

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

8:00 AM

**Second Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair
Councilor Terry Clark
Jake Pipp
Christopher Brehme
Rod Bouchard
Kenneth Dooley
Zach Luse
Andrew Dey

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Planner

Members Not Present:

Anna Schierioth
Cary Gaunt

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM. Roll call was conducted.

2. Approval of September 4, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Clark made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 4, 2019. Mr. Hansel seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3. Energy Plan

a. Community Workshop: 10/22/10, 6:30 PM, KSC Science Center Rm. 101

Chair Shedd asked Ms. Brunner to speak about the plans for the Community Workshop, to be held October 22 at 6:30 PM at the Keene State College Science Center, Room 101. Ms. Brunner stated that there will be a community workshop on the energy plan, which will start with a panel. She continued that there will be a panel of speakers who will address different topics related to energy. The plan is to divide the group up into small groups after the panel, to discuss and give feedback on the topics. Discussion ensued about the meeting space and other possibilities, and about the logistics of the meeting.

Chair Shedd asked for more information about the panelists. Ms. Brunner spoke about some of the panelists and the topics they will be presenting. Discussion continued. Chair Shedd asked if each breakout group will address the same questions. Ms. Brunner replied that the room is an auditorium/lecture-style room, and therefore the groups will break out into separate rooms and will not report back to the larger group. Each group will have the same guiding questions. There will be note-takers for each group. Chair Shedd stated that this workshop will be the first of four planned opportunities for Keene residents to give input to the City on the developing plan. In response to a question from Chair Shedd on the timing of the future workshops, Ms. Brunner replied that the exact timing has yet to be determined.

Chair Shedd asked about the plans for promoting this workshop on October 22. Ms. Brunner asked the ECC members to help get the word out in any way they can, such as through their social media channels. Discussion continued. Ms. Brunner stated that she can create a press release and flyer. Chair Shedd asked about print or broadcast media. Ms. Brunner replied that they can do that if the committee wishes. Chair Shedd asked for committee members' thoughts on promotion. Discussion continued about flyers. Nancy Gillard offered the services of the Clean Energy Team to help distribute flyers and spread the word on social media.

Chair Shedd stated that Ms. Brunner is recruiting ECC members to help facilitate, or at least to spread themselves out throughout the break-out groups. Ms. Brunner replied that she does not know how many people will attend the event and how many break-out groups they will need, but she is thinking approximately six groups, or a maximum of ten people per group. She continued that she has asked other staff members if they are available to facilitate but they will need ECC members' help if there are a lot of people at the meeting. Someone asked about having participants registering ahead of time. Ms. Brunner replied that there is no requirement for people to register ahead of time, but staff could create an options for people register ahead of time to get an idea of attendance. An ECC member asked Ms. Brunner if she wants input on the guiding questions to ask participants, and suggested having a survey. Ms. Brunner replied that the intent is to have note-takers at each break-out group, but yes, they could have a survey people could choose to write on and turn in. An ECC member suggested creating a Facebook event to get an idea of how many people are thinking of coming, and to help with promotion.

An ECC member asked if Ms. Brunner has received enough feedback on workshop questions. Ms. Brunner replied that she received feedback from Chair Shedd on the panel questions and the agenda, but she has not received feedback yet on the small group questions. She continued that the ECC has a folder on Google Drive, which includes documents where people have been brainstorming questions for October 22 and others are welcome to go there and add their feedback. Chair Shedd asked about the length of time for the small groups. Ms. Brunner replied and discussion ensued.

An ECC member asked if the small groups will come back together afterwards to report back, or just disperse. Ms. Brunner replied that if they wanted people to come back together and report out, they would have to cut back on other portions of the workshop, due to timing, and switch to a different room/meeting space that would be more conducive to that.

b. Consultant Status and Progress

Ms. Brunner stated that a contract has been signed by both the consultant and the City. The consultant kick-off meeting with staff was last week. At this meeting, the consultants walked through their approach, timeline, and deliverables for the project. It was an overview of the project and they asked clarifying questions of staff. It was a good meeting. They gave staff an idea of their planned timeline. One piece that is unknown right now: they submitted a data request to staff, which staff shared with Eversource. Staff is waiting to hear back from Eversource. In the meantime, the consultant, Cadmus, is working on a policy context for the City, to give an understanding of the federal, state, and local policies, laws, and regulations that are relevant to what the City is doing.

Chair Shedd stated that they could probably draw heavily from the Concord plan, which probably has summarized a lot of that. Ms. Brunner replied yes, Cadmus has worked with lots of communities on these types of plans. Discussion continued. Ms. Brunner replied that she does not think that this task will take long – about a month. The next task is doing the baseline, which will require data from Eversource. The City met with some people from Eversource and they seem to think it is possible to get that data, which is encouraging. Chair Shedd asked if it will be broken out by sector, as with the 2018 data Eversource provided, and have more detail. Ms. Brunner replied that is the request. Cadmus has asked for several years of data broken out by month.

An ECC member asked if there is any sense of the timeframe. For example, will the whole project take six months, or two years? Ms. Brunner replied that the contract says everything will be completed by April, but Cadmus is aiming to have everything wrapped up by February. She continued that one deliverable is to provide a final, written report and to do a presentation on their recommendations to the public and a separate presentation to City Council. They hope to do that at the second City Council meeting in January. That is the goal, but it will depend on how long it takes to get the Eversource data.

Chair Shedd stated that Cadmus's report is not the total plan. She asked, how does the City see taking Cadmus's report and filling it out further to be a plan? Ms. Brunner replied that the intent has always been for Cadmus's report to feed into the plan. The recommendations they provide, and the analysis of the strategies, will be used for the plan, but Cadmus is not writing the plan. An ECC member replied that Cadmus is only focused on electricity. Ms. Brunner replied yes, they are focusing on the City's most immediate goal, which is the 2030 electricity goal. Chair Shedd asked what the City will be doing between February and December and what further target dates there are for at least getting sections of the plan drafted. Ms. Brunner replied that right now there is no timeline set for developing the other sections of the plan. She continued that a lot of her effort has been on getting the consultant on board, which was a process, and working on the outreach has taken up a lot of her time.

Chair Shedd asked about the City Manager's timeframe and process for allocating staff time. She continued that she thinks there will be a lot of demands on staff time to work on this project. She asked if Councilor Clark has any sense of this. Councilor Clark stated that he does not know

about how the City Manager allocates staff time; it might be an annual thing. It is possible they could reintroduce the Sustainability Officer. Chair Shedd suggested this be an agenda topic next month. She continued that probably some discussion would need to happen, about whether the committee is ready to recommend that again. The ECC is advisory to the City Council. The ECC is not in charge of writing the plan. She asked, how can they best help the City keep this moving forward? A lot of it will fall on staff, who are already stretched. Ms. Brunner replied that her plan has always been to run things by the ECC and get the ECC's input. She continued that the ECC members represent a wide range of sectors from the community. Getting direction from the ECC on how the plan is evolving would be helpful. Also, the biggest piece, which is time-consuming, is public outreach and engagement. Anything the ECC could do to help with that would really help the project overall.

An ECC member stated that initially they are focusing on electricity but the other sectors will be complicated, too. The committee should start thinking about what they will do to address the other two sectors. Chair Shedd stated that the deadline for the resolution, to have a plan, is December 2020. She continued that if the goal is adoption by the City by December 2020, they would have to have a pretty good draft by October, to send it through the City Council channels. Discussion ensued about the City Council process and the possibility that the City Council would refer it back to staff or this committee or another City Council committee.

c. Community Energy Conversations (meeting-in-a-box activity)

Chair Shedd stated that this activity is for community members to be trained to go out and bring more community members into the conversation. Ms. Brunner has been working with volunteers from the community on this. Ms. Brunner stated that at the May workshop, Shaylin Salas (intern) presented on various outreach tools including an outreach strategy called "meeting-in-a-box." She continued that this format is meant to provide a less intimidating option for people to participate in a meeting and provide feedback to the City. A volunteer would get a package of materials from the City (hence the name "meeting in a box") and the volunteer would hold a meeting outside of City Hall somewhere, such as the library, a park, or a coffee shop, a place that is publically accessible. The City can facilitate people signing up to go to a community-run meeting like this. It is meant to be more accessible to members of the public.

Chair Shedd stated that the goal of this activity is to generate some documented feedback for the City on specific questions. Ms. Brunner agreed and said that the format is similar to that of the break-out groups at the October 22 workshop. There will be a facilitator and someone taking notes, which will be shared with City staff. They will gather feedback from people to feed into the plan. Chair Shedd stated that the hope is to have the training for the volunteer facilitators sometime this month. Ms. Brunner replied yes, she thinks next week. She continued that five people have signed up so far to be trained to be those facilitators.

d. Success Stories – www.ci.keene.nh.us/sustainability/success-stories

Chair Shedd stated that there are two success stories up on the website so far, one on Filtrine's renewable energy projects, and one on Paragon Digital, which includes drone footage by Mr. Brehme. She continued that if anyone has thoughts on other interesting profiles to put up (of

residents, businesses, or the school district), it can be brief, such as a one to 1.5 page read or a 5-minute video. Discussion ensued. An ECC member shared information about Greenwald Realty, Michele Chalice, and Toby Tousley. Ms. Brunner stated that the deadline to get them up for “Energy Month” is early October. Chair Shedd spoke about the Keene Unitarian Universalist Church. Other members spoke of possibilities they are working on. Ms. Brunner stated that Ms. Salas put together a “guide for success stories,” which she will share. Discussion continued.

4. Legislative Update: SB 286, “Relative to aggregation of electric customers by municipalities and counties”

Chair Shedd stated that this bill was enacted this summer. She continued that this is otherwise known as “community power” or “community choice aggregation.” New Hampshire has had legislation like this for some years now as an opt-in program only. Districts of whatever size could set this up, but it would only be by conscious enrollment by members of the community. What is different about the legislation this year is an entity of whatever scale can set it up as an opt-out program, so it would be the default energy supply unless customers took the action to say they are going to go another route.

Ms. Brunner stated that starting on page 12 of the agenda packet is an email the City received from Clean Energy NH that summarizes bill and provides links to more information. She continued that she also included a PowerPoint presentation by Clean Energy NH. She said there will be a presentation on November 4th to provide more information about this. Chair Shedd stated that the presentation is sponsored by the Monadnock Energy Hub, which is a group associated with the Monadnock Sustainability Network. It will be at the Marlborough Community House at 6:30. It will be geared towards decision-makers. Henry Herndon is the main presenter, and it will include a deeper dive on what Community Power could mean for the region. Ms. Brunner stated that there is a webpage on the Clean Energy NH website devoted to this, and they are calling it “Community Power” and will update it regularly. She continued that this is one of the options/strategies the consultant will be looking into; hopefully the City will get an analysis from them on how this could potentially work in Keene. Chair Shedd stated that the Local Solutions Energy Conference in Concord will also include conversations and presentations about this; it is a big opportunity for New Hampshire. It can be a cost savings and also has the potential to allow communities to source from local renewables.

An ECC member stated that there was a good presentation at Radically Rural about this, with a good overview, mainly from the perspective of Massachusetts. Discussion ensued about the materials and information available from this event. Discussion continued about Radically Rural.

Mr. Bouchard stated that he received a call from someone asking whether the County was aware of the legislation, and yes, the County is aware. He continued that he had talked with the Commissioners about looking into lowering the electric costs for County operations. This seemed like one of the opportunities. Mr. Herndon is coming to Keene to give a presentation to anyone interested in learning what this is all about and how to get involved. The County is interested. Perhaps they can put a roadmap out there for anyone in the towns. The bigger

question is, what level does this aggregation start or stop at? Is it every town for themselves? Is it county-level? There are a lot of questions about how this all works. He registered at the power pool and “quickly drowned in technology.” It is a challenge to navigate.

An ECC member agreed, one of everyone’s questions is, what administrative duties are there? What costs would there be? He thinks county-wide would be preferable, instead of having each community try to do it themselves. Mr. Bouchard replied that that begs the question of how this would all be bought and sold. That needs to be answered. Chair Shedd replied that she thinks that is one element that Clean Energy New Hampshire is sharing, to have the economy of not duplicating effort in whatever assortment of entities are collaborating/aggregating together. Mr. Bouchard replied that Mr. Herndon sent him a copy of the presentation and he thinks it will be challenging for the small municipalities to really do this; they have to find the appropriate level. They would have to be willing participants in this. Chair Shedd replied yes, each community would have to opt in and individual residents could opt out.

An ECC member wondered if the Southwest Region Planning Commission could be involved. Mr. Bouchard replied that he has talked with Tim about it and he is willing to talk. Chair Shedd stated that the Nashua Regional Planning Commission has been functioning as the aggregator for some of its areas for some years, so there is a precedent for that in the state. Someone added that Peterborough has that model, too, and gave some information about it. Brief discussion ensued. Chair Shedd stated that it sounds like there are documentations of the cost savings.

Mr. Bouchard stated that the possible dates with Mr. Herndon are October 28 or 29, or November 1. Chair Shedd asked who the intended participants are. Mr. Bouchard replied anyone here, or anyone from other groups that are interested in finding out more about this. Discussion ensued about the day and time. Mr. Bouchard stated that he will check with Mr. Herndon again.

Chair Shedd stated that the Local Energy Solutions conference is soon after that. She continued that the municipal membership in Clean Energy NH gives the City two admissions to the conference. She asked Ms. Brunner if that is available to committee members. Ms. Brunner replied yes, people can let her know if they would like to attend.

5. October Energy Awareness Month

a. Request for sign sponsorship from the Clean Energy Team

Chair Shedd stated that there are many activities scheduled for Energy Awareness Month, including a movie tonight at 7:00 PM. Tomorrow, the Mayor will issue a proclamation about Energy Awareness Month. There is a public hearing at the Recreation Center on October 15, at 6:00 PM, regarding the State’s update to its 10-year Transportation Plan.

Ms. Brunner stated that people should be aware that the funding for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which is the only available funding for bike/pedestrian improvements, has been cut back. She continued that projects that received TAP funding have had their deadlines pushed out. If people care about that topic, that might be something to weigh

in on. The City's transportation goals include promoting alternative transportation as well as reducing carbon emissions from conventional vehicles.

Chair Shedd stated that the Community Workshop on October 22 is on the schedule. An ECC member asked if the film being shown on October 16 is the same one that was done a couple years ago. Chair Shedd replied yes. She continued that the presentation on offshore wind, on October 29, should be very interesting, and gave some more information about it and about how offshore energy works in Massachusetts.

Chair Shedd stated that Clean Energy Team has asked the ECC to sponsor a sign about the events happening throughout October. She continued that Clean Energy Team has put together a large, plywood sign and there would be a fee for them to post it, and they would like City co-sponsorship which would waive the fee. Ms. Brunner replied if the request comes from a City department, the requirement for liability insurance would be covered under the City's insurance. Chair Shedd asked about the process for the ECC to request City sponsorship, if the committee recommends that the City sponsor the sign. Does it go through the whole City process? Ms. Brunner replied that there is an application form to fill out and submit to the City Clerk's office, and then the City Clerk's Office assigns a time slot and a specific location. Chair Shedd asked the guests from the Clean Energy Team if they already had a timeslot. Clean Energy Team members spoke about insurance difficulties that prevented them from putting the sign up this week. They asked if someone could speak to the City Clerk's Office. Chair Shedd asked: if this committee recommends sponsorship, does that recommendation still have to go to the City Council? Ms. Brunner replied that she does not think so; she thinks a staff member could submit the application to the City Clerk's Office if that is what the committee recommends.

Peter Hansel made a motion to recommend that the City sponsor the Clean Energy Team sign. Mr. Brehme seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued about the sign location. A Clean Energy Team member stated that they will probably ask for the sign to be at Fuller Park near the Rec Center. She continued, saying that according to the City Clerk this would not have to go before the City Council first. Chair Shedd stated that the sign is fairly generic – it has the City's goal, a link to the Clean Energy Keene's website, which has information about the Sustainable Energy resolution, local success stories, and the schedule of October events. A Clean Energy Team member replied that there will be an evening with local residential success stories. Chair Shedd replied yes, they are pulling together a panel of local residents as part of the October events, to share what they have done with energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Mr. Brehme stated that Renewable Keene is a citizens group that is trying to promote some of the same things the ECC is trying to do. Chair Shedd replied that is the group that brought the resolution of 100% renewable energy goals to the City and passed through the ECC and the City Council and was eventually adopted. Ms. Brunner replied yes, and they are partnering with the City to help with the outreach and engagement portion of the energy plan. Chair Shedd stated that it is somewhat analogous to Pathways for Keene or Friends of Open Space that support the work of some other City committees, but not exactly the same.

An ECC member asked if there is a website or location that has all of these various groups and what they are doing. Chair Shedd replied that Monadnock Energy Hub is working to create that. She continued that there is a meeting next week to talk about all of the groups working in this realm and see how they can synergize the efforts, particularly in terms of hosting events, and having better coordination and availability to the public. There is the City's Sustainability page, the Clean Energy Team's Clean Energy Keene website, plus all the Facebook pages, and the Monadnock Energy Hub; there is a lot of overlap and everyone is not very coordinated. The big picture of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions is what is common across the groups.

Ms. Brunner drew the group's attention back to the motion on the table.

Chair Shedd called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Keene Solarize Campaign Status

Chair Shedd stated that a solarize campaign will happen in 2020 in Keene and Marlborough. She continued that there have been two meetings of volunteer teams coming from those two communities, and they have begun the work of looking at what each community has in terms of property tax exemptions, what the process for that would be, code and permitting processes, and so on and so forth. A subgroup will start looking at the vendor selection process. All of the work is drawing heavily on the Upper Valley's model and an incredibly useful solarize toolkit generated from the campaigns they ran in their area. Other communities in NH have used that model as well. She gave more information about solar in the state. The goal of Solarize is to increase solar installations and to do it in an organized fashion with the partner installer selection in a transparent process. In some sense it is marketing, because once the partner installer is chosen the local team is getting the word out that the opportunity is there. There are discounts built in, with different models for how the discounts happen. It contributes to the overall goal of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, which is the goal of the ECC. The best cost effectiveness would be more community solar. There are also efforts happening in that realm, such as the project at the Co-op and the installation in Rindge.

Ms. Brunner stated that they had talked about a program Eversource had proposed, the Low and Moderate Income Solar Program, which would be run through their Electricity Assistance Program (EAP). She continued that staff finally got a chance to meet with Eversource to talk about renewable energy goals and also asked for an update on that program. Eversource has proposed it to the PUC and are still waiting for approval. Staff asked if a letter of support from the City would be helpful, and they are waiting to hear back from Eversource about that. What is really exciting is that this program, as proposed, would be excluded from the 1 megawatt cap and would allow projects to go up to 5 megawatts, which is currently what is preventing the City to do the project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant because the energy demand there is more than 1 megawatt. This is a program that would provide an on-bill credit for people that participate in the EAP to receive energy at a reduced cost.

Chair Shedd stated that they will put on the agenda for next month. Analogous to what they are doing to support the sign from the Clean Energy Team, there would be some benefit for the Solarize campaign if there was some level of City cooperation or co-sponsorship, such as the

ability to use City meeting space without incurring rental fees or posting signs without having to pay for the liability insurance.

7. New Business

Chair Shedd asked if there is anything to add to next month's agenda. An ECC member stated that it is helpful, as a new member, to have the issues put into context, to understand how everything fits in together. He gave examples of how Chair Shedd and the committee did this today. He continued that he would like to see some sort of a road map, with what work is being done when and by who, so he can understand the committee's relationship to the eventual plan and how they anticipate it unfolding. Chair Shedd replied that they have a timeline that Ms. Brunner drew up. Ms. Brunner replied that their former intern was helping with outreach and she helped create an outreach timeline. She could share it with the ECC. It has not been updated for a few months. Chair Shedd replied that it is part of the group's shared Google Drive. She asked if Ms. Brunner could send that link to all the ECC members again, and explained what else is in the Drive.

8. Next Meeting Wednesday, November 6, 2019

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner