



ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE (ECC)

AGENDA

Wednesday, June 28, 2023, 8:00
AM

City Hall, Second Floor Council Chambers

Members:

Zach Luse, Chair
Paul Roth, Vice Chair
Diana Duffy
Jake Pipp
Councilor Raleigh Ormerod
Jude Nuru
Peter Hansel
Clair Oursler
Kenneth Swymer

Councilor Bryan Lake
Beth Campbell
Lisa Maxfield, Alternate
Chuck Redfern, Alternate
Rowland Russell, Alternate

Staff:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes – June 7, 2023
3. Guest Speaker on Peterborough pilot program with BlocPower – Dori Drachman, Peterborough Renewable Energy Project
4. ECC Work Group Report Outs
 - a. Community Solar
 - b. Grants, Fundraising, and Partnerships
 - c. Education and Outreach
 - d. Legislative Tracking
 - e. Food Security
5. Downtown Infrastructure Project
6. Community Power Program update
7. Committee Membership
8. New Business
9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 2, 2023 – 8:00 am
10. Adjourn

Link to ECC Google Drive Folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1O1WIR0fADTNijRt13v3DU7k2FxxXDcGs?usp=sharing>

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

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
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Kenneth Swymer, Alternate
Rowland Russell, Alternate

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

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

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

11
12 Chair Zach Luse called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM. Ms. Mari Brunner noted there were
13 some open spots available for Mr. Charles Redfern and Dr. Rowland Russell to be invited to
14 participate as voting members. Chair Luse agreed and invited them to participate in the meeting
15 as voting members.

16
17 **2) Approval of Minutes- May 3, 2023**

18
19 Chair Luse asked for any discussion and revisions. With no revisions, Mr. Peter Hansel made a
20 motion to approve the minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

21
22 **3) ECC Work Groups**

23 **A) Proposed work group assignments/membership**

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

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

28
29 Grants and fundraising will be led by Mr. Redfern with Ms. Beth Campbell and Mr. Ken
30 Swymer as members.

31
32 Legislative Tracking is led by Councilor Bryan Lake and made up of Mr. Jake Pipp, Councilor
33 Raleigh Ormerod and Mr. Mike Metell.

34
35 Community Solar is led by Mr. Jude Nuru and has Mr. Peter Hansel, Ms. Diana Duffy, Mr.
36 Bruce Norlund, Mr. John Kondos and Mr. Scott Maslansky as members.

37
38 Lastly, Food Security is led by Dr. Rowland Russell with a roster of non-committee members.

39
40 With no questions on assignments, next steps were to identify a meeting time and making sure to
41 have groups meet at least monthly. Chair Luse suggested groups meet, discuss, and identify
42 goals and focuses for the year and then report back to the full committee with that information.
43 Ms. Brunner included an example in the packet for groups to use in creating their own goals.

44
45 **B) Format for monthly report-outs**

46
47 Chair Luse explained the format for the new monthly report. Report-outs will be done via a
48 google form and is simple. It will include what your work group was, date of last meeting,
49 monthly update/recap of what was discussed with a separate field for anything that needs to
50 come to the larger committee for discussion or action.

51
52 He explained the latter piece is important in that it will be included in the agenda packet for the
53 larger committee and allows members to review and know ahead of time what was discussed
54 allowing for a more focused discussion in the meeting.

55
56 Ms. Brunner provided an overview of what work groups can and can not do. She will try to send
57 out reminders to the lead of each group with a timeline. Ideally, the report will be included in the
58 packet. To get it in to the packet, they need to be submitted the Monday before the week of the
59 meeting (typically the last Monday of the month). She will create a word document version for
60 people who prefer that format.

61
62 She reminded that these are informal research groups. They are not an official public body and
63 are not a formally formed subcommittee. There are limitations in what they can do such as they
64 cannot have a quorum of the committee. There can be up to five members. Groups can not take
65 any action without getting permission from the larger committee. Non-committee members can
66 participate in these groups, but they are not public meetings. They are not going to be supported
67 by staff to take minutes nor will agendas be posted. While non-committee members can
68 participate, they must be confirmed by the full committee first.

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

74

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

79

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

83

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

86

87 **C) Next steps**

88

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

92

93 **4) Community Power Program**

94

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

99

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

108

109 **5) Legislative Update**

110 **A) 2021 Energy Code**

111

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

117
118 Ms. Brunner spoke to Med Kopczynski, who shared that the City of Keene could adopt the 2021
119 codes on its own and that may be something this committee may want to investigate and make a
120 recommendation to city council. He has heard rumors that there may an attempt to take that
121 ability away in the next legislative session. If the city wants to take advantage of that, it will
122 need to happen before the next legislative session. By staying on the 2018 code, the city could
123 potentially get penalized for insurance rates.

124
125 Chair Luse shared that being on an older building code could also disqualify the city for many
126 grants.

127
128 Ms. Campbell asked if it would be possible to get a list of the municipalities in New Hampshire
129 that have adopted the state building codes. Ms. Brunner offered to try and get one.

130
131 Chair Luse suggested this topic as one for the legislative workgroup to investigate and make a
132 recommendation to the committee. Personally, he feels it is a bad move for energy efficiency and
133 sets the community back. Ms. Campbell offered to be a resource to the legislative group. Having
134 worked in the construction industry and having been very involved in code, she could be of
135 benefit.

136
137 Mr. Hansel shared that they have been tracking the number of solar arrays. Most recent data is
138 2021 and at that time there were 133 residential installations (for a total of 939 kilowatts), 35
139 commercial and industrial (for a total of 2,973 kilowatts). 2022 was big year and he expects them
140 to jump quite a bit.

141
142 Ms. Brunner shared she did get an e-mail with the numbers for community power. They did say
143 the final numbers will be shared later this week. So far, 142 chose to go with the basic option
144 with 23% renewable energy. There were 8,878 that chose the default option. There were 25
145 opted up to 50% and 145 opted up to the 100%. Total is 9190 customers and will include both
146 residential and commercial.

147
148 **6) Committee Membership**

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

152
153
154

155 **7) New Business**

156

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

161

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

164

165 **8) Upcoming Dates of Interest:**

166 **A) Jeff Speck Presentation: Monday, June 12, 2023, Heberton Hall**

167 **B) SWRPC Annual Meeting: Tuesday, June 13, 2023**

168 **C) Building A Clean Energy Future virtual workshop: Thursday, June 15, 2023,**
169 **6:00pm**

170 **D) Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 5, 2023- 8:00 am- To be Confirmed.**

171 Chair Luse and Ms. Duffy will not be present for July 5. As such, the meeting will be shifted to
172 June 28th at 8:00 am.

173

174 **9) Adjourn**

175

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

177

178 Respectfully submitted by,
179 Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

180

181 Reviewed and edited by,
182 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

BlocPower Project Summary
Peterborough, NH Pilot Project
May 9, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Brief Summary

This document describes the partnership between the company BlocPower and the Town of Peterborough, NH to replace fossil fuel heating in 10 to 15 buildings in the town between early 2023 and June 30, 2024.

About BlocPower

[BlocPower](#) is a company founded in Brooklyn, NY in 2014 to tackle the challenge of electrifying buildings in order to reduce their use of fossil fuel, especially for heating and cooling. Since then, they have worked in cities and towns across the country to decarbonize thousands of buildings. BlocPower uses their proprietary software, called BlocMaps to prioritize work on buildings where the impact on fossil fuel consumption will be greatest. They also have a corporate goal, reflected in BlocMaps' assessment, of prioritizing buildings whose owners or tenants have low to moderate income.

BlocPower has attracted financial support from a number of entities, including Goldman Sachs and Microsoft's Climate Innovation Fund. In turn, they can provide financing for building owners who undertake the retrofitting of their buildings. BlocPower's customary arrangement is a lease of up to 15 years with no upfront payment and no lien placed on the building. During the period of the lease, BlocPower maintains the equipment that has been installed. At the end of the lease, the building owner can purchase an installed heat pump, for example, for \$1.

BlocPower provides marketing, project management, and financial services, but the actual work on a building is done by local contractors who have been vetted by BlocPower and have agreed to follow BlocPower's design parameters and submit to BlocPower's post-installation quality assurance program.

While BlocPower's initial work was on individual apartment buildings in Brooklyn, they now typically work by forming partnerships with municipalities to work on all or some of the buildings there. Perhaps their most ambitious such partnership is with [Ithaca, NY](#), whose goal is to decarbonize all buildings in the city by 2030. More recently, BlocPower and Cambridge, MA announced a [plan](#) over the next year to electrify buildings in the city with at least five units. Their goal is to retrofit 5 to 10 buildings, amounting to about 100 total units.

Peterborough's Pilot Project

In 2021, voters of the Town of Peterborough overwhelmingly adopted the goal of relying entirely on renewable energy by 2050. The Peterborough Renewable Energy Planning (PREP) Team was formed after the vote and created a plan to achieve that goal. The plan was approved by the Town's Select Board in December, 2022, and PREP came to mean the Peterborough Renewable Energy Project.

BlocPower came to the attention of the PREP Team early in 2022 and they began to research the company, including talking with officials in Ithaca about BlocPower's work there. Discussions with BlocPower staff culminated in the approval in February, 2023 of an agreement with BlocPower to electrify 10 to 15 buildings in Peterborough by the end of the Town's next fiscal year, June 30, 2024, under a pilot project that might be expanded in the future if all parties are willing. While much of the local support for the pilot project is provided by PREP, it was important to BlocPower to have an official endorsement of the project and clear support for building electrification by the Town government.

The pilot project kicked off on May 9, 2023, with a press release and distribution of flyers at the Town's polling place, since the local election happened to take place that same day. In preparation for the kickoff, the following actions were among those taken:

- A representative of BlocPower came to Peterborough to tour the Town and meet with Town officials, PREP Team members, and local contractors.
- PREP contacted contractors who conduct energy audits, do weatherization or electrical work, or install heat pumps to let them know of the project and encourage them to work with BlocPower.
- BlocPower conducted an additional meeting with interested contractors and [recorded](#) it for the benefit of those contractors unable to attend the meeting live.
- BlocPower prepared a flyer about their services for distribution in town by PREP volunteers.
- BlocPower created a Peterborough [webpage](#) on their site where building owners can indicate their interest in BlocPower's services and provide basic information about their buildings and their goals for work on the buildings.

Since the kickoff, outreach to additional contractors has continued and PREP has promoted the project on its website, via social media posts, and through electronic mailings to personal contacts in town. Articles about the project have appeared in the Concord Monitor, the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript, the Keene Sentinel, and the NH Business Review. As of June 13, 12 building owners have contacted BlocPower, 3 site visits have occurred, and 1 lease agreement is out for the building owner's signature.

The heart of the work on each building in the project will be replacement of a fossil-fuel boiler or furnace with an air source heat pump. In aid of that, the type and capacity of the building's electrical system will be upgraded if necessary and its weatherization will be evaluated and improved as needed. Building owners may also include other energy efficiency and electrification actions in their projects, such as installation of LED lighting, electrification of appliances or their replacement by more efficient models, installation of solar panels, and electrification of water heaters.

BlocPower works in all types of buildings. The goal for the pilot project is to work in a cross section of Peterborough's building stock, including single family homes, multi unit apartments, small and large businesses, and municipal buildings.

Preliminary assessments

The PREP Team was particularly interested in BlocPower because they offered expertise and financing for a significant component of the town's conversion to renewable energy. Getting an early start on replacing fossil-fuel boilers and furnaces was crucial because the most opportune time for replacement is when those devices are nearing end of life, an event that might occur only once for each boiler or furnace in the 27 years until our goal year of 2050.

BlocPower's interest in Peterborough stemmed from their desire to expand their work to more of the country and in particular to test their model for electrification in a rural community and in an environment (i.e., the State of New Hampshire) that does not offer the same robust encouragement and financial incentives for renewable energy initiatives that BlocPower has enjoyed in states like New York and California, where much of BlocPower's work to date has occurred.

Assessment of the success of the pilot project at this very early stage must be tentative. BlocPower and PREP have cooperated well on setting up and marketing the project and have been satisfied with the response so far. But no work has yet begun on any building. We will need to hear from contractors and building owners some time after work on buildings has finished to judge the worth of the effort put into the pilot project.



ECC Work Group Monthly report-out form

INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill out this form no later than the Monday of the week before the ECC meeting and email to Mari at mbrunner@keenenh.gov. If you have any supporting materials to share with the ECC (e.g. completed grant application, letter to the editor draft, articles/reports to share, etc.), please attach them to the email.

1. Name of Work Group: Community Solar
2. Date(s) that the work group met this month: 06/14/2023
3. Recommendation(s)
(List any requested actions here. If no action is needed, you can put "informational")

We recommend that the city expedites action on getting an LOI signed to start development of at least one community solar for LMI rate payers in 2023.

4. Monthly Update
(describe any topics the work group discussed, any activities/actions that were taken, guest speakers you heard from, research conducted, etc. here)

Group Activities: We reviewed the description of Group's activities:
This group will work with city staff to identify potential sites for photo-voltaic, community solar installations and, as appropriate, share information about these potential sites with renewable energy companies, other relevant organizations, and potential participants in community solar installations.

In addition, this group may share information about solar power generation with residents and businesses in Keene (e.g. state, local, and federal incentives, "how-to" guide, etc.). Finally, this group may research and recommend to the full committee ways to incentivize or decrease barriers to installing solar power projects locally.

Action Items: We then discussed the following action items:
Goals: We set four (4) goals to be accomplished in 2023 as follows:

1. Keep track of solar project development in the city.
2. Identify one or more viable sites for community development.
3. Organize a commercial solar tour to showcase existing commercial P.V project sites in the area, while targeting businesses with viable roofs or available land for future participation.

Goals: Looking beyond 2023, we hope to:
2. Mobilize potential investors to pool resources to secure future project sites for community solar projects.



4. Monthly Update (Continued)

Action Items: We then discussed the following action items:

1. Contact Eversource to get updated data on existing solar projects in the city (Diana to contact Paul Hausman)
2. Contact business owner (s) (e.g. Legere Emil) with the hope of leasing their land/roof for community solar for low-income populations (Peter to contact Emile Legere and others).
3. Use Google Maps to identify properties in the city that have roof potential for solar (Jude/All)



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1. Name of Work Group: Education and Outreach
2. Date(s) that the work group met this month: 6/26/23
3. Recommendation(s)
(List any requested actions here. If no action is needed, you can put "informational")

Informational
4. Monthly Update
(describe any topics the work group discussed, any activities/actions that were taken, guest speakers you heard from, research conducted, etc. here)

We are scheduled to meet on Monday, June 26.



ECC Work Group Monthly report-out form

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1. Name of Work Group: Food Security
2. Date(s) that the work group met this month: We have not met yet.
3. Recommendation(s)
(List any requested actions here. If no action is needed, you can put "informational")

informational
4. Monthly Update
(describe any topics the work group discussed, any activities/actions that were taken, guest speakers you heard from, research conducted, etc. here)

I have been in contact with seven of the eight community members who are expected to comprise the coordinating group for the Food Security work group. Once the last individual is brought in, I will poll the group to set up our initial meeting time.



ECC Work Group Monthly report-out form

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1. Name of Work Group: Legislative Tracking
2. Date(s) that the work group met this month: Have not met, will meet in July
3. Recommendation(s)
(List any requested actions here. If no action is needed, you can put "informational")

N/A

4. Monthly Update
(describe any topics the work group discussed, any activities/actions that were taken, guest speakers you heard from, research conducted, etc. here)

N/A