



ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA - AMENDED

Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 8:00 AM

Virtual Zoom Meeting

TO JOIN THE MEETING:

The public may join the meeting online by visiting www.zoom.us/join or by calling the toll-free # (888) 475-4499 and entering the Meeting ID: **860 6322 7039**. If you encounter any issues accessing this meeting, please call 603-209-4697 during the meeting. More info on how to access this meeting is available on the Energy and Climate Committee webpage at ci.keene.nh.us/energy-and-climate-committee.

Members:

Peter Hansel, Chair
Cary Gaunt, Vice Chair
Ken Dooley
Jake Pipp
Jude Nuru

Paul Roth
Zach Luse
Denise Thomas
Andrew Dey
Clair Oursler, Alternate

Staff:

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

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of February 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes
3. Presentation on Home Energy Labeling: Carolyn Sarno & Emmeline Luck, Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)
4. Energy Plan Work Groups
 - a. Weatherization
 - b. Home Energy Labeling
 - c. Electric Vehicles
5. Correspondence
 - a. Letter of Support for Keene TAP Grant Application – Chuck Redfern
 - b. Request for Endorsement of Carbon Fee and Dividend – Nancy Gillard & Carolyn Jones
6. Legislative Updates
7. Earth Day 2021
8. Community Power Update
9. Committee Membership
10. New Business
11. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 7, 2021
12. Adjourn



ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 3, 2021 8:00 AM **Virtual Zoom Meeting**

Members:

Peter Hansel, Chair
Cary Gaunt, Vice Chair
Ken Dooley
Jake Pipp
Terry Clark, Councilor
Paul Roth
Zach Luse

Andrew Dey
Clair Oursler, Alternate

Staff:

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

Chair Hansel called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

1. Roll Call

Chair Hansel 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. He then read aloud the Zoom virtual meeting platform rules and roll call was conducted. Chair Hansel welcomed new alternate member Mr. Oursler and prospective member Denise Thomas.

2. Approval of January 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Clark moved to accept the January 6, 2021 meeting minutes, Mr. Roth seconded and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

3. Adopted Sustainable Energy Plan

Ms. Brunner announced that the Sustainable Energy Plan was adopted by City Council on January 21 by unanimous vote. She said members can visit the City of Keene Energy page and the Energy and Climate page as well as www.KeeneEnergyPlan.com.

Ms. Brunner said that at the January 13 PLD meeting, City staff were asked to remove any reference to a mandatory Home Energy Labeling and Benchmarking program and rewrite that the program is entirely voluntary. Ms. Gaunt asked what the process would be if they learn in a year or two that the voluntary program is not working. Ms. Brunner replied it would not require changes to the Plan, however, it is a decision that would be made at the City Council level and they would also have to do a significant amount of outreach and education to the community about the programs, which could be the advantage of starting with a voluntary program. Chair Hansel agreed that the ECC does not have authority to mandate anything, however, they can petition the City Council in the future to change the Home Energy Labeling and Benchmarking program to mandatory. He congratulated the committee and City staff for their work on the Plan.

4. Committee Retreat to discuss Energy Plan Implementation

Chair Hansel stated that their committee retreat will take place on February 16 from 3-5 pm and they will discuss next steps on implementation of the Sustainable Energy Plan by 2030. He said the goals and objectives are laid out in the Plan but they will review each step and discuss ways to roll them out. Ms. Brunner said she is looking for a facilitator for the retreat, however, they have had some challenges finding someone for this year. She said she will plan to facilitate as staff if they cannot find someone and welcomed member ideas for a facilitator. Chair Hansel asked if they would have a minute-taker and Ms. Brunner said she will try to find one and if not, she will record the meeting and takes notes herself. Ms. Brunner stated that she also invited Mr. Jude Nuru, who will become a member of ECC tomorrow, so he will be on the attendee list as well.

5. Community Power Update

Chair Hansel stated that the Good Energy-Standard Power consultant plan was submitted to City staff, however, the plan has not yet been made available to the Community Power Committee or the public. It will be available on Friday for their review as well as the public's. Ms. Brunner noted that there were two community sessions held with about 26 people in attendance for the afternoon session, and 6 to 7 people in the evening session. She said that there were a number of good questions that came out of the afternoon session and a recording of that meeting is also available. Ms. Brunner said that the document reads more like a legal document so the City Attorney spoke to some of the language and some revisions were recommended to make the document more easily understandable. She said the City received the newest version last night so that version will be shared with the Community Power Committee and the public.

Chair Hansel stated that the plan will be made public for comments from February 5 to March 5. He said the next Community Power Committee meeting is March 5 and there will be a public hearing on March 30. Ms. Brunner added that they will accept public comments after March 5, but they wanted to give the consultants time to analyze the data and prepare for the public hearings on March 30.

6. Legislative Updates

Ms. Brunner stated that these are all bills that Clean Energy New Hampshire is opposing.

a. **HB 315, “Relative to the Aggregation of Electric Customers”**- Ms. Brunner said this bill is being dubbed the “Monopoly Power Act” by the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire. She said the most concerning aspect of this bill is that it would restrict or eliminate access to electric customer data which is needed to run a community power program. She said right now under the law, once the City adopts a plan, the utility is supposed to provide the City with customer electric usage data which is needed to forecast and put together a bid. This law also requires the City to mail a written notification to each retail electric customer using only addresses in the City’s public records and this is not possible as many times the property owners have LLCs in other states or countries. She said this law makes it almost impossible to run a community power program. Ms. Brunner said this bill was introduced by Eversource and they are considering amendments to the problematic aspects of the bill; Eversource will be meeting with the City tomorrow morning to discuss those issues.

Ms. Brunner said HB 315 also restricts municipalities and counties from spending any tax dollars on the program including for incidental costs. This is concerning as City staff are funded by tax dollars and this may prevent staff from spending any time working on the program. She stated that even before the consultant was hired, City staff were heavily involved in development of the program.

Ms. Brunner stated that this bill would also add layers of regulatory review which would delay programs and make it much more costly to launch a program. She said right now, once the plan is adopted through the committee and Council process it undergoes two rounds of review. This bill proposes to add a step for sending the plan to the PUC for review and that is concerning as it can take a very long time. For example, the community power law was passed two years ago and the PUC still has not drafted the rules for the program. It would also add cost to the program as somebody has to participate in the process of reviewing the plan and it prevents tax dollars from being spent on that staff time, making it unclear how they could accomplish that.

Finally, Ms. Brunner stated that HB 315 will place a lot of restrictions on what can be done with these programs as they would only be able to use utility programs for energy efficiency, conservation and demand side management that are highly regulated. For example, they could only work with NH Saves. It also removes the ability to read customer meters and provide customer service, takes away the ability to install smart meters, and takes away the ability to participate in the Community Power Coalition of NH model of municipal/county aggregation in the future.

Chair Hansel stated that the committee will do their best to have their voices heard by the legislative committee that is reviewing this bill. He said a number of members have already signed up to speak against this bill. He suggested that they also spend a bit of time at the retreat discussing the “what ifs” if the bill does pass and how that will impact the community energy program.

Mr. Lamb encouraged members to attend and sign up for the meetings to express opposition to the legislation. He said this is the number one action in the Sustainable

Energy Plan for the 9-year period between now and 2030. He encouraged members to take this bill seriously and express their opposition.

Ms. Brunner noted that it is within the committee's purview to bring this to City Council's attention and they could vote today to move it through the Council approval process.

Mr. Dey asked if the support of this bill is due to the utility wanting to keep power or are there legitimate concerns on their end. He expressed that it is important to understand both sides but he will support the motion on the table in any case. Chair Hansel replied that most of the bills on the table were sponsored by Representative Harrington, and he is unsure what his agenda is, which would be good to know. He agreed with Mr. Dey that Eversource must have a reason behind their sponsorship of this bill and they can hopefully rely on Clean Energy New Hampshire to research that. Mr. Lamb said that the City does not have a separate contract with the lobbyists. However, Eversource will tell them their concerns at the hearing and if it is a legitimate concern, they will come to some compromise but if the changes are approved it will gut the program entirely. Chair Hansel said he suspects that any raise in taxes is of major motivation to Representative Harrington.

Ms. Gaunt moved to ask City Council and the Mayor to take a formal position in opposition to HB 315, Mr. Roth seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Gaunt asked Ms. Brunner if alerts can be posted on the website so that members and the public can keep track of the legislative updates. Ms. Brunner agreed that she would provide members with alerts on all of the bills; she added that the Monadnock Sustainability Hub is organizing a regional meeting tomorrow, February 4 at 4:00 pm to discuss how Monadnock communities and organizations can work together to actively oppose HB 315.

b. HB 213 – “Relative to the Elimination of Useful Thermal Energy from Renewable Energy Classes”

Ms. Brunner stated that the main point of HB 213 is to reduce the renewable portfolio standard from 25% in 2025 to 8.8% in 2025. It would go into effect this year. The bill also eliminates useful thermal class 1 and presents an attack on the RPS overall and specifically thermal Renewable Energy Credits (RECs).

Chair Hansel stated that Representative Harrington is the primary sponsor of this bill as he is adamant that the energy classes do not include thermal energy and only electrical energy. Chair Hansel said he is not sure if he has support for this bill but members should attend those hearings and let their voices be heard.

c. HB 549 – “Relative to the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard and the System Benefits Charge” and HB 351 – “Relative to the System Benefits Charge”

Ms. Brunner said HB 351 is also sponsored primarily by Representative Harrington. This bill would eliminate PUC oversight of the Systems Benefit Charge (SBC) and limit use of the SBC to energy efficiency for electricity only. Ms. Brunner said it would also override the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) plan which is a three-year process which was just completed and is a very important plan as they required a lot of research and public input. She said both of these bills attack the EERS and the SBC, which is set to take effect last month through NH Saves and was a program agreed to by all parties, including the utilities and consumer advocates. HB 549 also puts the plan in the hands of the legislature and not the regulators which is problematic due to party changes and will introduce a lot of uncertainty into the SBC and EERS.

Chair Hansel stated that Eversource spoke up in opposition to this bill at the hearing. He said he does not know how much support there is for HB 351 but that does not mean it cannot be passed. He stated there were many people who opposed this bill and if members sign up as opposed or in favor the committee members were very interested in those numbers.

d. HB 225 – “Relative to the Calculation of Net Energy Metering Payments or Credits”

Ms. Brunner stated that HB 225 will drop the payout rate from the stable utility default energy rate, or the market rate, to the much lower and variable “locational marginal price (LMP).”

Ms. Brunner showed a slide with instructions on how ECC members and members of the public can share their opinion with the Science, Technology and Energy Committee.

Ms. Gaunt asked if they should consider writing a letter as a committee to the Science, Technology and Energy Committee. Ms. Brunner replied that they can as long as they are clear that they are representing ECC and not the City. Chair Hansel asked if they know the dates of the legislative hearings. Ms. Brunner said that she did not see the hearings on the schedule as of yet but they meet Mondays and Fridays and must give a week’s advance notice. Chair Hansel said they can possibly draft a letter and vote on it at the Retreat. Ms. Gaunt said at Keene State College, they send a letter out via email and ask people to respond and review and gather responses that way. Mr. Lamb stated that it has to be done in a public meeting as a public body as the public must have the opportunity to review and respond. Ms. Brunner said that in the past, the City Council has voted on taking a position on a bill and then gave authority to the Mayor to draft a letter. Mr. Lamb said the committee can authorize the Chair to write a letter on their position. Ms. Brunner noted that they could either have something ready for the 16th or take the approach of the Chair writing the letter instead. She said the Retreat is a public meeting so it would meet the criteria for drafting a letter as a committee. Chair Hansel suggested that he draft a letter for members to discuss at the Retreat and they can vote on it at that time. Councilor Clark suggested that they vote today to authorize the Chair to write a letter to send to the appropriate committee chairs and the legislature. Chair Hansel agreed he would be happy to draft the letter if it is the will of the committee. Ms. Gaunt offered to help Vice Chair

draft a letter; she said they could also share the letter with the committee to provide language for members to include in their own individual letters.

Councilor Clark moved to authorize Chair Hansel to write a letter of opposition to the House Bills that were discussed in the meeting and send them to the appropriate committee chairs in the legislature, Ms. Gaunt seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

7. Committee Membership

Chair Hansel stated that Mr. Oursler is now an alternate and Mr. Nuru is expected to be approved tomorrow. He said Ms. Denise Thomas is also a prospective member. Chair Hansel said they would have one more vacancy for a regular member and two more alternate seats available. He said if members have any more suggestions for committee membership, they can share those ideas with himself and Ms. Brunner.

8. New Business

No new business was raised by committee members or members of the public.

9. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. ECC Retreat: Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 3:00-5:00 pm
- b. March Meeting: Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 8:00 am

10. Adjourn

Chair Hansel adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute-Taker

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner



City of Keene

New Hampshire

February 1, 2021

Mr. Thomas Jameson, P.E. TAP Program Manager
NHDOT Bureau of Planning & Community Assistance
John O. Morton Building
7 Hazen Drive, PO Box 483
Concord, NH 03302-0483

RE: City of Keene Letter of Interest
Transportation Alternatives Program

Dear Mr. Jameson:

I'm pleased to inform you that the City of Keene intends to submit an application for a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant in the recently announced application cycle.

The City has established a long-term goal of completing the restoration of approximately 8.6 miles of the Cheshire Railroad from the Swanzey town line to the Surry town line. With the generous support of private donors and assistance from prior TAP grants, we've completed over five miles already. An additional 0.9 miles will be improved as part of the Cheshire Rail Trail Phase III Loop Project during the summer of 2021.

In January of 2019, the City of Keene submitted a proposal to the NHDOT for the reuse of the historic Robert J. Prowse Memorial Bridge. Our proposal envisioned the adaptive reuse of three historic bridges along the rail trail to tell the story of how transportation systems have shaped the development and evolution of Keene. The Robert J. Prowse Bridge will be used to carry the trail over State Route 101. The project also includes the retrofitting the magnificent Stone Arch Bridge with historically appropriate pedestrian safety rails. Finally, the City's Island Street vehicular bridge will be re-purposed to carry the trail over Swanzey Factory Road. The overall vision, which we are calling the "Transportation Heritage Trail" (THT), will encompass 1.1 miles of the currently unimproved rail bed.

Our plan is to complete the overall project over several phases, using a combination of private donations, City funds and grants where possible. The first phase, and the subject of the City's 2021 TAP Grant Application, will restore of the Cheshire Railroad from Eastern Avenue to Route 101 in Keene NH. This stretch of rail bed travels southeasterly from the eastern terminus of the previously improved section. The proposed project includes the design and construction of 4,100 +/- feet of Rail Trail by brush clearing, drainage improvements, grading and stone dust resurfacing. This phase of improvements will terminate at a scenic overlook on the northern side of State Route 101. At this terminus, we will construct an area with benches and informational signage related to the planned re-use of three historic bridges. The project will leave the site prepared for the installation of the Prowse Bridge (under a future contract).

Identified natural resources in this area include The Branch River to the south of the project areas terminus at State Route 101; no direct impacts are anticipated to this resource. A significant historical resource, the Stone Arch Bridge, carries the old rail bed over the Branch River. The Stone Arch Bridge will be the subject of future

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City of Keene

New Hampshire

phases, but is not a part of the project proposed for TAP Round 4. There are two old railway bridge abutments located in the project area, one near the western end and one at Eastern Avenue and the other at Route 101. The size and geometry of the Prowse Bridge will require the abutment at Rt. 101 to be removed. As part of the work proposed for this phase, the City will document the historic stone abutment and carefully disassemble the granite blocks with the intention of potentially reconstructing the abutment at Swanzey Factory Road. There are no known sources of contamination within the project limits.

The City estimates the project cost at approximately \$644,000. The City will be requesting 80% of federal TAP funds in the amount of \$515,200. The City will be allocating \$128,800 in its FY 2023-2029 Capital Improvement Program to support this project. In addition, a private non-profit has pledged to contribute a portion of the City's share for this phase of the work.

This project meets the following TAP eligible activities:

- Construction, planning and design of on-road and off-road facilities for pedestrian, bicyclists and other users of non-motorized forms;
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for pedestrians, bicyclists or other non-motorized transportation users.

The contact person for this application process will be:

Donald R. Lussier, P.E.
City Engineer (LPA Certified)
350 Marlboro Street
Keene, NH 03431

Telephone: (603) 352-6550
Email: dlussier@ci.keene.nh.us

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

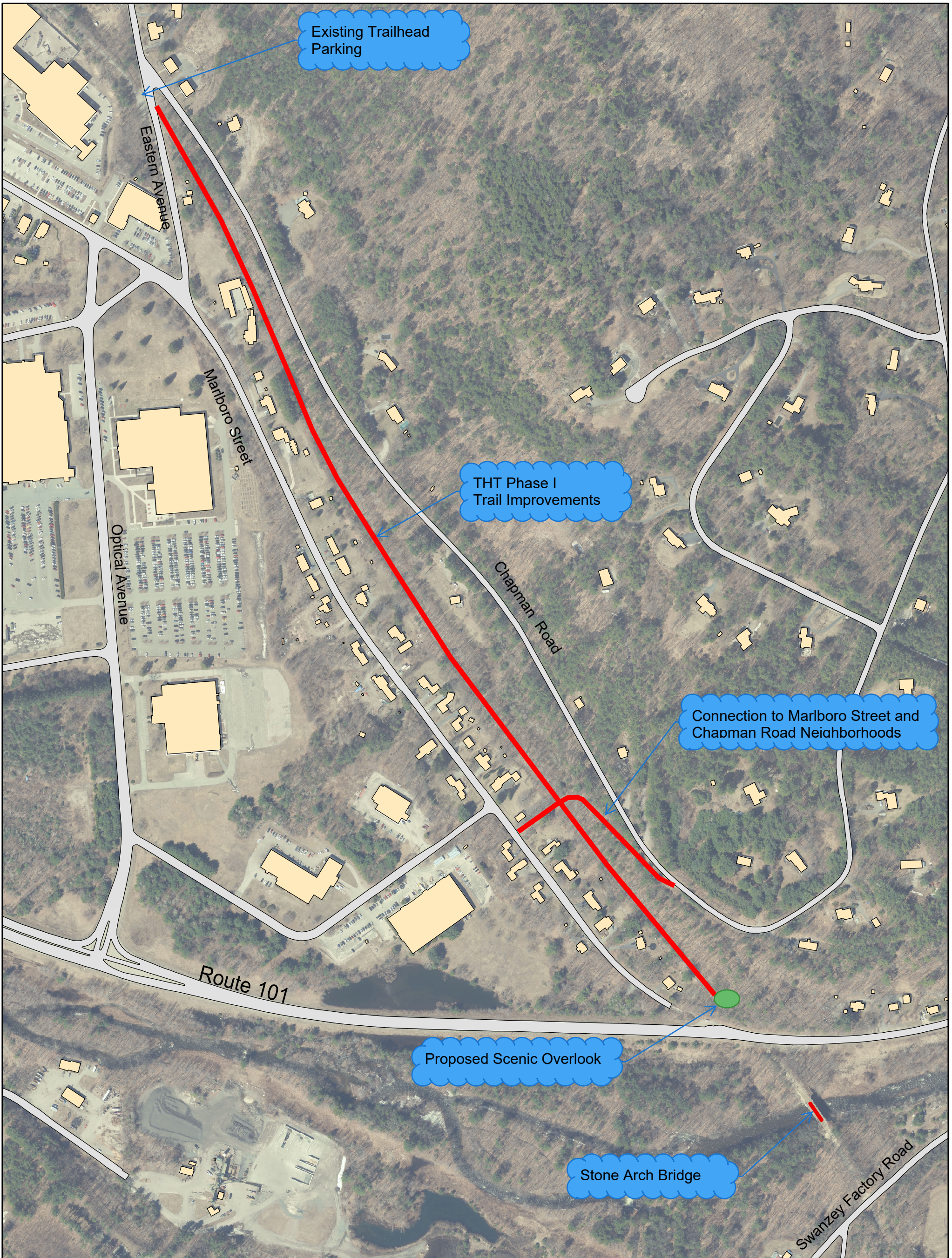
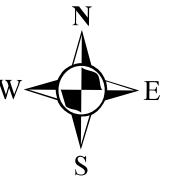
Kurt D. Blomquist, P.E.
Public Works Director/Emergency Management Director

cc: Rhett Lamb, Assistant City Manager/Planning Director
Andrew Bohannon, Parks & Recreation Director
Don Lussier, City Engineer
Chuck Redfern, Pathways for Keene

Transportation Heritage Trail

Phase I

City of Keene, NH



February 22, 2021

Dear Chairman Hansel and Energy and Climate Committee Members:

The Clean Energy Team encourages your consideration of the attached draft resolutional endorsing national legislation which reflects climate action initiatives Keene has embraced over many years.

Carbon Fee and Dividend is considered to be the most cost-effective way to reduce our carbon emissions on the scale needed to aggressively address the climate crisis.

The endorsement of this resolution and national legislation by Keene's City Council would be supportive of our goals as a city and consistent with our ongoing climate leadership.

The Clean Energy Team looks forward to continuing to promote and support the work of ECC and the city to move us toward a sustainable energy future.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to this work.

Sincerely,

Nancy Gillard
Carolyn Jones
Clean Energy Team
cleanenergykeene.com

Draft 2/22/21

Resolution Endorsing National Legislation to Reduce the Costs of Climate Change

WHEREAS: destabilized weather patterns, rising sea levels and extreme weather events pose a substantial threat to the health, prosperity, and security of Americans; and

WHEREAS: climate change costs are real, growing and already burdening businesses, taxpayers, and municipal budgets, placing our economy, infrastructure and public safety directly at risk; and

WHEREAS: prudent action now will be far less costly than the consequences of delayed response and will create a more stable business environment for our nation; and

WHEREAS: the City of Keene has been a leader in addressing the challenges of climate change for over 20 years; and

WHEREAS: 3500 economists view carbon pricing as the most cost-effective approach for reducing carbon emissions at the scale and speed needed; and

WHEREAS: Carbon Fee and Dividend (also known as Carbon Cash-Back) will place a fee on fossil fuels at the source, steadily increasing until emissions reductions goals are met; and

WHEREAS: Carbon Fee and Dividend will distribute all revenue collected to American households equally and directly; and

WHEREAS: Carbon Fee and Dividend is market-based and revenue neutral, sending a clear price signal to entrepreneurs to invest in a local clean-energy economy.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Keene hereby endorses Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation to reduce the costs of climate change to the citizens of Keene, our state, and our country.

From: [Mari Brunner](#)
To: [Mari Brunner](#)
Subject: FW: March 3 ECC Agenda Packet - Carbon Cash-Back
Date: Monday, March 1, 2021 9:30:34 AM
Attachments: [2102 CET to ECC Letter.docx](#)
[2102 Draft Resolution to ECC 22221.docx](#)

From: Suzanne Butcher
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 3:04 PM
To: Mari Brunner <mbrunner@ci.keene.nh.us>; peterhansel61@twc.com
Subject: Re: March 3 ECC Agenda Packet - Carbon Cash-Back

Mari and Peter,

Thanks for checking your email while you were out, Mari.

I hope the ECC will be able to consider Carbon Cash-Back on 3/3. An endorsement by the City of Keene would have the most impact if it could be done soon (Congress and the Administration are shaping climate policy now), although it would still be welcome if it can't be done until later.

The following could provide background to ECC members before the meeting:

<https://cleanenergykeene.com/2020/12/22/carboncashback/> (good summary with 1-minute video)

<https://monadnock sustainabilityhub.org/the-climate-solution-that-pays-families/> (42-minute recording of 1/12/21 forum the ECC cosponsored)

<https://clcouncil.org/economists-statement/> supported by 4 former Fed Chairs, 28 Nobel Laureates, and 3500+ U.S. economists

https://www.ted.com/talks/ted_halstead_a_climate_solution_where_all_sides_can_win?language=en (10 minute TED talk)

A list of endorsements from other cities across the country is at <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/endorsements/municipal/> and a list of 28 NH towns is at <https://sites.google.com/view/carbon-cashback-coalition/home> (at the bottom of the page).

Let me know if there's any other information I can provide or any other way I can help.

Suzanne