

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

8:00 AM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Peter Hansel, Chair
Cary Gaunt, Vice Chair
Ken Dooley (Arrived Late)
Councilor Raleigh Ormerod (Arrived Late)
Jake Pipp
Jude Nuru (Arrived Late)
Paul Roth
Zach Luse
Suzanne Butcher
Bryan Lake
Andrew Dey
Clair Oursler, Alternate

Staff Present:

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

Chair Hansel called meeting to order at 8:15 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 the Zoom platform rules aloud and roll call was conducted. Ms. Brunner stated that Mr. Ken Dooley would be fifteen minutes late. Chair Hansel welcomed the newest ECC member, Mr. Bryan Lake, to the committee. Chair Hansel invited alternate member, Mr. Oursler, to participate as a voting member today.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. February 16, 2021 Meeting (ECC Retreat)

Mr. Luse moved to accept the February 16, 2021 retreat meeting minutes, Mr. Roth seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

b. April 7, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Dey moved to accept the April 7, 2021 meeting minutes, Mr. Roth seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

3. Presentation: Draft City of Keene EV Ready Guidelines & Solar Ready Guidelines – Julia Anselmo, KSC student intern

Chair Hansel introduced the City of Keene intern from Keene State College (KSC), Julia Anselmo. Ms. Anselmo introduced herself and her background as an environmental and sustainability studies major at KSC. She began a presentation of her first report on EV-Ready Guidelines with the committee. She stated that in 2019, the City adopted the Energy Plan Resolution to transition the City to 100% renewable energy in the electricity sector by 2030, and 100% renewable energy in the thermal and transportation sectors by 2050. She noted that the City does not currently require new development to be EV ready, however, it is strongly encouraged as EV's contribute to a more energy efficient future.

Ms. Anselmo stated that EVs are more than four times more efficient than gasoline-powered vehicles, reduce noise pollution, improve air quality and overall quality of life for people and wildlife. She said EVs are especially important to sustainability as the transportation sector is the highest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

Ms. Anselmo presented an infographic reviewing three EV charging levels: *AC level 1*, *AC level 2* and *DC Fast Charger* which she said is important information to understand before implementing different charging stations. She stated that levels 1 and 2 are good for residential and the fast charger for commercial use. She defined becoming "EV Ready" as "*residential and commercial developments have energized electrical outlets installed at the time of construction that are callable of charging an EV when a charging station is installed in the future.*" Ms. Anselmo added that there are three different stages of EV readiness: *EV capable*, *EV ready* and *EV installed*. She noted that the most important part of her project is the question of when to become EV Ready. She said becoming EV ready is 4-6 times less expensive when EV Ready infrastructure is included during the initial construction phase as opposed to retrofitting.

Ms. Anselmo showed a flowchart for homeowners to consider in regard to level 1 and level 2 charging stations. She said if residential owners want to take an easier route, they may want to consider a level 1 charging station. She stated that a level 2 requires a licensed contractor and a permitting process, and the residential permitting checklist can be found at the Community Development website. There is also a 10% discount incentive for residential homeowners who hire a licensed electrician to come out and oversee safety and efficiency of the project. She showed a flowchart for commercial planning processes for EV Ready which begins with assessing needs, determining the number of chargers to implement and incorporation of property layout, building characteristics and power needs in the process and engagement with the local utility company. She said commercial planning can also consider onsite battery storage, onsite local energy generation, for example, solar panels, and Smart charging, which allows consumers to charge off peak demand. Finally, she said step three includes finalizing the process and ensuring it meets NH electrical codes and applying for a permit. Ms. Anselmo presented a slide of the Commercial EVCS Permitting Checklist and Application and stated that this type of permit requires a licensed electrician.

Ms. Anselmo stated that she will be working on a report for Solar Ready Guidelines in the residential and commercial sectors next. She noted that project report will follow the same format as the EVCS report.

Councilor Ormerod joined the meeting at 8:10 AM.

Chair Hansel thanked Ms. Anselmo and shared his experience with level 1 charging in his residence. He said with a 115-volt, level 1 charger it can take several days to charge his EV so he suggests that homeowners consider pursuing a level 2 system. He stated that many people do not own in Keene or live in multifamily dwellings, therefore they will be dependent on what landlords provide for EV charging. Mr. Dey asked if the permitting applications have been adopted by the City of Keene yet and Ms. Anselmo replied that they are available on the website. Ms. Brunner clarified that the City has one application form for all building permits, including both EV charging and solar projects. The checklists that Ms. Anselmo presented are guides to accompany the application to help streamline the process for applicants. Vice Chair Gaunt stated that in Vermont, Green Mountain Power and Efficiency Vermont offers incentives for businesses to become EV ready, and asked if anyone knows if Eversource or NH Saves has a similar program. Ms. Anselmo said she was not aware of any such program. Chair Hansel asked how the licensed electrician discount works and Ms. Anselmo replied that it applies to single-family homeowners to promote safety and efficiency and is a discount off of the permitting process. Chair Hansel stated that they will need to lobby for battery storage as it is an important part of the EV charging process.

Mr. Dooley joined the meeting at 8:20 AM.

4. Energy Plan Work Groups **a. Weatherization**

Mr. Luse shared that the work group spoke with Ms. Kristen Bahny from Eversource at their last meeting regarding a marketing campaign “blitz” aimed at encouraging commercial properties and small businesses to take advantage of energy efficiency upgrades. He said they discussed working with the City and volunteers to develop a marketing campaign with mailers and contact property owners in a specified area of the City. He stated that NRM and World Energy will visit properties and talk to owners and tenants about doing energy efficiency upgrades. Mr. Luse added that the marketing would serve to warm up potential customers. He emphasized that it may not lead to much weatherization work, but if combined with other efforts around residential tenants, the blitz could provide a springboard for starting conversations with tenants and building owners. He said they would be discussing next steps at their next meeting.

Ms. Butcher stated that the home energy labeling also discussed outreach, so they may want to coordinate the efforts of different work groups to avoid duplicating work. Mr. Luse agreed that the marketing effort should be coordinated between all of the groups. He said Eversource also needs to be on board, and it will be more effective if they coordinate their efforts and have one marketing blitz aimed at engaging tenants and owners.

Chair Hansel suggested that they partner with Eversource to identify landlords and how to contact them as many residences in Keene are not owner-occupied. Mr. Luse stated that the Eversource is helping with identifying billing, and that may be the first step in contacting landlords. Councilor Ormerod added that as a marketing person, it is typically necessary to contact customers multiple times, so perhaps ECC should take some lead in cross-training various work groups as they do not want to lose the support and energy from the community.

b. Home Energy Labeling

Mr. Dey stated that the Home Energy Labeling work group discussed how it may be difficult to establish a home energy labeling program with a group of volunteers. He noted that it took Montpelier, VT a couple of years to even get a pilot program going, so the process appears more like a marathon than a sprint. He said that the work group is currently thinking about ways to get assistance, for example, collaborating with other work groups on education and marketing for home energy labeling. He stated that NEEP is a good resource, and Ms. Brunner suggested that they speak with them again to discuss next steps. Mr. Dey stated that they discussed the approach of focusing on a subset of the housing stock to develop a pilot program in Keene, for example, focusing on the influential landlords in the City to get them on board with the program first. He proposed that people who have already had energy work done on their house could also be an asset, as well as educating realtors for single family homes. He stated that the next step is working on a list for a focus group; however, they are still deciding which approach to take for particular constituencies to move the project forward.

Mr. Oursler stated that it will be important to get landlords and realtors involved early on because there are many multifamily homes and 70% of the properties in Keene are rental properties. Chair Hansel stated that engaging residents who have already gone through a weatherization process is key, as they can serve as advocates for others interested in the program. Mr. Dey suggested that the region-wide database HELIX could provide a strong starting point. Ms. Butcher added that they also discussed that working with the landlords will be especially important due to equity concerns and the approach of bringing the benefits to the renters.

Mr. Nuru joined the meeting at 8:30 AM.

Councilor Ormerod stated that as a landlord, he has already started talking to his tenants about the NHSaves program to see if they qualify. He said they can also use the home energy labeling to drive participation in NHSaves, because if the landlords are aware of what is coming down the pipeline, they can get more participation from landlords and NHSaves. He said one of the key elements is to ask how long it is going to take to collect the information for landlords, as it provides some context and clarity for landlords. Ms. Gaunt stated that because they are trying to roll out many different programs that are geared towards the City's Resolution, it might be advantageous to provide some guidelines for landlords and renters to bring all of the information regarding the Resolution together in one place. For example, the City could create guides called "Meeting the City's Energy Goals: A Guide for Landlords." She said that a unified approach may be an easier route to lay out the critical next steps for the Resolution. Mr. Pipp agreed with Ms. Gaunt's idea of simplifying the various options for people coming into the program from different angles.

c. Electric Vehicles

Mr. Nuru stated that the EV working group's goal is to promote EV infrastructure and to advocate for finding programs and policies that are EV friendly at the local, State and federal levels. He stated that at their last meeting, they covered four thematic areas: *infrastructure*, *marketing*, *EV baseline data*, and *brainstorming options*. He said they discussed the Volkswagen Settlement (VW) funds that have been dedicated to developing EV infrastructure in the State, and they discussed that making this information available to the public is crucial. For example, they discussed Route 9 and 101 as sites that would have charging equipment that could facilitate EV charging stations. Mr. Nuru said that the group recognized that it will be difficult for people to identify the locations of EV charging stations. They discussed promoting PlugShare, an application that provides the locations of EV stations using a searchable map, as well as updated information about the location of EV charging station from users. He said EVgo is a nationwide information organization that has installed charging stations across the U.S. and Canada and currently both countries have about 160,000 locations. He stated that in the White Mountains, because of the fire risk, charging stations are located away from residences. Mr. Nuru shared that another idea they came up with is providing training on fire risk relating to EVs. They also decided to monitor resources like the Monadnock Food Co-Op and Eversource. He said that Mr. Roth will contact Eversource about ways to leverage the VW funds and discover how these resources will be useful to people and Chair Hansel will contact the Food Co-Op.

Mr. Nuru shared that they discussed staying on top of EV-relevant stories to share them in forums for the public to access, contacting the City to gather more information about level 2 stations, and the number of EVs being used in the area. They also invited a resource person from ReVision Energy, who is the Director of EV systems with that company, to provide information and guide their understanding of the process. They also discussed incentivizing multifamily households, working with the housing authorities to motivate them to install EV charging stations on their properties. Lastly, they will be discussing diverse ways to promote EV infrastructure in the area. They will also invite Mr. Oursler to their next meeting on May 19 at 10:00 AM, as well as subsequent meetings which will take place on the third Wednesday of every month at 9:00 AM.

Chair Hansel suggested that they compile information about how residents in the City can identify EV charging stations through applications or other means. He also stated that there was a panel discussion at the Earth Day events after a film about EVs. He said the marketing is happening, and car manufacturers are moving towards EVs so there is a need to get the infrastructure in place to satisfy the wave of EVs in the future. Ms. Butcher shared that the film is still up on the site of the Monadnock Sustainability Hub website, www.monadnocksustainabilityhub.org. Councilor Ormerod added that he is glad to have Mr. Nuru on EV work group, as the battery storage is crucial and provides more visibility for the community solar project in East Keene where they are scoping out a site. Mr. Nuru agreed as the EV goal is that all charging stations are powered by solar energy to ensure an inclusive transition towards 100% clean energy in the transportation sector. He said the EV funded charging stations are proposed to be placed at locations such as Starbucks and Dunkin and users can enter the information into the PlugShare to create more visibility about the charging stations. Mr. Roth

asked if the PlugShare app informs users if stations are in use or not and Chair Hansel replied that it does.

d. Community Solar

Mr. Nuru stated that he was late in joining this work group, so he just added his name to the list as a member. Chair Hansel said this work group is aimed at developing a neighborhood-scale community solar project that might serve households in the community. He said developing the plan and finding the land is a good way to provide solar opportunity for homeowners that do not have a good prospect for rooftop solar but would like to participate with solar energy. This group will hold its first meeting on May 20, 2021.

5. Correspondence from Jessica Forrest re: Delay in PUC implementation of the 2021-2023 New Hampshire Statewide Energy Efficiency Plan

Ms. Brunner shared that Ms. Jessica Forrest sent a communication to the Committee about a delay in the three-year plan that was developed by all of the State's utility providers and a group of stakeholders; the plan proposes using funding from the System Benefits Charge (SBC) to pay for the energy efficiency programs that would then be invested through NHSaves. She said that she believes that concerns around implementation during the pandemic contributed to the decision for the PUC to revise what the economic impacts are. They gave themselves a deadline of February 23, however, it is now May, and it still has not happened. She said the delay in implementing the Energy efficiency plan has created a lot of uncertainty about what will be available in terms of funding for energy efficiency and weatherization in 2021. She said the Button Up workshop through the Clean Energy team was a success, however, Mr. Andy Dunkin stated that this pause is mostly affecting larger commercial industrial users, as NHSaves is still able to provide 2020 funding levels for residential programs. She stated that Ms. Forrest asked if the ECC would like to comment on this and send a letter the PUC in reference to Docket DE-20-092.

Chair Hansel asked if 2021 funding levels are the same as last year or if they are using funding from 2020. Ms. Brunner said she is unsure but her understanding is that they are spending money that they think they will get and that might be where some of the hesitancy is coming from. She said it is still unclear to her. Councilor Ormerod stated that the funding levels are secure for NHSaves for 2021, however, he asked what the process is for submitting a letter. Chair Hansel replied that if the committee wants to authorize the Chair to draft a letter to send to the PUC, they do not need approval. Ms. Brunner agreed that if the letter comes from the ECC, they do not need approval, however, if the letter came from the City they would need City Council approval. Chair Hansel suggested that he draft a letter and have it approved at the next meeting or in consultation with a few others. Mr. Dey said he does not require approval of the committee. Mr. Roth and Mr. Oursler agreed that time is of the essence. Ms. Butcher asked if they have examples of how the delay is impacting programs in this area. Mr. Oursler replied that he is not aware of the commercial and industrial programs, however, MEDC may be aware but they have had trouble contacting the leadership at MEDC. He suggested that he reach out to MEDC to find out and he will report back in the next couple of days. Chair Hansel thanked Mr. Oursler and

proposed that the consensus is to authorize himself to draft a letter and send it out to the PUC in the next week. Ms. Brunner suggested that the committee take a vote.

Vice Chair Gaunt moved that the ECC authorize Chair Hansel to write a letter to the PUC to encourage them to move forward with funding and approval of the 2021-2023 New Hampshire Statewide Energy Efficiency plan and budget, Mr. Roth seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

6. Legislative Updates

Ms. Brunner stated that the City originally opposed HB 315, relative to the aggregation of electric customers. However, after the bill was amended to address stakeholder concerns, it is no longer opposed. A hearing was held by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee on April 26, and the committee voted “Ought to Pass with Amendment.” However, the timing for when the bill will be adopted and go into effect is uncertain.

Ms. Brunner stated that HB 351, relative to the SBC, was opposed by the ECC, however, the Senate’s Energy Natural Resources committee ruled on April 26 to refer it to the committee. Ms. Brunner said she is unsure exactly what that means but it is not thought to pass so it may be good news.

Ms. Brunner stated that other House bills that the ECC was tracking were either retained (HB 213 or HB 549) or inexpedient to legislate (HB 225). She said all were bills that the ECC opposed, so the retained bills will need to be tracked but the others they do not need to worry about this year. Ms. Butcher said the retained bills will be worked on in the fall, so the committee should keep track of the progress of those.

7. Keene Community Power

Chair Hansel stated that the Community Power Committee is finalizing their work. The FOP Committee unanimously recommended adoption of the CP Plan to the City Council which meets tomorrow. As a result, the Community Power Committee will not meet this month as they will wait and see what happens, however, they wanted to get the plan off to the PUC as soon as it is adopted by City Council. He said this will put pressure on the PUC to get the rules in place and show readiness for moving forward with the program.

Ms. Butcher stated that one of the amendments to HB 315 was that the PUC has to act in 60 days so getting the plan into them is getting them to move along. Ms. Brunner stated that the 60 days will not go into effect until the bill is adopted.

8. New Business

Ms. Gillard shared that the ButtonUp workshop was recorded, and the Clean Energy team will post it to their website, as well as share with Ms. Brunner to post. She said the meeting demonstrates many different ways to take small and big steps to improve the energy efficiency of

their homes, as well as addresses the landlord issues. She said it is a great resource for people who were not able to attend to learn more.

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 2, 2021

10. Adjourn

Chair Hansel adjourned the meeting at 9:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner

Additional edits by Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office