

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 3, 2019

8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb, Community Development
Director/Assistant City Manager
Mari Brunner, Planner

Members Not Present:

Cary Gaunt

1) **Call to Order & Roll Call**

Dr. Shedd called meeting to order at 8 am and roll call was conducted.

2) **Approval of June 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Councilor Clark moved to approve the June 5 minutes with revisions, Mr. Hansel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Revisions are as follows:

Page 7 of 16, change: CNS to C&S

Page 8, under Updates, HB-365, change: “passed both Houses of Congress” to “passed both Chambers of the New Hampshire legislature.”

3) **Committee Membership**

Dr. Shedd announced that there are currently two applications for membership submitted to the Mayor, including Ms. Anna Schierioth from the real estate sector who submitted a request for appointment. Councilor Clark said the Mayor meets with the City Clerk the Monday before every Council meeting to go over membership. He said meetings have been irregular with the Council so he is not sure when the Mayor will act on the potential appointments. Dr. Shedd stated that if they could get the nomination through from the

Mayor next week and the confirmation in August, they would have new appointees on board for September. She informed members that the City will start enforcing the new rules for quorum soon. Dr. Shedd stated that Mr. Zach Luse who is the owner of Paragon Digital Marketing is also interested in membership.

Guest Mr. Weed stated he suggested to the Manager and the other Commissioners that they start their meetings at 8 am at least once per month and then resume Commissioner's business after the ECC meeting. Dr. Shedd stated that there will only be one additional full seat available if the other two appointments go through and they are only looking for one representative from the County. Mr. Weed said that he would be happy to serve in that role and Dr. Shedd suggested that they follow up on his appointment after he returns from vacation. She informed Mr. Weed that ECC meets the first Wednesday of every month from 8-9 am, as well as a quarterly two-hour working session at a time that is determined by Doodle Poll. Mr. Weed said he is happy to serve as a liaison in the interim. Dr. Shedd said the County is doing some interesting work on the Maplewood county property with battery storage to decrease the number of customer outages. Dr. Shedd asked if there are any other questions about membership. She said there will be alternate seats available as well.

Vice Chair Hansel stated that there is a new Facilities Director at Cheshire Medical Center who is also a new member of the Rotary Club and he can reach out to him about possible participation in ECC.

Councilor Clark said he set up a meeting with the Vice President of Benson Wood, Mr. Andrew Dey, and at least two principles of the company will be present. He said that he asked Dr. Shedd and Vice Chair Hansel to attend the meeting with him to discuss potential committee membership and collaboration. Councilor Clark stated that it would be a good collaboration in the building industry as Benson Wood owns a company called Unity Homes which prefabs energy efficient homes. Dr. Shedd stated that she recently recruited Mr. Hans Porschitz to be on a solarize campaign as well. Councilor Clark added that it would be valuable to have individuals from the building sector involved on the committee.

Councilor Clark asked if the request for nominations should come from Dr. Shedd as Chair. Dr. Shedd replied that the request does not have to come from the Chair; however, it would be helpful to request an appointment with the Mayor. She suggested that Ms. Schierioth complete a form on the City website to request an appointment with the Mayor.

4) Energy Plan
a. Outreach Timeline

Ms. Salas stated that they are looking for more feedback from members on the timeline. Dr. Shedd asked if members had a chance to look at the timeline (on page 10-11 of agenda packet). Vice Chair Hansel asked if it had changed since last meeting and Ms. Salas replied it has not. Ms. Salas said she has already completed 16 interviews and will

probably do 3-4 more interviews as she is already in contact with individuals who are interested but overall interviews have been completed. She said the Real Estate (third column: focus group sessions) scheduled for next week will be adjusted for the first or second week of August. Dr. Shedd asked if the Residential focus group will be pushed back and Ms. Salas replied yes. Dr. Shedd asked if Ms. Salas' internship is through August and Ms. Salas said yes and that the plan is for Ms. Brunner to take over after Ms. Salas leaves.

Ms. Salas stated that she has been working on the "Meeting in a Box" materials and outline including instructions for the facilitator, developing questions for the group to discuss, as well as an evaluation for the group to complete at the end of the meeting. She said she has been devoting most of her energy to reaching out to contacts to make sure they have people in attendance at the meetings. She said Ms. Brunner is in contact with Mr. Hansel's daughter, Juliet Walker, to gain more insight on how to conduct the "Meeting in a Box." Dr. Shedd said that part of the outcome of the focus groups would be that some representatives from each focus group will be energized to lead "Meeting in a Box" focus sessions with contacts in their own sector to tackle the same types of questions, for example, whether or not attendees have set energy goals, are tracking energy use and any obstacles they are facing and how the City can support those goals.

Mr. Pipp suggested that they do the focus groups before the first community workshop in October. He said the community workshops will involve presenting objectives and strategies so it may be helpful to have the focus groups first so they can fine tune those strategies. Vice Chair Hansel suggested moving it back to December. Dr. Shedd suggested that having some kind of public community engagement piece in October during Energy Awareness month would be very relevant. She said if several different energy and climate action groups took over one event in October to raise awareness and interest around the energy plan and if the City could do some form of community engagement they would have an opportunity to publicize several events together and get the word out. Vice Chair Hansel said they are talking about moving the Commercial and Industrial "Meeting in a Box" and focus groups until after September and asked if that doable from a staff perspective. Dr. Shedd said it might be okay for the Institutional sector focus group to meet after a community engagement event because they have their own scale of challenges. She said she likes Mr. Pipp's point about having community forums after the focus groups but the Institutional sector might be an exception.

Dr. Shedd said the timeline shows that they are already underway on providing models, case studies and success stories and finding a way to divide the effort between the Clean Energy Team, the Monadnock Energy Hub and the City and share the results would be useful. Dr. Shedd spoke to providing informational videos as there was an expectation that ECC would help with the creation of videos and asked for members' thoughts on how to gather those resources. Ms. Salas noted that she asked interviewees who have done energy efficiency projects about sharing their success stories and a handful of individuals have already shown interest. Mr. Pipp added that the Monadnock Sustainability Network did a solar project on the roof of the Monadnock Co-Op and they

created a video about the project and suggested they reach out to Mr. John Kondos for more information. Dr. Shedd added that the Sustainability network is also working with the County Conservation district on a community solar project. They have a host farm in Rindge and the Conservation District is in the process of signing up a few more farmers to become members of the community solar farm project. She suggested reaching out to Mr. Kondos and Ms. Littleton from the Conservation District about that effort.

Dr. Shedd asked for member suggestions on people to reach out to for case studies and success stories. Mr. Pipp suggested Pablo and Valerie at Green Energy Solutions. Ms. Baum suggested posing the same few questions to each case study for consistency.

Dr. Shedd stated that the online public survey will take place in September and asked if there is any movement on the survey and how ECC can help. Ms. Salas suggested placing a brainstorming session of the survey the questions on the agenda for the next work session.

Mr. Weed asked members if they are focusing on groundwater heat pumps as they have had difficulty with groundwater heat pumps at the County jail and they could share their experiences about some of the pitfalls of using that technology. He said the groundwater has become so warm that the heat produced is causing the machinery to shut down and they have not yet found a remedy for the problem. He said they also consume a lot of propane. Dr. Shedd suggested that they also accumulate stories about technologies that have glitches, for example, wood chip heating technologies and preempting issues with those stories would be useful information to collect and share. Vice Chair Hansel said that groundwater heat pumps are a good solution so they want to make sure they are disseminating the right information about how they work and what the challenges may be. Mr. Weed said the groundwater pumps are expensive and the investment has not returned. Councilor Clark asked if maybe there are newer solutions now. Dr. Shedd said they are giving a lot of attention to solar; however, energy efficiency is a big part of what they need to create awareness about. She said they just received information from Eversource about energy usage in 2018 by sector (commercial, industrial and residential) and they would like to see those total numbers lowered. Dr. Shedd asked members if there are any more questions about the energy plan and timeline and moving things forward.

b. Focus Group 1: Residential/Real Estate

Ms. Salas stated that she printed out a list of all the real estate individuals she has contacted so far, including information on what group they are associated with, whether or not they have been interviewed, as well as if they are interested in attending a focus group. She said they are aiming for at least 15-20 people to confirm that they are interested in attending a focus group so they actually have at least half that amount attend due to scheduling issues. She asked if members could provide contact information about potential individuals that may be interested in their networks so they can compile a more robust list. She said the sooner the better. Vice Chair Hansel asked how many individuals

she would like to see attend and Ms. Salas replied 15-20 so that at least 8-10 people actually attend. Dr. Shedd asked Ms. Salas if she has had more interviews in the real estate sector than other sectors and Ms. Salas replied that she has mostly interviewed individuals from real estate and landlords but she has also interviewed individuals from the business and residential sectors.

5) Potential Keene Solarize Campaign

Dr. Shedd stated that solarize models are community and volunteer-based efforts aimed at increasing the number of solar installations in small businesses and residences in a town. She said that Solarize Monadnock, a group/program under the Monadnock Energy Hub (MEH) umbrella, just finished a campaign in the five eastern Monadnock towns and she attended a debrief session of lessons learned last night. She said Keene is a larger community than any of the other eastern Mondanock towns with Peterborough being the second largest. She said there have been 32 towns in the Upper Valley that have been part of solarize campaigns and they have ended up with a total of 2.2 extra megawatts through those campaigns so the potential is significant.

Dr. Shedd noted that Solarize Monadnock would need to start to organize a solarize campaign soon and so far she has tried to recruit volunteers and Mr. Porschitz from Benson Wood is interested, as well as a retired engineer who has solar installations on his home. She said the project would really need a Team Leader and she does not feel like she will have time to be that person while also working on the Energy Plan but she will continue to reach out. She said Marlborough is also interested in being a part of the solarize campaign and is an adjoining town with a potential to boost each other just like the eastern Monadnock towns have boosted each other. She said there will be a training session sometime in August for potential volunteers and Mr. Brehme and Councilor Clark have expressed interest. She said there is an amazing how-to manual from the community organizer from the Upper Valley with links and templates available online.

Solarize Monadnock, through the Monadnock Energy Hub and the Monadnock Sustainability Network, has already created a webpage and a FB page and PR materials. Dr. Shedd stated that they still need a project manager, preferably someone with data tracking skills, communication and fundraising skills to recruit donations from community businesses to support the campaign. She encouraged members to think of anyone in their networks who would have the passion, interest and the time. She said the campaign would run from September to June and to let her know if they know of anyone.

Mr. Weed stated that before they can think of encouraging more and more people to be involved they need to figure out a way around the cap on solar projects. Dr. Shedd said the cap was aimed at large-scale systems that are between 1 and 5 megawatts and the scale of installations for solarize campaigns are typically much smaller, for example, Peterborough's solarize campaign is under a megawatt. She said the solarize campaign is aimed at residential and small business installations so they are permitted to have many small installations. Dr. Shedd noted that this kind of campaign is part upping the total renewable generation and in part community awareness and education. Councilor Clark asked how many participants were in the Upper Valley campaign and what was the total

installation was. Dr Shedd replied that the Upper Valley included 300 households over three separate cycles in a number of towns on both sides of the river. She said the numbers are not yet in for the eastern Monadnock towns and will probably not be as high as compared to the Upper Valley; however, there are a number of factors contributing to that. She said weatherization and energy efficiency should come first but the federal tax credit on solar installations goes down after this year from 30% to 26% and then keeps going down year by year so there is incentive to do it now. However, she said, they will plan to build weatherization and energy efficiency education into the solarize campaigns.

Mr. Weed said he put solar on his house and he did that to lease the installations and asked if that model is included in the campaign. Dr. Shedd said that is another whole model that is not part of this particular model as it takes a big contractor that can do financing of little installations and the decreasing tax credits might decrease the solar developer appetite for that kind of investment. Vice Chair Hansel said there were a number of companies that came in a few years back but has not heard much from them again. Dr. Shedd replied they may have moved on to more hospitable states.

6) Updates

a. Energy Planning Consultant

Dr. Shedd stated that Ms. Brunner is away today but City Council approved shifting unused personnel funds from this year to hiring an energy consultant to help with some aspects of the Energy Plan. She said the City Manager can negotiate with the company who submitted the proposal to bring numbers down by scaling back the scope of the proposal. She said they have a handle on baseline data from Eversource so they hopefully will have a consultant on board in the months to come. She said they should have more information soon.

b. Report Out: June 21st Municipal Gathering

Dr. Shedd said there was a meeting on June 21 of municipal and volunteer representatives from a lot of the NH towns that are working on the 100% Renewable Energy goals. She said most notable is Concord as they are rolling out the final draft of their Energy Plan. She said some of their focus is maximizing municipal energy efficiency to model for the rest of the community. She said they are not diving into the community piece as much, but they have request for proposals (RFPs) to be released for about 5 megawatts of solar divided between the wastewater treatment, capped landfill and water treatment plant. Dr. Shedd said there are plans to have these gatherings of the different communities that are working towards the 100% Renewable goals. She said it is still worthwhile to contact Cheshire County's legislators as they are on board with raising the cap. Councilor Clark said there are 8 people that need to be talked to and the legislative session will be in September to convince those people to change their minds.

7) Timing & Duration of ECC Meetings

Dr. Shedd stated that she and Ms. Brunner discussed changing the timing and duration of the monthly meeting to 8:15-9:30. Ms. Brunner pointed out that City people have to come

in early to unlock the door and if they started at 8:15 am the doors would be opened. She said they would still have the quarterly meetings and shift the start time to 8:15 and still having quarterly meetings. Ms. Baum said she is fine with that but she asks that they work on efficiency and not just expanding meeting times. Vice Chair Hansel said he would like to keep the time to 8 am instead of 8:15 am. Dr. Shedd asked if the one hour is sufficient for members. Vice Chair Hansel said another fifteen minutes is fine with him. Dr. Shedd said they have their working session on July 18 so maybe they can discuss the timing and duration of meetings again. Dr. Shedd noted that having Mr. Dooley present on the software he is using to track the school district's energy use will be helpful in learning what tools are available to track and monitor energy usage.

8) New Business

Dr. Shedd asked Mr. Dooley if there is any news from the School District. Mr. Dooley replied that they are finishing Phase 2 of 3 at Franklin School where they took out the steam-oil fired water boilers. He said they will have controls and LED lights in rooms they are outfitting this year, as well as a controlled ventilation system. He said they are consuming slightly more electricity and offsetting the cost with LEDs and controlled systems. Mr. Dooley said they are using propane boilers as they investigated biomass and they cannot implement that strategy with such small properties at the schools. He stated that they are doing some small-scale LED retrofits at the High School, however, Franklin School is what they are working on most this summer with Phase 3 and then will go on to Fuller and Wheelock.

Vice Chair asked if they are receiving help from Eversource. Mr. Dooley replied that they partnered with an energy group and did not hire a consultant; however, they needed a rebate-savvy partner and are currently working with Energy Efficient Investments (mother company E&E Systems from MA) for five years on these projects as they are very good at setting up meetings with Eversource. He said they get boiler and light credits and each year they have received between \$50K-\$100K check for investments and the Board has allowed to roll back the money into more energy projects. Mr. Dooley said there is so much more they should do but there is only so much they can do, so they have been making broader and wiser decisions which have resulted in year by year increases in energy savings. Dr. Shedd asked if those savings are being announced in annual PTA reports. Mr. Dooley said he reports monthly and twice a year there is a grand summary of what has been done and a preview of what is coming up. He likes to highlight how much money they have saved line by line so they can see the massive cost savings. He said the propane and oil have surpassed each other already and they have not had big budget cuts because of energy savings. Vice Chair Hansel said it would be great to have an article in the Keene Sentinel about the School District's efforts.

Mr. Weed stated that the battery storage at Maplewood is the third of three big projects; the other two are in Connecticut and Cape Cod. He said each is going to be a demonstration, however, one of the big things that Eversource has done is to give incentives to Westmoreland property owners. Dr. Shedd said residents must bring their own batteries. Mr. Weed said the wanted to do a big installation at Maplewood and

Eversource has agreed to put the lines up to make the battery storage possible. He said property owners are complaining about anticipated noise from the lines but they have reassured them that will not be a problem.

9) Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, August 7, 2019, 8:00 a.m. –City Hall 2nd floor conference room

Thursday, July 18, 2019, 8:00 a.m. – Parks and Recreation building, Room 11

Respectfully submitted by,
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute-Taker

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner