

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

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

**Wednesday, June 7, 2023**

**8:00 AM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Zach Luse, Chair  
Councilor Bryan Lake  
Peter Hansel  
Jake Pipp  
Jude Nuru  
Diana Duffy  
Beth Campbell  
Clair Oursler  
Kenneth Swymer  
Charles Redfern, Alternate  
Rowland Russell, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Paul Roth, Vice Chair  
Councilor Raleigh Ormerod  
Lisa Maxfield, Alternate

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

Chair Zach Luse called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM. Ms. Mari Brunner noted there were some open spots available for Mr. Charles Redfern and Dr. Rowland Russell to be invited to participate as voting members. Chair Luse agreed and invited them to participate in the meeting as voting members.

**2) Approval of Minutes- May 3, 2023**

Chair Luse asked for any discussion and revisions. With no revisions, Mr. Peter Hansel made a motion to approve the minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**3) ECC Work Groups**

**A) Proposed Work Group Assignments/Membership**

Chair Luse expressed excitement to get the workgroups going. He reviewed the current workgroup assignments.

Education and Outreach is led by Chair Luse and is made up of Ms. Lisa Maxfield, Mr. Clair Oursler, and Ms. Carolyn Jones.

Grants and fundraising will be led by Mr. Redfern with Ms. Beth Campbell and Mr. Ken Swymer as members.

Legislative Tracking is led by Councilor Bryan Lake and made up of Mr. Jake Pipp, Councilor Raleigh Ormerod and Mr. Mike Metell.

Community Solar is led by Mr. Jude Nuru and has Mr. Peter Hansel, Ms. Diana Duffy, Mr. Bruce Norlund, Mr. John Kondos and Mr. Scott Maslansky as members.

Lastly, Food Security is led by Dr. Rowland Russell with a roster of non-committee members.

With no questions on assignments, next steps were to identify a meeting time and making sure to have groups meet at least monthly. Chair Luse suggested groups meet, discuss, and identify goals and focuses for the year and then report back to the full committee with that information. Ms. Brunner included an example in the packet for groups to use in creating their own goals.

### **B) Format for Monthly Report-Outs**

Chair Luse explained the format for the new monthly report. Report-outs will be done via a google form and is simple. It will include what your work group was, date of last meeting, monthly update/recap of what was discussed with a separate field for anything that needs to come to the larger committee for discussion or action.

He explained the latter piece is important in that it will be included in the agenda packet for the larger committee and allows members to review and know ahead of time what was discussed allowing for a more focused discussion in the meeting.

Ms. Brunner provided an overview of what work groups can and can not do. She will try to send out reminders to the lead of each group with a timeline. Ideally, the report will be included in the packet. To get it in to the packet, they need to be submitted the Monday before the week of the meeting (typically the last Monday of the month). She will create a word document version for people who prefer that format.

She reminded that these are informal research groups. They are not an official public body and are not a formally formed subcommittee. There are limitations in what they can do such as they cannot have a quorum of the committee. There can be up to five members. Groups can not take any action without getting permission from the larger committee. Non-committee members can

participate in these groups, but they are not public meetings. They are not going to be supported by staff to take minutes nor will agendas be posted. While non-committee members can participate, they must be confirmed by the full committee first.

Dr. Russell asked if that meant they could not use city property for meetings. She said they certainly can, but it will be up to the lead to schedule and reserve the space. She also noted that they have been using the city zoom accounts for the work groups. She noted that will be going away due to a transfer to Microsoft Teams, but they can use their personal or other professional zoom accounts.

Ms. Duffy asked Ms. Brunner what the process was for getting non-committee members for approval. Ms. Brunner explained that some non-committee members were volunteers that requested being part of the committee while others are individuals that the workgroup asked to participate.

Dr. Russell shared that he plans to do focus groups and asked if they need the name of everyone that participates on the focus group. Ms. Brunner explained that she thinks just sharing the name of the core committee is sufficient.

Mr. Redfern mentioned that he had met briefly with Ms. Brunner and learned that guests do not need advanced approval so long as they are not recurring attendees.

### **C) Next Steps**

Ms. Brunner requested each workgroup to commit to meeting monthly, create the goals of the group and review the description of the group that she created. The description should accurately reflect the group.

#### **4) Community Power Program**

Ms. Brunner shared that the community power program has officially launched. Half of Keene residents have a June meter read so about half are officially on the program. The supplier is still working through all the opt out, opt in, opt up requests so numbers are still in flux. She is hoping to have numbers by the end of the week.

Ms. Campbell asked if Ms. Brunner knew the number one reason people are opting out. Ms. Brunner shared that it seems to be confusion. She explained she had people share their excitement and that they sent their card in not realizing that meant they were opting out. Many of those with solar net metering were advised to stay with Eversource due to a data transfer issue. She also noted some left due to opposition to a city run program. Some individuals also made previous commitments to other suppliers, so they must see that contract through prior to changing. She also noted many people are in the process of getting solar installed and opted out due to that.

5) **Legislative Update**  
A) **2021 Energy Code**

Chair Luse said there was nothing action wise on the Clean Energy NH weekly update. There was an updated e-mail sent out to the group on the 2021 energy code. Ms. Brunner shared that the subcommittee voted to recommend to the full Building Code Review Board that they stay with the 2018 code. They will be holding a public hearing on it sometime in October with opportunity to provide public comments. No date has been set yet though.

Ms. Brunner spoke to Med Kopczynski, who shared that the City of Keene could adopt the 2021 codes on its own and that may be something this committee may want to investigate and make a recommendation to city council. He has heard rumors that there may an attempt to take that ability away in the next legislative session. If the city wants to take advantage of that, it will need to happen before the next legislative session. By staying on the 2018 code, the city could potentially get penalized for insurance rates.

Chair Luse shared that being on an older building code could also disqualify the city for many grants.

Ms. Campbell asked if it would be possible to get a list of the municipalities in New Hampshire that have adopted the state building codes. Ms. Brunner offered to try and get one.

Chair Luse suggested this topic as one for the legislative workgroup to investigate and make a recommendation to the committee. Personally, he feels it is a bad move for energy efficiency and sets the community back. Ms. Campbell offered to be a resource to the legislative group. Having worked in the construction industry and having been very involved in code, she could be of benefit.

Mr. Hansel shared that they have been tracking the number of solar arrays. Most recent data is 2021 and at that time there were 133 residential installations (for a total of 939 kilowatts), 35 commercial and industrial (for a total of 2,973 kilowatts). 2022 was big year and he expects them to jump quite a bit.

Ms. Brunner shared she did get an e-mail with the numbers for community power. They did say the final numbers will be shared later this week. So far, 142 chose to go with the basic option with 23% renewable energy. There were 8,878 that chose the default option. There were 25 opted up to 50% and 145 opted up to the 100%. Total is 9190 customers and will include both residential and commercial.

6) **Committee Membership**

Chair Luse did talk to a potential member a couple of weeks ago but is unsure of his final decision. He welcomed the group to invite anyone who might be interested in participating.

7) **New Business**

Ms. Brunner shared that they were thinking of having someone from Peterborough come to speak on a program they are implementing. They are doing a pilot program with a company called BlocPower. While she does not know details, it sounds very interesting, and it sounds like they would be interested in collaborating with City of Keene possibly in the future.

Ms. Duffy questioned if there was a way to get a summary to help distill the questions down. Mr. Hansel suggested requesting a summary.

8) **Upcoming Dates of Interest:**

- A) **Jeff Speck Presentation: Monday, June 12, 2023, Heberton Hall**
- B) **SWRPC Annual Meeting: Tuesday, June 13, 2023**
- C) **Building A Clean Energy Future virtual workshop: Thursday, June 15, 2023, 6:00 PM**
- D) **Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 5, 2023- 8:00 am- To be Confirmed**

Chair Luse and Ms. Duffy will not be present for July 5. As such, the meeting will be shifted to June 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 AM.

9) **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Luse adjourned the meeting at 8:56 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner