



ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Wednesday, September 7, 2022, 8:00 AM

City Hall, Second Floor Council Chambers

Members:

Peter Hansel, Chair

Zach Luse, Vice Chair

Diana Duffy

Jake Pipp

Councilor Raleigh Ormerod

Jude Nuru

Paul Roth

Linsey Edmunds

Councilor Bryan Lake

Beth Campbell

Clair Oursler, Alternate

Staff:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes – August 3, 2022
3. Energy Plan Work Group Report-outs
 - a. Weatherization / Window Dressers
 - b. Electric Vehicles
 - c. Community Solar
 - d. Renewable Energy Loans
 - e. Outreach and Education / Keene Energy Week
4. Community Power Update
5. Discussion: Home Energy Labeling Pilot Program
6. Committee Membership
7. Upcoming dates of interest:
 - a. Radically Rural – Sep. 21-22, 2022
 - b. Keene Energy Week – Oct. 16-22, 2022 - [keeneenergyweek.com](https://www.keeneenergyweek.com)
 - c. Window Dressers Community Build – Oct. 27-Nov. 3, 2022
 - d. Chamber Regional Issues Series – Oct. 27, 2022, 8:00 am, Cheshire County Courthouse Delegation Room
8. New Business
9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 5, 2022 – 8:00 am
10. Adjourn

Link to ECC Google Drive Folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1O1WIR0fADTNijRt13v3DU7k2FwxXDcGs?usp=sharing>

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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4 ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
5 MEETING MINUTES
6

Wednesday, August 3, 2022

8:00 AM

Council Chambers,
City Hall

Members Present:

Peter Hansel, Chair
Zach Luse, Vice Chair
Councilor Raleigh Ormerod (Zoom)
Councilor Bryan Lake
Jake Pipp
Paul Roth
Diana Duffy
Beth Campbell
Clair Oursler, Alternate
Jude Nuru

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Linsey Edmunds

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

10 Chair Peter Hansel called the meeting to order at 8:06 AM and roll call was conducted.
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12 **2) Approval of Minutes- July 6, 2022**

13 Chair Hansel asked for comments or questions on the minutes for July 6, 2022. Councilor
14 Bryan Lake motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Paul Roth seconded the motion. The
15 motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
16

17 **3) Community Power Update- Bob Hayden, Standard Power**

18 Mr. Bob Hayden of Standard Power announced that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC)
19 approved the [Community Power] rules as established by a joint group of stakeholders. They
20 were a broad set of rules that allow a wide range of opportunities in community power
21 programs. Those rules have been moved to the JLCAR group (Joint Legislative Committee on
22 Administrative Rules) for their detailed work in converting the rules to actual laws. He expects
23 this item to be on the August meeting schedule for community power rules.
24

25 Chair Hansel asked if there anything in the rules that affects our plan. Mr. Hayden responded
26 that if there are, they are minor and the team is ready to resubmit at any time. Ms. Brunner
27 added that they were resubmitted yesterday afternoon with some minor edits, so the 60 days
28 clock should have started.

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Chair Hansel asked if we were the first to submit. Mr. Hayden responded that they do not have documentation to confirm, but he had a high suspicion that we were.

Chair Hansel asked if there was good anticipation that the PUC will stick to the 60 day timeframe. Mr. Hayden said that is a very strong expectation of their behavior, but given the evolution of the PUC and Department of Energy (DOE) over the past year, he has a hard time giving a succinct answer.

Ms. Brunner said Good Energy had prepared a few slides that provide an overview of the energy market outlook. She asked if the Committee would like to view those slides, or hold off to a future meeting. Mr. Hayden was willing to speak to if the committee agreed. Chair Hansel approved the presentation.

Mr. Hayden started by saying that the City is on a great path for Keene Community Power. The recent rule changes were mostly administrative. The timeline, while aggressive, suggests that the City could be enrolling members this year. This is possible at this moment, but if there are changes to the possibility or probability of this timeline, they will inform the Committee.

Mr. Hayden, in reference to a slide displaying a graph showing the cost of residential default service, said that this has been his world for the past 10 years – selling electricity to schools, towns and commercial and industry (C&I) entities. In many ways, the average price of electricity has either stayed the same or dropped, largely because of the incredibly low cost of natural gas, particularly during a timeframe when the United States was making as much oil and natural gas as they could. That is no longer the case, and the impact has been that prices have skyrocketed. Last year at this time, he was selling electricity for 9 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh), and the year before it was 6.5 cents per kWh. Now, he is selling it at 15 cents per kWh, and the utility has gone to a default rate of 22.556 cents per kWh. That is what Eversource’s default customers will see on their next utility bill.

There reason for these price increases is twofold – one is about the New England ISO, and one is about the cost of natural gas. The New England ISO is our grid, and it is constricted as to what can come into the grid – the capacity of pipelines and electrical wires is limited, so our ability to get raw materials (natural gas and electricity in volume) is very low. That is called constriction. We also have a rising demand for electricity as we electrify our buildings and transportation. The primary generation of electricity is based on natural gas. On many days, natural gas may be generating maybe 65%, or even 80% of the electricity we are using.

On the day that Eversource had to buy electricity (June 14), natural gas cost \$9.30 per dekatherm. A few days after, there was an explosion of an export station in Texas. When that station exploded, it dramatically reduced the U.S.’s ability to export natural gas. While prices in the United States are high, the prices are even higher worldwide, so the U.S. exports a lot of natural gas. The capacity to export was reduced by about 18%, which created a glut of natural

72 gas in our domestic marketplace. As a result, prices went down precipitously. They have
73 already gone back up pretty high and are presently at about \$8.10 [per dekatherm].

74

75 Mr. Hayden said that this is what is going on in the market. What does this mean for
76 Community Power? Right now, the residential rate is horribly high. When the City was first
77 talking about Community Power, electricity cost 7 cents per kWh and we were talking about
78 saving half a cent. Now, with electricity at 22.5 cents/kWh, we will likely save some number
79 greater than a nickel, which is significant. In this marketplace, people will feel the Community
80 Power impact. Although the market is terrible, it will be a relief for Keene residents when we
81 can implement this plan. Mr. Hayden has requested that Mayor Hansel send a letter to the
82 JLCAR to act expeditiously with the hope that this will be approved and the City can launch a
83 program by December.

84

85 Next Mr. Hayden discussed some of the market drivers other than natural gas. Other sources of
86 electricity, which were factors as recently as five years ago (like coal) have been pushed out of
87 the market. Coal usage has been dramatically reduced in New Hampshire, with only one or two
88 plants remaining and the state has also eliminated most of the nuclear fleet. Previously,
89 electricity was being made for 3 cents with natural gas that cost 2 cents (\$2 per dekatherm), it
90 was costing 4-5 cents to make electricity with coal, 7 cents to make it with biomass, and it was
91 taking 4.2 cents to make it with nuclear power – all those things would be great to have right
92 now as supplements (with the exception of coal). Without those options available, it
93 significantly limits our alternatives.

94

95 The broader market is transitioning to a new normal due to Russia's war in Ukraine. We are
96 likely to see a dependence on natural gas exported from the US to Europe. The market today
97 may be seen a year from now as not so bad. There is a push to move more and more fossil fuels
98 off the grid as much as possible. This means other sources of electricity need to be promoted,
99 such as solar, wind, etc. The cost of those generation sources are all now lower than brown
100 power, i.e. fuel made from oil, natural gas, propane, jet fuel, etc. This includes solar plus –
101 solar PV plus battery storage –that costs less than natural gas over 20 years.

102

103 Some of the future problems that could be seen with natural gas is related to storage. Natural
104 gas is stored in caverns. The big storage caverns are not being filled up like they normally have
105 been. The ability to pump out large quantities in the winter and summer (when we need it the
106 most) is diminishing. This causes more upward pressure on the pricing.

107

108 With respect to market pricing, it is very difficult to really predict where pricing is going other
109 than the general curve is pointing up. There are not many things that have downward pressure
110 on the price of electricity in New England or in the Country. There is a major effort to electrify
111 homes, both heating and cooling, and vehicles, which provides upward pressure. If there was
112 ever a time to build solar or the ability to charge the car from the excess energy from solar
113 panels, this is the time to do it. Mr. Hayden noted that for the first time, the federal government
114 even seems interested in supporting wind projects, which he has not seen in the last 10 years.

115 He noted that this gives a general picture of the market and how it is changing. There is an
116 opportunity to help be a part of the cure for the problems we've been discussing. He
117 encouraged people to think about solar on their home, or if it isn't possible on their home, think
118 about community solar for the neighborhood. These are all things that help avert this energy
119 catastrophe we're in.

120

121 Mr. Roth asked what the outlook is on distribution costs. Mr. Hayden responded that there are
122 two parts to that. He believes Eversource does a good job maintaining existing system, but the
123 system is antiquated. He does think costs will continue to go up for some time, but they have
124 been and will continue to be incremental. A national level program is needed to be able to fix
125 national level transmission lines across the country. It is time to connect the country correctly.
126 Chair Hansel asked about other questions. Vice Chair Zach Luse asked if Mr. Hayden had one
127 or two options he believed City of Keene should be trying to promote. Mr. Hayden pointed out
128 the easiest one to promote is solar. Anything we do fits under group net utility rules- the utility
129 has to become the default battery and will have to make up for that with storage on site. Solar
130 plus is cheaper than power made by natural gas.

131

132 Mr. Hayden added that with Mayor Hansel's direction, they looked at and talked about a couple
133 of bigger projects for community power. Another thing that they hope to get into place is an
134 early program to make sure that everybody who has solar has registered to get renewable
135 energy credits. The previous process was tedious and is now much easier and we want to
136 encourage those REC's to be part of the system.

137

138 With no other questions and concern, Chair Hansel thanked Mr. Hayden for his information
139 and time.

140 **4) Energy Plan work Group Report-outs**

141

142 **A) Weatherization**

143 Mr. Luse reported that the weatherization group did not meet this month.

144 **i) *Window Dressers***

145 Mr. Luse said the program is progressing nicely. They have received the certificate of insurance
146 for the build location at 310 Marlboro Street. Habitat for Humanity is helping recruit and
147 assisting with measuring, along with volunteers from Bensonwood. The group is currently
148 working on organizing their own training for measurers so they can start going out to measure
149 windows in homes. The next big thing is to find low-income prospects for the free inserts in
150 order to meet goal of 20-50% going to low income. The Clean Energy team was reaching out to
151 Southwestern Community Services to see if they could help promote the program to people on
152 fuel assistance. Mr. Luse and Mr. Pipp are planning to attend the Brattleboro build and the
153 organizer of that build plans to come and assist with this build.

154

155 Ms. Campbell asked what the dates of the build will be. Mr. Luse replied that the build is
156 scheduled for the end of October and beginning of November (Oct. 27- Nov. 3).

157

158 Chair Hansel asked whether this will be an annual event, and whether the ECC would take it
159 over in future years from the Window Dressers program. Mr. Luse said that is possible; the
160 group decided to go with Window Dressers this year, but some of the required trainings and
161 processes are onerous. They have spoken with other partners, such as 310 Marlboro Street, the
162 Rotary Club, and Habitat for Humanity. Once they get through this first build they are going to
163 assess and decide whether they even want to continue with the build model. They spoke to
164 Habitat for Humanity about possibly having an ongoing program where volunteers build the
165 inserts as the orders come in. This seems to make more sense rather than building up to one big
166 event; however, they want to wait until they get past this first event to make that assessment.

167

168 **B) Electric Vehicles**

169 Councilor Lake stated that this group had a planning session where they worked through a
170 couple of the things that they wish to tackle moving forward. The group is trying to compile a
171 list of when some organizations will be working on contracts for new vehicles, such as the
172 school district. They are also trying to see if they could get dealerships involved and possibly
173 collaborate on promotional events.

174

175 Mr. Luse said that, as part of the Keene Energy Week planning, the weatherization group had
176 talked about trying to get dealerships and possibly the Monadnock Sustainability Hub (MSH)
177 involved in doing another Drive Electric Event. Last year, MSH did a virtual event. He said he
178 would like to collaborate with the EV group on a possible Drive Electric event.

179

180 Chair Hansel asked if there was an update on the fast charging station at food co-op. No member
181 has any additional information. Chair Hansel thought their RFP was accepted, but was unclear on
182 what happens next. Ms. Brunner said that Mr. John Konndos from MSH has been working on
183 this as well as Mr. Michael Faber, General Manager of the Monadnock Food Co-op.

184

185 **C) Community Solar**

186 Mr. Jude Nuru reported a new law was passed roughly two weeks ago known as SB270. This is a
187 program targeted at low to moderate income (LMI) populations and how to increase community
188 solar programs. A main challenge for these programs is how to get LMI off-takers. Part of the
189 PUC 900 rules are incorporated in this bill. The electric utility providers will now be required to
190 provide a list of customers that would be eligible for these programs (LMI members on the
191 electric assistance program). This will alleviate the administrative burden for developers. This
192 will hopefully promote community power programs in NH.

193

194 Mr. Nuru continued, stating that the DOE has 90 days from the passage of the law to set up the
195 processes and invite developers to apply for a designation to develop a community power
196 program. By the end of October, this law should be fully implemented and programs can start to
197 be developed. The overall cap for this program is 6 MW. If there is higher demand, then the
198 developers who offer a higher on-bill credit will be selected. Mr. Luse said this will be the single
199 most most important policy that will actually drive LMI community solar power. This is where

200 the work group could work with Eversource and developers to bring these types of programs to
201 Keene.

202
203 Chair Hansel asked whether the list from Eversource will be a good resource for the Window
204 Dressers program. Mr. Luse said window dressers does not require certified low income. Chair
205 Hansel wondered if information around low to moderate income eligible families would be able
206 to be shared. Mr. Nuru said the new law will take effect in 90 days will require them to share that
207 information. Mr. Roth asked whether the program is federal or state funded. Mr. Nuru said this is
208 not a grant program, this is a program to help developers find LMI off-takers to enroll in their
209 programs. Chair Hansel added that, in NH, one of the few incentives offered is the 2.5 cent adder
210 for electricity sold to LMI customers. This makes the system more profitable, which incentivizes
211 programs for LMI customers.

212
213 Ms. Brunner said that previously, part of the benefit of the LMI community solar program was
214 the ability to do on bill crediting. She asked whether on-bill crediting is still only available for
215 LMI projects, or whether that will be opened up for other programs. Mr. Nuru said it is still
216 restricted to low to moderate income participants. Developers have been challenging it, but no
217 changes as of yet.

218
219 Chair Hansel said that the only thing to add to this report-out is that the group is still monitoring
220 possible sites for solar in Keene, including the site on Rose Lane, the site near Ashuelot River
221 Park, and the site at Monadnock View Cemetery. The latter would require zoning changes, but is
222 still a possibility.

223

224 **D) Renewable Energy Loans**

225 Chair Hansel reported that he and Ms. Beth Campbell met last week and tried to figure out a
226 direction. They have contacted the major financial institutions, including Mascoma Bank and the
227 Savings Bank of Walpole, and they been in touch with other possible sources of loan money for
228 renewable energy, including the Keene Downtown Housing Corporation and the Monadnock
229 Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). They are beginning discussions with the local
230 Rotary club and have found a lot of interest, but nothing has come together into a plan yet.

231

232 **E) Outreach and Education**

233 Mr. Luse reported that the group is currently working on a marketing plan. Ms. Diana Duffy is
234 working on a success story for Pinnacle Windows and St. Bernard's, and it sounds like that is
235 moving along.

236

237 **i) Keene Energy Week**

238 Mr. Luse stated that most of the focus for the group has been to getting the initial plan figured
239 out for Keene Energy Week, which is scheduled for October 16-22, 2022. This coincides with
240 the national energy awareness month. Parts of the week are similar to last year's event. There
241 will be the Clean Energy Team solar tour, tabling, the clean energy team will also do a button up
242 workshop that week. They talked to Pumpkin Festival organizers who would be open to them

243 tabling at Pumpkin Festival. A back up plan might be tabling at the Farmer’s market on
244 Saturday. Rather than a business-focused webinar, they chose to focus on the energy plan and
245 talk about what has been done /accomplishments and future work. This would include
246 community power, the energy audits, window dressers, home energy labeling, community solar,
247 etc. They are currently looking for other ideas and examples of accomplishments that could be
248 discussed and promoted. There is a chamber event- one of their regional issue series happening
249 at the Court House the following week on October 27. A couple other possible events include a
250 film showing – the Clean Energy Team is exploring this option, in addition they are hoping to
251 have an EV expo.

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253 Ms. Duffy asked if anyone had any contact with Father Allen at St. Bernard’s as they need
254 permission in order to share the success story. Mr. Nuru said the best method would be to reach
255 out to the church office.

256

257 Councilor Ormerod asked about the status of the outreach to dealerships. He has contacts with
258 some of the dealerships and could help out with this. Mr. Luse said that he is going to coordinate
259 with John Kondos. Councilor Ormerod said he would reach out to Mr. Kondos to coordinate.

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261 **5) Membership**

262 Chair Hansel said this is a good time to start recruiting new members so they can be approved
263 prior to the end of the year. Councilor Ormerod asked if someone named Sarah has expressed
264 interest. Ms. Brunner said that, for anyone interested in joining a committee, there is an interest
265 form for the City of Keene that then gets forwarded to the staff liaison and the board chair. From
266 there, it goes to Mayor Hansel for final approval. She said she hasn’t seen anything from
267 someone named Sarah, so she would recommend that that person fills out the interest form.

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269 Chair Hansel asked members to think if they know of anyone who might be interested and
270 promote membership, if possible. Chair Hansel asked Ms. Brunner how many slots will be open.
271 Ms. Brunner said that Chair Hansel’s second term will expire at the end of this year, one other
272 spot and two alternate spots will be open. This creates four possible openings. Chair Hansel
273 asked Clair Oursler if he would be interested in moving up to a regular member; Mr. Oursler
274 responded in the affirmative. Councilor Ormerod asked if Mr. Oursler has to fill out the form in
275 order to move from an alternate to a regular member position. Ms. Brunner said he does not.

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277 **6) Legislative Updates**

278 Other than the previously mentioned SB270, Chair Hansel asked if there were any additional
279 legislative updates. Mr. Nuru mentioned the federal Inflation Reduction Act. He said this is a
280 game-changer – it is being described as the largest investment in climate change response ever.
281 This will increase and extend the solar income tax credit (ITC) for 10 years, it will also be
282 available for municipalities and nonprofits, which have never been eligible before. There were
283 no other updates.

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285 Mr. Oursler and Mr. Nuru left the meeting. Chair Hansel confirmed a quorum was still present.

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7) **Upcoming Dates of Interest:**

- A) **Window Dressers Community Build- October 27-November 3, 2022**
- B) **Keene Energy Week- October 16-22, 2022**

Chair Hansel reviewed the upcoming dates of interest, and added that there will be a Chamber Regional Issues Series event on Clean Energy on October 27 at 8:00 am at the Cheshire County Delegation Room. Mr. Luse said that attendees will get to tour his business, Paragon Digital Marketing, which is next door.

8) **New Business**

Chair Hansel asked whether there are any items to add to a future agenda. Ms. Brunner asked the group whether they would like an update on the 21 in 21 Program. There was general agreement that this should be added to a future agenda. There were no other items of new business.

9) **Next Meeting:**

Chair Hansel stated that the next meeting is September 7, 2022 at 8 am.

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Hansel adjourned the meeting at 9:06 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner