

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 2, 2020**

**8:00 AM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair  
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair  
Councilor Terry Clark  
Jake Pipp  
Ken Dooley  
Cary Gaunt  
Rod Bouchard  
Andrew Dey  
Zach Luse  
Rod Bouchard  
Paul Roth, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community  
Development Director  
Mari Brunner, Planner  
Carly Peruccio, UNH Fellow

**Members Not Present:**

Meaghan Rafferty  
Anna Schierioth

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Dr. Shedd called meeting to order at 8:04 AM. She read a prepared statement explaining how Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04, gives authority for public meetings to be held remotely and shared information about how members of the public can listen and share comments. Roll call was conducted.

**2. Approval of August 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Peter Hansel moved to accept the August 5 meeting minutes, Rod Bouchard seconded and the motion was passed unanimously by a roll-call vote.

**3. Energy Plan**

**a. Responses to Feedback Polls**

Ms. Brunner stated page 10 of the agenda packet includes a summary of the feedback received from the two feedback polls that were up on the energy plan website. She said the proposed Vision statement is also currently up on the City's Energy Plan Facebook page and they are asking the public for feedback using a Likert scale (1-6). She said that the majority of

respondents (24) said they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the Vision statement, and a number of respondents (5) were either “neutral” or “strongly disagreed.” She said that they were accepting comments until the end of August and will be taking the poll down today. Ms. Brunner noted that there appears to be strong agreement for the majority of respondents. She stated that the average rating was 5.1 for the 28 people that responded.

Ms. Brunner stated that the committee agreed on the definition of renewables based on the EPA’s definition; 21 people responded (2 people stated “other”; 4 people stated that the definition should include other renewable sources, and 15 stated that the definition should be specific to green power sources). She said she also shared the comments participants provided. Ms. Brunner asked for members’ thoughts about the feedback the City received. Vice Chair Hansel noted that 30 people responded to the Vision statement yet only 21 people responded to the definition of green power. He asked why there is a difference in response numbers. Ms. Brunner replied that the difference is most likely a function of placement of the polls on the website. Dr. Shedd noted that is a lesson on the future placement of polls on the website, as well as the development of better strategies to have questions addressed.

Mr. Pipp stated that the comments people provided were useful in acquiring more information that they can use in future outreach as to how to address the importance of energy efficiency and energy conservation, the smaller goals along the way to 2050 and the equitability and accessibility of the process. He noted that individuals brought up concerns about taxes, as well as the idea that all electricity should come from renewables. He suggested that perhaps for the latter question they can do some more educational outreach to further clarify these questions. Mr. Roth agreed with Mr. Pipp and said they can wordsmith a response based on the public’s feedback to demonstrate to the public that the City will address their concerns and opinions.

Vice Chair Hansel stated that there was one good point brought up about people’s right to make decisions about their own properties. He proposed considering including exported power that is generated inside of their region so that the net energy use is renewable even though parts of it may not be. Ms. Brunner agreed that the comments were valuable, and she is considering different ways to demonstrate to the public that their comments have been heard and are being addressed in the development of the Plan. Dr. Shedd added that she was impressed that individuals chose to leave individual comments in addition to answering the poll questions. She thanked everyone for their attention to the polling.

#### **b. Fall 2020 Outreach**

Dr. Shedd stated that one of their next tasks is to address community outreach strategies for the fall before they take the draft Energy Plan to City Council. Ms. Brunner stated that they discussed the possibility of holding a community forum at the last meeting and some valuable ideas were shared. For example, Ms. Gaunt discussed reaching out again to the individuals who participated in the focus groups. Ms. Brunner said she sent out a poll last week about when to hold a community forum and there were 6 respondents; it looks like the best date for a workshop appears to be October 7 from 6-8 pm. She said the goals of this workshop are to raise community awareness about the draft Sustainable Energy Plan so that the public has an opportunity to review the plan and ask questions, learn more about the top priority strategies, for example, the

Community Power strategy that is in the works. She said it would also be useful to talk to people in the community about how strategies can be implemented here in Keene given the local context. Ms. Brunner said engaging individuals who have already participated in past events, including the 2019 forum and community energy conversations; as well as elected officials, would be advantageous. She said Wednesday, October 7 is City Council Committee night so they might not have good Councilor attendance on that date. She also emphasized engaging more people in the community.

Ms. Brunner stated that the proposed structure would include an overview of the Energy Plan project, review of the road map document which includes the Vision statement and definition of renewable energy, and then an outline of the three sectors (Electricity, Thermal and Transportation) and the pathways proposed for each sector. She said she is proposing doing breakout groups with the focus on Community Power for the Electricity sector, Home Energy Labeling and Benchmarking for the Thermal sector and Electrification of Transportation for the Transportation sector. She said this would give people the opportunity to dig into each strategy a bit further.

Ms. Brunner stated that this is just a proposed structure and she asked if ECC members would volunteer to serve as breakout session facilitators. She said she would also like to have professionals join as experts for each sector and serve as a resource. For example, Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) has done a lot of work with home energy labeling and benchmarking in the Northeast. She said if they have a community power consultant by that time then can also have that person attend the Community Power discussion. For the Transportation sector, she suggested reaching out to the Drive Electric New Hampshire organization and they also have some local people who are knowledgeable about that area. Ms. Brunner said they will most likely have enough staff for managing the Zoom platform and moderating the structure of the meeting, with herself and one or two other City staff members present. She noted that the workshop planning is very preliminary as of right now, however, she would like to hear the committee's thoughts on the proposed structure and agenda and their time availability for assisting with the event. She stated she is also looking for help in getting the word out into the community to ensure they have enough attendance.

Councilor Clark stated that the PLD meeting takes place October 7 and he will not be able to skip that meeting. Dr. Shedd suggested that if Tuesday works for most committee members, they might get more government and City participation. Ms. Brunner stated that the next ECC meeting is October 7, however, if October 20 works as an alternative that would give them more time to prepare. *Members agreed to move the Community Forum to October 20, 2020.*

Ms. Brunner asked if members like the idea of the three breakout sessions with the three topic areas. Vice Chair Hansel said they both look good to him and he is willing to facilitate if needed. Mr. Pipp offered to facilitate the Home Energy Labeling and Benchmarking session. Mr. Dey said he would assist Mr. Pipp with that session. Dr. Shedd and Ms. Gaunt stated that they are also willing to facilitate any of the sessions. Mr. Roth added that he is willing to help out with the Community Power session if no one else can and also thinks it would be good to have a subject matter expert. Mr. Bouchard stated that he can help facilitate the Community Power session. Vice Chair Hansel and Dr. Shedd they would facilitate the Electrification of

Transportation session. Dr. Shedd stated that other committee members could provide backup help for the three sessions. She also proposed that City staff members distributed across the three sessions provide information to the public on how the City staff supports these strategies. Ms. Brunner replied that they can have City staff speak specifically at a higher level around policy to each breakout session.

Dr. Shedd asked if Ms. Brunner has enough feedback and person power to move forward with fleshing out the event. Ms. Brunner thanked members for their help; she said she will begin crafting more detailed agendas for each of the breakout sessions and then reach out to the facilitators who have volunteered for each group. Ms. Brunner announced that the City may also be extending Ms. Peruccio's time with the Community Development Department for a couple of more months so Ms. Peruccio may also be available to help out with the event.

Ms. Brunner noted that the most important part of the effort is to create public awareness about the event to increase participation. She is also looking for help with those ideas. Dr. Shedd replied that past City outreach efforts used display boards with visuals, for example, Building Better Together and Marlborough Street projects, in empty storefront windows downtown. She proposed putting up some screens in storefront windows with focus areas and different strategies and more information about the workshop as visuals are more engaging than newsletters. Ms. Brunner replied that she is not sure if there are many empty storefront windows, but she can look further into that concept. She said she can check in with Mr. Mitch Greenwald about using any empty storefront space that he has available that they can use for a few weeks leading up to the workshop. Dr. Shedd also suggested asking storefront owners if they would be willing to devote some window space to this effort.

Dr. Shedd suggested placing information about the community workshop into the PTA newsletters. Ms. Brunner replied that there is a different newsletter for each school and when she has reached out to schools in the past, they were not always willing to directly share contact information for PTO groups. She asked if any committee members have contacts with any of the PTO groups. Mr. Dooley replied that he does not know who the members of PTO groups are, and he typically has to go through the Principal when he needs more information. Ms. Brunner said she will reach out to the Principals for more information about sharing information with PTAs/PTOs. Dr. Shedd proposed that environmental education faculty might be another good avenue to get information out there. Ms. Brunner replied that she has presented to both MC<sup>2</sup> and Surry Village Charter School in the past so she can reach back out to them; she also suggested contacting middle school and high school science teachers.

Ms. Gaunt expressed her support for the idea of placing visuals in the storefront windows. She also suggested placing an announcement in the YMCA newsletter as they have a large mailing list. She said it would be beneficial to target participation to specific leaders, for example, target a few individuals from schools who have the capacity to rally people in the school. She added that an email with an invitation to a specific individual is much more effective than mass emails. She stated that she is happy to reach out to academic classes at Keene State College (KSC), however, those participating individuals will most likely already self-identify as sustainability advocates which might skew the feedback. Ms. Gaunt added that KSC offers the CALL program for people interested in extra learning, and the program coordinators are currently looking for

extra classes. She proposed that they do a two-part class which includes an introduction to the Energy Plan which could then lead into participation in the community forum. Ms. Brunner expressed support for Ms. Gaunt's ideas. She said that they have already received feedback from the community and used it in coming up with the proposed strategies, so she does not see the harm in having sustainable energy advocates involved in the workshop as they are aiming to engage people in Keene and it is less of a question of whether or not they should implement the Plan. Ms. Brunner said if members have the contact information for the YMCA, she thinks that is a great idea as there is a strong connection that can be made between health/wellness and energy and promoting active transportation.

Vice Chair Hansel added that Hannah Grimes puts out regular newsletters as does the Cheshire Conservation District, Stonewall Farm and the Keene Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Brunner replied that Ms. Peruccio has already used some of those avenues for feedback so they can reach back out about participation in the community forum. Mr. Dey also suggested reaching out to other civic organizations and clubs, for example, the Keene Young Professionals network, the Rotary Club and Lyon's Club. Mr. Luse added Healthy Monadnock as well.

Councilor Clark proposed putting together a short script on the local radio station's open mic, or a short PSA for Cheshire TV that would be run 10-12 times per week. He said they can call up Mr. Dan Mitchell to get a slot of time, or alternatively call up a few times a week through the open mic program to deliver a solid message about the workshop. He said there are programs on the radio station that they can contact people to set up a time. Dr. Shedd said the interviews may be done remotely and perhaps someone on the committee could be a guest on the show. Ms. Brunner asked Councilor Clark if he was thinking of having a video clip for Cheshire TV to play. Councilor Clark replied that they could do a video as they are always asking for fillers, as many of their programs do not go for a full 30 or 60 minutes and they frequently do short PSAs. Ms. Brunner asked Councilor Clark if he could take the lead on that idea and Councilor Clark replied that he would as long as he had direction on what they wanted to showcase. Ms. Brunner replied that she would be happy to help him with that.

Dr. Shedd added that it is beneficial for Ms. Peruccio to stay with the City a bit longer as they will need her help with the community outreach.

## **5. Community Power Update**

Mr. Bouchard stated that Community Power New Hampshire (CPNH) has engaged the services of a law firm in Washington D.C. that is very experienced in joint community power agreements and has worked in establishing community power in California and other locations. He said the meetings have been very productive and they have another meeting tomorrow, and then will have some documentation before the end of the month on the new areas that are being discussed. He said this means they will be able to stand up Community Power NH as an incorporated organization by the end of the month or early October.

Dr. Shedd asked for clarification of whether or not the attorneys are reviewing the joint action agreement which would define how the participating entities will relate in terms of responsibility. At this point, the entities are Nashua, Lebanon, Hanover and Cheshire County.

Mr. Bouchard said there are more participating entities, but those are the core group of clients. He said the process is being constructed to allow every community to participate, and laying out the terms of engagement or disengagement; the goal of the group is to get this out as soon as they can so that everyone has time before Town Meeting rolls around in the spring and the Clean Energy groups have time to roll this out before their towns. Vice Chair Hansel asked Mr. Bouchard if there are any roadblocks Eversource has put up in this process. Mr. Bouchard responded that Eversource is not willing to share data, but neither are the other utilities; however, they are getting through the process slowly with the help of the PUC and hopefully they will have a positive outcome in the next 30 days.

Ms. Brunner said the ad-hoc Community Power Committee will meet on Friday and they are in the process of selecting a consultant. The RFP was posted July 13 and they received two proposals and are interviewing those firms this week. She said their first interview was yesterday and the second will be tomorrow afternoon, and they will bring a recommendation to the FOP meeting on September 10. She said FOP will then review the recommendation and if they decide to recommend it to City Council, City Council would then act. She said if a community power consultant is selected, the next step would be to work with the Community Power ad hoc committee on public input which by state law must include at least one public information session. Ms. Brunner noted that they are looking to do much more outreach than one info session, however. The next step is for the committee to develop a community power plan with assistance from the consultant. Ms. Brunner added that Dr. Shedd, Vice Chair Hansel, and Mr. Roth are on the Community Power ad hoc committee so they are can also serve as resources.

Vice Chair Hansel asked Ms. Brunner what would happen with the initiative if they did not approve either of the consultants. Ms. Brunner replied that they may have to redo the RFP process and hope for different responses; however, they would need some understanding as to why the original proposals were rejected. She said both of the proposals they received meet all of the requirements of the RFP so she is hopeful that at least one of them will go through.

Dr. Shedd asked Ms. Brunner if the process for identifying local goals would draw on the Energy Plan in progress; she also asked if the consultant's process for public input would confuse the public with sperate input processes. Ms. Brunner replied that the identification of the local goals includes the City's energy goals already, so both firms are aware of these goals. She said the rest is up to the Community Power ad hoc committee to determine the goals. She stated that the current goals are as follows: the renewable energy goals, the option for opting-up if base electricity rate does not include 100% renewable energy (for community members who are willing to pay more for that), encouragement of collaboration with other communities in the region and coming up with a rate that is competitive with Eversource. She said any new goals would be up to the committee and the public outreach process in conjunction with the consultant. Ms. Brunner said there will be a lot of outreach on several different initiatives; however, the Energy Plan and Community Power plan are very related. She does anticipate that the outreach for the Community Power plan will take place after the outreach for the Energy Plan which is slated for October. She is hoping they will have a consultant on board in early October, so there will be some overlap.

Dr. Shedd asked for clarification on what the timeframe of the relationship with the consultant will be, and if the consultant will also serve as the broker for the community. Ms. Brunner replied that assuming that everything moves forward, it is a minimum of two years to start; the consultant will help with the initial planning stages, forming the community power plan and then bringing the plan to City Council who would then have to approve the plan for the project to move forward. She said that assuming City Council does approve the plan, the consultant would then start acting like an energy broker, helping the City prepare bids, pre-vet vendors and then going out to bid and evaluate bids, and making recommendations back to City Council. She said at that point City Council can choose whether or not to go with any of the bids that are received, which if they choose not to, would essentially put an end to the process. However, in the absence of that, it would include robust communication leading up to public enrollment; everyone who is already on a default energy supply with Eversource would be rolled over automatically, however they would have 30 days to opt out and after that could opt out at any time. State law requires notices that would have to go out. So timing depends on when the market is favorable to go out to bid, so it is hard to say what the timeframe would be beyond that point, but the goal is to have the Community Power plan adopted by early 2021 so the consultant can go out and look for bids.

Vice Chair Hansel noted that the consultants would not get paid until the process goes out to bid and they get only a small percentage; therefore, the consultants' objective is to be successful to ensure payment, as well as their role as broker in the process. Ms. Brunner agreed and said that is why there is a minimum number of years that are contracted because of the time and effort they put into the process. She said that is why their contract is two years, to allow ample time for a favorable bid to come up. Dr. Shedd stated that this is a complicated process and committee members are welcome to join the Community Power meeting on Friday at 8 am and Ms. Brunner can provide the information about joining that meeting.

## **6. Committee Membership**

Dr. Shedd stated that her term is expiring this year. Ms. Rafferty is moving out of state and will no longer be participating on the committee. Dr. Shedd stated that Mr. Roth has expressed interest in moving from an alternate to a regular member of the committee to fill Ms. Rafferty's seat. Vice Chair Hansel is contacting new potential members; he has contacted Mr. Paul Hausmann from Eversource to see if he can participate or someone else from his organization as it would be good to have representation from an energy supplier on the committee. He said Mr. Pablo Fleischman from Green Energy Options has also expressed interest and Ms. Brunner will be following up with him on the details of membership.

Ms. Brunner provided correction on the committee membership status that was provided at last month's meeting. She said Mr. Pipp's term is not expiring, he has one more term available and will stay on the committee. She said that the Mayor is also discussing a new process with the Human Right committee for how committee nominations work, and she will be learning more soon about that process and how it may impact nomination of new members. Dr. Shedd there will be a couple of alternate seats available, assuming everyone else will continue serving and they will wait to hear from the City about the new process.

## **7. Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 7, 2020**

**8. Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Dr. Shedd adjourned the meeting at 9:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner