the workshop. She said she was very impressed by Ms. Gaunt’s inspirational speech; however, she missed the Mayor’s speech because she had to help out with a late registration. She said there was also a panel of four speakers who also did a great job. Ms. Julia Griffin, the Town Manager from Hanover, was a speaker. She said Hanover adopted their 100% renewable energy goals and skipped over the development of a plan and jumped straight into action, so they have already made a lot of progress towards their goals. There is a lot that Keene could learn from. Speakers also included Mr. Henry Herndon from Clean Energy New Hampshire, Mr. Tom Webler from Keene State College, and Ms. Keely Felton, the Vice President of Nova Energy Group, which is the consultant group that has been working with Keene Housing on their energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for a number of years.

Ms. Brunner stated that the group broke out into three small groups. She ended up in a group with people who are supportive of the City’s energy goals, so there was a great discussion but not a lot of controversy. She said the other two groups had a bit more discussion about the goals. She encouraged other members to discuss their experiences.

Mr. Bouchard stated that there was a “denier” in his small group and it was a lively discussion. Vice Chair Hansel agreed that both Ms. Gaunt’s and Mayor Lane’s speeches were very good. He added that in reading the notes, he noticed there was mix of deniers and nuclear energy supporters in two groups. He said it wasn’t clear from the notes if there were answers to the ranking questions. Ms. Brunner replied that they did not necessarily rank questions, but what seemed to emerge in her group as the most agreed-upon concept was the economic impact of renewable energy. She said that one member

of the group said the other items, such as reducing the energy burden and equity, flow from addressing the economic impact of energy. She noted that overall they had a good discussion.

Dr. Shedd stated that a few questions arose out of the exercise: first, what do they do with the input? and secondly, does it inform any of the Meeting-in-a-Box, which are being called “Community Energy Conversations,” that are about to be rolled out? Ms. Brunner said this was sort of a test run for the Meeting in a Box activity, as the questions are very similar. She said hopefully they will get good feedback from the Community Energy Conversations and she is hoping to group similar responses to questions together and get a sense of what the consensus is in the community around those different questions.

Dr. Shedd added that a third question to address is how they will allocate the energies of the committee and City staff to these sessions that will mostly be bringing in the residential voice as opposed to the focus groups they have planned with representatives of the different sectors. She said they had the Landlord focus group already with four attendees, and their plan was to have one with the Institutional sector, Commercial sector, and Residential sector. She said they are already addressing the residential sector in the process of the Community Energy Conversations. Dr. Shedd asked, with limited staff and committee time, how much they want to focus on the residential sector if it ends up being at the cost of the other sectors.

Vice Chair Hansel replied that the presentation Ms. Brunner made to the Rotary Club should count towards one of the sectors as those are business-oriented people either working or retired or in the nonprofit sector. Mr. Bouchard stated that there was some focus on the possibility for hydropower in his breakout group and that has been neglected in the early planning. He said if it were possible, it could solve another problem in Keene, for example, Beaver Brook as they could potentially put a reservoir there in Northfield. He said he hopes hydropower does not get lost in the mix. Ms. Brunner asked if the hydro discussion was centered on Beaver Brook or was it more general discussion. Mr. Bouchard replied that he is individually impacted by flooding by Beaver Brook, but there has also been study done by the City and the Army Corps made a big mistake 20-30 years ago when they put the dam on Route 10. He added that it might be a way to solve a couple of problems in Keene. Dr. Shedd agreed that she likes the idea of creating solutions to multiple problems; however, they do not need to get into details at this time but instead focus on the flexibility needed with emerging and future technologies that will benefit them in the transition.

Ms. Brunner stated it was a good workshop overall, however, they are still early on in the planning stages and reflecting on this workshop she was wondering if the tentative future workshops they had discussed on Transportation and Thermal and Heating could be more specific. She suggested that instead of breaking them into three categories based on sectors, perhaps they can discuss those topics in context of specific recommendations that come out of the consultant’s report or other recommendations that they want specific feedback from the public on. She said it will also be easier to design surveys around that subject material because at this point in time, the ideas are still pretty abstract. Vice Chair

Hansel agreed that timing will be important as to what the topics will be for those next sessions, for example, the report from the community power aggregation process may very well inform the next session topic if it happens after the report comes out. Dr. Shedd said the consultant report includes a one-hour presentation towards the conclusion of their work and the next community workshop could be shaped around that presentation.

Ms. Brunner added that the City has asked the consultants to come on a Thursday in order to give a one hour presentation for the community, and then they will give a twenty minute presentation to City Council, including a Q&A session, that evening. She said the Council committee meeting will also provide an opportunity for the public to hear the consultants' presentation; however, it would probably be worth having an additional workshop event so that people who are working during the day can attend.

Dr. Shedd encouraged members to look at the agenda packet to see the notes Ms. Brunner typed up as well participants' questions.

Mr. Pipp added that his group also had a vocal "dissenter" and Mr. Lamb handled the conversation very well as a mediator, as well as other group participants, and he applauded their engagement in civil conversation.

### **Consultant Status and Progress**

#### **b. Timeline Update**

Ms. Brunner stated that the City had a kick-off meeting with the consultants on September 27 and they provided the City with a timeline for completing different deliverables. The first deliverable is a memo that outlines the current electricity context in Keene, which includes everything except the actual data for the electricity baseline. It outlines all the key state and federal policies, local incentives and innovative actions being taken by other communities in New Hampshire. She said it is a thorough and useful document that is still in draft form so she has not shared it yet. Ms. Brunner stated the consultants are currently waiting on Eversource to provide data so they can complete an electricity baseline, which is essential to moving on to the next steps of the project. She said they contacted Eversource at the end of September and they have not received the information yet, so the timeline for the consultant has been extended accordingly and they are currently in a holding pattern on that component.

Ms. Brunner stated the consultants have since shifted their energy into the Sol Smart program, which is a US Department of Energy (US DOE) program that aims to help communities reduce the "soft" costs of solar. Incidentally, Cadmus is the company that helps the US DOE with that program. It involves providing free technical assistance with participating communities to review their zoning, create a permitting checklist and help draft a solar ordinance--three items they are working with them on currently. She said the consultants have shifted their energy into the Sol Smart program while they await the data from Eversource. Ms. Brunner said the City has already completed a zoning review with them which has been signed off on by the Zoning administrator. She said Cadmus is

also currently working on a draft solar ordinance for the City. Dr. Shedd asked if the solar ordinance involves solar siting for a large commercial utility and Ms. Brunner replied that the consultants have not provided any information yet so she cannot speak to that.

Mr. Bouchard said that the Hanover Town Manager noted that the hardest part of the process for Hanover was getting the electricity usage data and Ms. Brunner agreed that it took them six months to acquire the necessary data from their utility company. Dr. Shedd said there was a measure that came out of the PUC this year that was geared towards improved transparency and electrical data from utilities. Ms. Pat Martin is knowledgeable about that if they want more information. She said it may not help the City in the next month or two, but perhaps for ongoing reporting for the community's profile. She said unfortunately Eversource's director for strategic planning for clean energy who spoke at Radically Rural, has left for a more private sector. She said she had come to Eversource from Green Mountain Power and she seemed to be a good high-level access to coordinating with Eversource and they do not know who her successor will be. Ms. Brunner said the point person she has been talking to who is knowledgeable is Ms. Kate Peters and the City's municipal representative, Mr. Connor Jennings.

Dr. Shedd said that the energy plan timeline is in the packet. Ms. Brunner said they are on track but they are a bit behind on the focus group engagements, however, with the Meeting in the Box activity, they may not have to do the residential focus group as it is intended to reach residents of Keene. She said they are looking at February for the second workshop and May for the third workshop and asked if members would like to adjust the timeline. Dr. Shedd said there is a line on the timeline that says "Implementation Team Meeting" and that is not until March, so after they have the strategies developed and presented by the consultant, they could hope to address the specific strategies with the Agriculture and Conservation commissions as well as the Energy and Finance groups. He asked how this committee could help make progress on the timeline. Ms. Brunner said this timeline highlights the communication and reach piece, which ECC has agreed to take a leadership role on. She said if something appears missing or unnecessary, members should speak up.

Mr. Dey asked Ms. Brunner what came out of the focus group as he believes that drowning in data is not the best way to go. Dr. Shedd added that a thought that occurred to her is how to make better use of members who are showing up for ECC meetings. She suggested that one of the upcoming meetings be the focus group for the Institutional Sector as they can get a sense of benchmarking and goals for local institutions and gather thoughts on directions where collaboration could be helpful. She asked how that possibility resonates with the group. Ms. Schierioth said it sounds great. Mr. Brehme asked if all the institutions are represented, and Dr. Shedd replied that they are lacking representatives from Antioch University, Cheshire Medical Center, and Keene Housing. Mr. Dey said that is a good idea as it would be less aspirational and more actual reporting.

Chair Shedd said there is a guest coming for the December meeting from the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership (NEEP), but maybe the ECC can aim for the January 8th

ECC meeting to be the Institutional focus group to shape what they want out of that and maybe extend it slightly if possible. Vice Chair Hansel replied that the only caveat is that if they are talking amongst themselves, the group would not necessarily be representative of the dissenting opinions of people and they should probably invite some people who might disagree with them. Dr. Shedd asked who Vice Chair Hansel would envision from the Institutional sector. Vice Chair Hansel replied he did not know. Dr. Shedd asked if it would be useful to have individuals from the School Board facilities committee and others from KSC as they already have representation from the County and Council. Dr. Gaunt spoke to Vice Chair Hansel's point, it is advantageous to have balance through other collaborators, for example, the facility and planning people from each institution. Dr. Shedd said it would be good to invite the facilities people from the City as well. Ms. Brunner suggested that members reach out to facilities people in their own institutions and send her their email information so she can create a poll to schedule this meeting at one of their ECC meetings. Dr. Shedd added that members can also email Ms. Brunner ideas about content for the meeting and they can read through them at their December meeting. Mr. Dey said if they have more people they may need a bigger venue. Ms. Brunner said her only hesitation about choosing the date right now is if people cannot make that date and time.

Dr. Shedd asked if there are any more thoughts on the timeline and moving things forward. Ms. Gaunt added that what works well for her is to have a specific "ask" from the committee, for example, making requests for facilitation more specific and detailing who they are meeting and when to make her scheduling easier. She said they all have different skillsets to bring to the table and it is easier for her to respond to a clear "ask" as opposed to an open-ended question. For example, if they are having focus group meetings it would be good to know beforehand so she can plan ahead.

### **c. Community Energy Conversations**

Ms. Brunner stated that the Community Energy Conversations are similar to the small group breakouts at the workshop but they will be facilitated by volunteers in the community as City staff has limited time to do meetings out in the community. She said the premise of the activity is to have a volunteer who is trained in how to facilitate the meeting and will take the Meeting in the Box kit and run a meeting, type up the notes and share the notes with staff. Ms. Brunner noted that this is a strategy to reach more people out in the community. She said so far, there are five people that are trained to be facilitators and most of them are choosing not to do public meetings but instead taking the model to their churches, senior centers, etc. She said guest Ms. Martin has volunteered to run three meetings that will be open to the public, one in November and the other two in December. She said those meetings will be advertised on the City website, however, the others will not be on the website. She said they put a page on the website and a Facebook post but they still need more help getting the word out. Ms. Brunner passed out cards she created for members to place around the community and she solicited more ideas on how to publicize the events.

Dr. Shedd said that she is trained as a facilitator as well as several of the guests present from the Clean Energy team and other individuals in the community for a total of about eight facilitators. She said facilitators have paired up for most of the sessions that are scheduled so that one person serves as a note taker for back up. Vice Chair Hansel suggested that they advertise the meetings in the Chamber of Commerce newsletter.

Ms. Brunner stated that members can help with getting the word out about the Community Energy Conversations, help facilitate a meeting, or even attend a meeting. Ms. Brunner said she is not choosing the dates for the meetings and they are based on volunteer availability. She said most of the meetings are scheduled during the workday but evening meetings are also possible to arrange for community members who work during the day. She encouraged members to contact her and she will get meetings set up. Ms. Gillard stated that she and Ms. Jones are facilitating meetings on three days in November and December: in November they will hold one at the Senior Center and one at the College for students and faculty, and in December they will hold one at the Community Kitchen. She said two meetings are in the evening and one meeting is during the day. Vice Chair Hansel asked if they can receive a list of the dates. Dr. Shedd said that there is spreadsheet available with meeting dates on the shared drive. Mr. Weed said if there are any decisions about the community power aggregation, that is an outcome that would be good for people to recognize when they attend these meetings. Dr. Shedd added that the meetings are good opportunities to listen to the public, however, at a certain point they need to begin teaching because everyone knows we need to weatherize and we need cheaper energy but not everyone is aware of what avenues are available.

**d. Success Stories - [www.ci.keene.nh.us/sustainability/success-stories](http://www.ci.keene.nh.us/sustainability/success-stories)**

Dr. Shedd stated that currently the City's website has success stories on Filtrine and Paragon Digital Marketing. Ms. Brunner added that a success story for Bensenwood should be coming up on the website soon as well. Dr. Shedd added that Keene resident Ms. Chalice also has a success story on her energy efficiency and renewable energy applications in her home. Ms. Brunner noted that Ms. Chalice asked her to hold off on posting her story until she provides more data. Dr. Shedd said they do not need much data as the story is the most important piece although documenting the financial impact would be relevant. She asked if anyone has a contact at MoCo and Ms. Gillard stated that she can work on that story. Dr. Shedd said it would be great if success stories include business, residential and non-profits. She said Forest View has been installing heat pumps and that could be a nice story on the impact on low-income communities. She said the ribbon cutting ceremony could provide a nice start on that story and interested members could talk to Mr. Meehan at Keene Housing to develop that story. Vice Chair Hansel said he would take the task on. Mr. Maslansky stated that the Community Development Finance Authority funded a percentage of the energy efficiency work and they are currently aiming to change their policies to include more energy audits so they would be interested in participating with the story telling. Dr. Shedd said the information stream they need to work on moving forward is how "to fund the revolution."

**4) Committee Membership**



Dr. Shedd announced that Vice Chair Hansel's and Ms. Gaunt's committee membership will expire at the end of December, however, they are both eligible to renew for another term. She stated in a couple of years the committee should anticipate a big turnover in membership as she will no longer be on the committee as she will have reached her term limit. She said individuals can serve two, three-year terms and then they are required to rotate off for at least one year before returning. Dr. Shedd said that the committee will vote for Chair and Vice Chair at the January meeting. She said 2020 will be her last year on the committee and if anyone would like to serve as Chair, she would be happy to pass the torch on as a sort of transition year as she will be busy serving as the project lead for the solarize campaign for the first six months.

Ms. Brunner clarified that Mr. Pipp is on his second term which expires in 2020 and Ms. Gaunt is on her first term which expires in 2021. She said Vice Chair Hansel's term expires in 2019. Dr. Shedd stated that unless members ask to not be re-appointed, if they are eligible they will be automatically reappointed.

#### **5) Community Choice Aggregation/ Community Power**

Dr. Shedd stated that there were a couple of presentations about SB 286 and Clean Energy New Hampshire had a webinar on Monday. She will provide members with a link. Mr. Bouchard stated that he was taken aback by how unstructured everything is, however there are opportunities to learn about what a county or multiple counties can do. He said they have a lot of education to do before they launch an opt-out program like this as everyone would be opted in and there are concerns about how that would be received. He said Clean Energy NH has done a good job of getting the concept out but they need to take it to the next level in exploring what some of the implications are of instituting this plan and what some of the focuses might be. Mr. Bouchard stated that they talked about having the packages to opt-up which would enable people to buy wind and solar power or to buy from local generators, or having the ability to subsidize some of the lower-income families who may be struggling with paying power bills. He said they need to put together a picture of what that structure would look like and the biggest question is whether or not it makes economic sense given that a lot of this would involve putting out a bid for actual operations and there are very few people with expertise in dealing with buying from the power pool, or doing the reporting, etc. He said there is a lot of potential but they have to be cautious about how to achieve the potential.

Ms. Brunner added that she had a very similar conversation with Mr. Lamb about the program and they are at the same spot within the City about recognizing that they need more detailed technical information. She said they are talking to Cadmus, their consultant, about getting more information about this strategy. Mr. Bouchard said they would bring the Executive Director over to Keene. Vice Chair Hansel said they might at some point ask Clean Energy NH to bring some of the consultants or brokers who would provide the service that would take on a lot of the details as long as they can make an economic case for it and that is the next missing link. Ms. Brunner added that she met with a company called Good Energy that is doing a pilot program of community power

and it was very useful to hear their approach because they currently do work with every state that has enabled this program (except for New Hampshire since it is so new), and they do not bother with the opt-in programs. However, she said it was still at a higher level and her ability to get to specifics was limited.

Dr. Shedd asked members if they are all familiar with the community choice opt out to further the conversation. Mr. Maslansky stated it would be very useful to reach out to gain perspectives from contractors that are implementing this. He said they did a great job at the webinar in the case study of the California CCA who have been implementing this, however, at a local and county scale there are a lot of layers and they will need a lot of depth to understand the process on a county and city scale. Ms. Martin stated that Massachusetts is very close to New Hampshire's situation; however, New Hampshire's bill is actually better. She said Boston finally signed on and the bill has been rolling along for the last couple of years and Mr. Patrick Roche from Good Energy helped roll out these programs in Massachusetts. She said having a neighbor so close is a better model as opposed to California as Massachusetts shares a lot of the same utilities and power suppliers as New Hampshire.

Mr. Bouchard said they cannot model their process on California's as they are very unique. Mr. Maslansky added that the Massachusetts examples were a letdown in terms of renewable opportunities; however, he felt that the California example was aiming higher with their renewable objectives. Ms. Martin questioned the strategy of going 100% renewable while continuing to purchase Texas wind and how it ignores the local community. She said instead, it is worth using the budget on energy efficiency projects at the beginning as aiming for as much local renewable energy as possible with the aim of actually saving people money. Ms. Martin stated that they do not need to become one hundred percent right out of the gate. Mr. Bouchard agreed that they should not lose track of the simple things, as those will bring ultimate success.

Dr. Shedd said it is clear from the presentations thus far that an important early step is to establish the goals of the program. She said that cost savings should be a primary goal and a goal should also be to increase the percentage of renewables and include energy efficiency as part of the portfolio. She said they clearly still have a lot to learn as they have to keep working on scale. At the presentation on Monday evening, there were nine municipalities within Cheshire County plus Peterborough represented and they all thought the County doing it would be great. Dr. Shedd said that RSA 53A allows any grouping of local and county governments to collaborate so if Cheshire County plus Peterborough wanted to collaborate, they could work together on a program. Ms. Brunner added that there is no geographic limitation to the program and that provides them with a lot of flexibility. Mr. Bouchard noted that they are aiming to build an active coalition in the legislature.

Mr. Maslansky asked how simple the process should be to begin with. Dr. Shedd added that this a topic the committee will revisit in the coming months and there are meetings coming up that will be informative about how to develop the model and the scale at which they can operate the program. Dr. Shedd thanked Mr. Bouchard for being present

at the meeting and he responded that the next step is for Ms. Brunner and Mr. Lamb to do the deep dive in to the details. Ms. Brunner said they can invite some of the other municipalities that have entertained the idea of this program.

Ms. Brunner restated that she provided the small cards so that members can place them around the community and share them to promote the Meeting in a Box meetings as they require good attendance to be successful.

#### **6) Keene Solarize Campaign**

Dr. Shedd said the Keene-Marlborough Solarize campaign is moving along and a vendor and partner selection team is reaching out and reviewing a template RFP to customize to the region. They have used numbers from the Vital Communities tool kit and discovered that the campaign may have the potential to reach as many as 150 new owner-occupied residential units. She added that whether or not they can find an installer who is capable of doing that many installations is still uncertain.

Dr. Shedd stated that the ECC's mission includes promoting energy conservation and efficiency as well as the use and production of renewable energy. She said it would be helpful for the solarize campaign to have some form of connection to the City, at least in terms of promoting the kick-off the campaign and having access to City facilities for meetings. For example, being able to put up signs the like signs put up by the Clean Energy Team at Fuller Park and using City meeting space without invoking a fee. She said there could be a couple hundred people so they may need a large venue like the Blastos room at Keene Ice.

She proposed that the committee make a motion to recommend to City Council that the City support the solarize campaign in the community. She clarified that this would not include financial support. Vice Chair Hansel asked if they would be called a sponsor, to make it clear there is no financial commitment involved. Dr. Shedd replied in some communities the city serves as a sponsor, but it can take other forms in different communities. Vice Chair Hansel said it may make more sense to use the word "sponsor" and then make it clear that there is no financial component. Dr. Shedd agreed that they are only asking for in-kind contributions of meeting space. Ms. Martin added that they may also want to call it a "partnership" just in case there is a legal problem that would affect the City.

Dr. Shedd asked if the committee needs more time to consider, and noted that the campaign launch is March 4th or 5th in Keene, so they do not need to make a decision immediately. It would be helpful to know what the City's role would be. Ms. Schierioth suggested that they word craft the recommendation carefully. Ms. Brunner said the recommendation can state the committee's intentions and the City can wordsmith it from there. The process does take a while so it could be a good idea to put the recommendation in early. Dr. Shedd said that the City can benefit by being associated with the campaign, which is usually popular and a great way to do something positive in the community.

ECC Meeting Minutes  
November 6, 2019

*Mr. Dey moved to recommend that the City support the upcoming solarize campaign, Vice Chair Hansel seconded and the motion passed unanimously with Dr. Shedd abstaining.*

7) **New Business**

Dr. Shedd stated that the committee will wait until a future meeting to discuss Agenda item 6- Update on Recent Municipal Projects.

8) **Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 4, 2019**

9) **Adjourn**

Dr. Shedd adjourned the meeting at 9:18 am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner

# Keene Community Energy Conversations

## FEEDBACK SUMMARY – NOV. 22, 2019

### Project Overview

In January 2019, the Keene City Council adopted Resolution R-2018-36 ([Sustainable Energy Resolution](#)) setting the following goals:

1. That 100% of electricity consumed in the City will come from renewable energy sources by the year 2030, and
2. That 100% of thermal energy and energy used for transportation will come from renewable energy sources by the year 2050.

These goals apply to the entire community, not just municipal operations. Furthermore, the City Council made a commitment to develop a plan to achieve these goals by December of 2020.

Staff from the City of Keene Community Development Department are working with the City's Energy and Climate Committee and other community partners, such as the Clean Energy Team and Keene State College, on public outreach and engagement around these goals. Throughout the fall of 2019 and winter of 2019-2020, volunteers from the community are facilitating a series of small group discussions called "Community Energy Conversations" to provide individuals with an opportunity to learn more about the renewable energy goals, express concerns and hopes, and share ideas.

Each community energy conversation is limited to ~10 people in order to ensure everyone in the group will get an opportunity to fully participate in the discussion. The discussions are facilitated by volunteers, who will take notes and share feedback with City staff. Feedback from Keene citizens and others will be used to inform the vision, goals, and strategies of a community energy plan.

The "Community Energy Conversations" activity is an opportunity for anyone who is interested in learning more about the project and/or providing feedback in a less formal setting than a typical public meeting. The meetings are facilitated by volunteers from the community; however, feedback will be shared with City staff in the form of typed meeting notes.

### Meeting Schedule

The following is a list of Community Energy Conversation sessions that have taken place, or are scheduled to take place, as of November 22, 2019:

Date	Location	Status
November 10, 2019	United Church of Christ	Completed – Notes Rec'd
November 18, 2019	Keene Public Library (KPL)	Completed – Notes Rec'd
November 20, 2019	KSC Student Center	Completed – Notes not yet Rec'd
November 24, 2019	Keene Unitarian Universalist Church	Pending
December 6, 2019	Keene Public Library (KPL)	Pending
December 9, 2019	Keene Senior Center	Pending
December 16, 2019	Keene Public Library (KPL)	Pending

## Summary of Discussions

### November 10, 2019 – United Church of Christ

- Seven participants, 6 from Keene and 1 from Spofford

#### Concerns:

- The timeline is unrealistic in two ways - too short for most people to make the changes needed, but also too long to get their immediate attention and prompt action to make these changes - It is important to compress the timeline within which people will pay attention and act.
- How can we increase grid reliability and security? This is a complicated issue, in part due to the underlying interest of utilities in localization in cases where supporting localization protects their profits – i.e. reduces competition and allows a utility company that dictates costs keep charging higher rates for electricity. Counterpoint - Keeping energy sources in state keeps economic benefits in state.
- Local culture may not be supportive of renewable energy or localization of energy sources. How deal with an unwilling local culture? How do we change the culture to one that encourages individuals to make the changes needed, e.g. driving more energy efficient cars?
- How many families and individuals can afford to make this transition, and how do we address these financial constraints for homeowners? For instance, a person may get a loan to lease or purchase solar panels, but if they are not confident in the reliability of their job and income stream, they may choose not to take on that risk. For example, one of the participants anticipates downsizing and selling her house in the next 5 years. She can't afford to spend money on solarization for her current home with little likelihood of return on this investment.
- If this transition requires regional cooperation and investment (not just within Keene), that may take a long time and involve difficult negotiations. How many other towns in the region can get their residents to agree to this transition and can afford the costs?
- To meet the goals, will the city have to mandate that individuals and businesses make this transition, and if so how will it do that?
- How will the city provide the level of public education and communication needed to get everyone on board?
  - For example – many people in NH and Keene (the local social norm?) think that burning wood is a “cleaner” alternative to using oil or gas, but air pollution caused by wood burning can be worse for public health and air quality than coal. Education is needed to correct that perception.

- The information that I have read about energy projects such as the Northern Pass doesn't seem trustworthy. It is often polarizing when coming from groups for or against an initiative. How can consumers trust the information we read? What sources can we trust and how many people use these? More education is needed.
- The city needs to do a better job of getting information out to the public – e.g. Many do not read The Sentinel or listen to local radio (1290 am) or watch local TV, etc. How can it better use the internet and other means to reach a broader audience?

### Ideas

- Build public awareness of the many exciting changes in technology and how fast this technology is becoming available and being used. Spread the message of “Promising Frontiers.”
- Address myths that hold people back – e.g. that our cold temperatures significantly limit the efficiency of batteries in electric cars
- Build a better infrastructure so power lines don't go down in storms. – Develop ways for community to weather outages.
- Have more small group discussions such as this (because they are educational and provide more opportunity to describe more thorough answers) and include a broad set of interest groups (to better represent the range of perspectives - e.g. rod and gun clubs, young Rotarians group, Home owner Associations from high to low end, e.g. Wrights Estate - Tanglewood.
- Get the private sector more involved – Large corporations, small businesses, etc.
- Create more local incentives - e.g. Limit center parking in center lanes along main street to compact and subcompact cars.

### Priorities

Participants were asked “What should the community be prioritizing in terms of where and how we get our energy?,” and were directed choose their top 2-3 priorities from a list. All seven people in this group chose reducing social impacts, such as energy burden for low income or elderly residents, proximity of energy generation sites to neighborhoods, etc., as one of their top three priorities. Six people said that reducing the health and environmental impacts of energy (e.g. air quality, water quality, etc.), and four people chose increasing energy efficiency.

Three people chose reducing the cost of energy, and one person said that reducing the upfront cost of transitioning to electricity should be a priority.

The table below summarizes the responses to this question.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total Count
<b>Reduce social impacts</b>	5	1	1	<b>7</b>
<b>Reduce environmental &amp; health impacts</b>	0	3	3	<b>6</b>
<b>Increase energy efficiency</b>	0	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Reduce costs of energy</b>	1	1	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Reduce upfront costs of transitioning to electricity</b>	1	0	0	<b>1</b>

## November 18, 2019 – Keene Public Library

- Eleven participants, 7 from Keene and 4 from other towns (Troy, Swanzey, New Ipswich, MC2 Charter School Faculty)

### Concerns

- Cost effective versus green for green's sake?
- Feasibility and affordability
- Transportation should be included
- Timeline
- Will there be a regional effort?
- Workforce training
- Concern about loss of jobs, tax burdens
- Skeptical about wind/solar as only sources
- Lack of state and national support
- Don't want to be constantly pushing uphill
- Need community solar for those who rent or don't have good location for solar.
- Affordability

### Ideas / What excites people

- Plans for more? (wastewater treatment plant)
- Potential for local sustainable energy sources
- Working toward a green future
- "Its about time!"
- Attract more people and businesses to area



- REAP grant Is Keene eligible?
- Not excited
- Free fuel from wind and sun
- Co benefits of better health and good jobs
- Good jobs

### Priorities

In this group, participants were asked to name their top two or three priorities from a list (but were not asked to say which was their first priority, second priority, and priority). Seven people chose “reduce reliance on fossil fuels,” six chose “Reduce upfront costs of energy,” five chose “increase local energy generation,” four chose “reduce overall energy use,” three chose “reduce energy costs,” and three chose “increase reliability and resilience.”

## Evaluations and Feedback on Process

### UNDER CONSTRUCTION\*

\*This section will be filled out with responses from evaluation forms and comments on how to improve the process.