

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 4, 2022

8:00 AM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Linsey Edmunds

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Hansel called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM and conducted roll call.

2) Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Hansel announced that he will be cycling off as a member. Mr. Zach Luse has put forward his name for chair and Mr. Paul Roth as vice chair. Chair Hansel asked for any other nominations or comments from committee. Mr. Jude Nuru arrived at 8:03 AM. With no comments, Chair Hansel asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Jake Pipp moved to approve the motion for Mr. Luse as Chair and Mr. Roth as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Councilor Raleigh Ormerod and approved by unanimous roll call approval. Chair Hansel passed the role of Chair to Mr. Luse.

3) **Approval of Minutes from December 7, 2022**

Chair Luse asked for any discussions on the minutes from the December 7th meeting. With no comments or corrections, Councilor Lake moved to approve the minutes of the prior meeting with a second from Mr. Pipp. The motion passed by unanimous roll call approval.

4) **Introduction of New Members**

Chair Luse suggested all members introduce themselves, and started with himself:

- Zach Luse runs Paragon Digital Marketing and has been on the committee for over three years.
- Peter Hansel, retired from Filtrine Manufacturing Company, has been on the committee for six years and very much involved in environmental issues for a long time.
- Bryan Lake, city councilor for Ward three. Lived in Keene his whole life and works at CNS.
- Jude Nuru, originally from Ghana. Attended Antioch and continued to work here for Revision Energy.
- Jake Pipp, has been on committee for five to six years. Works in energy efficiency consulting.
- Paul Roth, facilities maintenance director at Cheshire Medical Center. Been on committee for three years and has a strong interest in this committee and affordable housing.
- Lisa Maxfield, new to the committee. Works for an energy auditing company in Brattleboro and has lived in Keene since a month before Covid hit.
- Clair Oursler, retired Scientist. Been on the committee for two years.
- Ken Swymer, Recently moved back to Keene and works remotely for a commercial insurance and underwriting company on the West Coast.
- Raleigh Ormerod, Keene City Councilor official representative and has been on committee for two years.
- Beth Campbell, works at Unity Homes (subsidiary of Bensonwood Homes). Been on the committee for about a year.
- Diana Duffy, lived in Keene for twelve years and worked at Keene State College in energy efficiency.

5) **Energy Plan Workgroup Report-Outs**

A. **Weatherization**

Chair Luse reported that there was no meeting this month nor last month. The Clean Energy Team had to cancel their Button Up workshop last month. They have tentative dates of January 25th (still trying to reserve the Rec Center) with a backup weather date of January 31st. Since it is being rescheduled, Ms. Mari Brunner did not believe any action was needed regarding the sponsorship of the event by the committee.

B. Electric Vehicles

Mr. Lake reported the electric vehicle work group did not meet this month due to Holidays and scheduling conflicts.

C. Community Solar

Mr. Nuru reported no meeting last month. He is looking forward to more movement this coming year. Mr. Nuru asked if Mr. Hansel had anything to add. Mr. Hansel noted he was not able to attend.

D. Renewable Energy Loans

Mr. Hansel reported that he and Beth were the original members of the committee, and while they have not achieved a lot, they have had numerous positive discussions with others in the region regarding renewable energy loans and look forward to continuing those discussions and the potential for re-energizing the committee this next year.

Chair Luse added that he has been talking with Kendra Carter at Savings Bank of Walpole and hopes to get her on the work group or Committee. Ms. Campbell added that she hopes to have more time this next year to devote to the committee. She asked if Peter Hansel would be leaving the Committee. Mr. Hansel replied that he would; however, he would continue to participate on the work group.

E. Outreach and Education

Mr. Clair Oursler reported that he attended the Keene Energy Week and expressed interest in reaching out to get more students involved.

6) Monadnock Earth Festival – Invitation to Sponsor

The Monadnock Earth Festival is to be put on by the Monadnock Food Co-op. Chair Luse noted that they want to reserve the sign by the post office, but have to be a non-profit organization in order to do so. As such, they are requesting this committee to submit on their behalf and this committee would be listed as a co-sponsor. The motion to approve was made by Mr. Roth with a second from Mr. Ormerod. The motion passed by unanimous roll call approval.

7) Introduction of Monadnock Energy Circuit Rider – John Kondos

John Kondos, Monadnock Energy Circuit Rider, addressed the Committee and said that he is an energy efficiency and solar specialist. The energy circuit rider program started in the North Country, where many communities were just getting started. His role is more robust as he

serves in an area with numerous energy committees. He is here to help in any way he can, but his role would be more additive. He is interested in results and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, starting with measuring energy use (benchmarking) and doing weatherization and energy efficiency. He help fill gaps where additional help is needed, he could also help with funding. He noted this committee is successful and efforts are much more robust than in some regions. Some towns do not have any sort of energy committee.

Chair Luse asked if there are any comments or questions from the Committee. Mr. Hansel thanked John for attending and referred to his work over the years on solar and energy efficiency. He likes what Mr. Kondos said about being addition, and noted that some areas where the committee could use help include monitoring how well they are doing / measuring progress.

Chair Luse said that there is another guest here today. Ms. Brunner said that Nora Hanke from the Monadnock Sustainability Hub is here today to observe the meeting, but she could introduce herself if the Committee would like. Chair Luse invited Ms. Hanke to address the Committee.

Ms. Hanke introduced herself, and stated that the Monadnock Sustainability Hub is partnering with Clean Energy NH on the circuit rider position. The Hub has been in place for several years and they like to help people get on the path with projects that will reduce greenhouse gasses and climate change. Their goal is to serve as a catalyst for climate solutions and like to help towns and groups that want to learn about those solutions and how to implement change. She and John Kondos are hoping to be complementary to each other, their respective work and throughout the region.

Mr. Hansel added one way he thought the groups could help each other is through outreach and education. The Monadnock Sustainability Hub often writes articles and pieces and could help the committee spread word on projects/events and education. The Committee could potentially help write articles for the Shopper News, for example.

8) Committee Memberships and Budget Discussion

Ms. Brunner stated that the Committee gets \$850 per year with \$250 of that set aside for Clean Energy NH membership and the remaining was previously spent on ICLEI Membership. ICLEI recently increased their membership cost, resulting in \$600 left to use. It is too late to join the National Membership. The money can be used for anything that falls within the purview of the charter. Ms. Brunner said she would send out the charter for member review. There are certain things that would need council approval. If the money is not used, it would go back to the general fund.

Chair Luse asked if it was too late for next year's budget. Ms. Brunner clarified that budget approval happens in April/May, but that there can be late additions. She noted the budget cycle runs July 1 to June 30.

Mr. Pipp asked if any expenses came out. Ms. Brunner noted that there was a cleaning fee that came out of last year's roundtable event. She did not believe that there were any expenses from this year that have come out of the budget (the \$45 approved for Ms. Jones at the last meeting has not yet been paid out).

Mr. Hansel asked with the community power program starting in the spring whether Ms. Brunner expected any expenses for that. Ms. Brunner did not anticipate any additional expenses as the committee.

Chair Luse asked what is included as part of the membership to ICLEI. Ms. Brunner said the lowest membership rate is \$1200, which is double what the committee was previously spending. Membership includes access to the Clear Path Software for greenhouse gas inventories. Fee to use the software is equivalent to the membership. Additionally, it includes access to online resources and online community.

Ms. Brunner mentioned the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN). They have regional networks with Keene being a founding member of the New England regional network. The regional networks do not have any dues or membership costs (USDN has a sliding scale, so she doesn't know what the cost would be for Keene to join).

Mr. Pipp asked about the New England Municipal Sustainability Network. Seems like it could be a good option, but the website has not been updated in a while. Membership list had not been updated and did have Keene listed on it. Ms. Brunner clarified that the network is the regional network she mentioned earlier. There are no membership dues so it is a low budget network, and while she thought it was effective, she noted it was really geared more towards staff than this committee.

Mr. Hansel asked about NEEP (Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership) as a potential opportunity. Chair Luse said they provide the software for the home energy labeling and last he knew, their Vermont Membership was around \$17,000.

Mr. Roth asked John Kondos if he had any suggestions. John suggested putting the money towards outreach and education and local efforts.

Chair Luse asked for any other thoughts on associations or groups. The next part of the discussion will be what the group wants to budget for with regards to next year.

Ms. Brunner mentioned that she was in the City's Mail Chimp account recently and checked on the status of the Energy and Sustainability email list, which was created during the energy plan process. She believed there was over 100 people on the e-mail list for outreach purposes.

Chair Luse asked the groups thoughts on using the money for outreach. Mr. Pipp seconded the suggestion.

Mike Metell asked if there was any way to join or work with the State to join NEEP. Without them, we cannot get the program needed for home energy labelling. Councilor Ormerod asked if there was potential to join the Vermont Program for a small fee to get access to NEEP resources. Mike Metell was interested and wanted to discuss further and Chair Luse suggested asking NEEP if that was a possibility and what it would cost. Mr. Metell responded that essentially he did and was told that it is a “state thing”. Councilor Ormerod stated he would be willing to go back and ask again as he believes there might be some room for negotiation and education of what Keene has to offer.

Councilor Lake returned to the budget discussion and asked if the committee was planning to run Keene Energy week themselves and whether there was any funding. Mr. Luse did not believe so as it is simply too much for volunteers to be able to support. Mr. Hansel asked if funding was required. Mr. Luse responded that funding was previously provided by donations, but that a fund for incidentals might be useful.

Mr. Hansel stated he would support going back to the City and requesting at least keeping the budget level. Mr. Luse seconded that suggestion.

9) Planning for Annual Retreat

Currently trying to pin point a date in mid- April. Ms. Brunner is to send out a doodle poll before the next meeting.

10) Community Power Update

Ms. Brunner noted that there is no significant update. A few communities in the region have received PUC approval, namely Walpole and Peterborough. More towns are working towards approval. She hopes to have more news next month. The City is still waiting on data from Eversource. The launch cannot happen until April at the earliest, and the data is needed in order to be able to go to bid.

11) New Business

12) Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 8:00 AM

13) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Luse adjourned the meeting at 8:46 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner