



July 1, 2025

Keene City Council  
3 Washington St  
Keene, NH 03431

**RE: Annual Report to the Mayor & Keene City Council from the Energy & Climate Committee (ECC)**

Dear Mayor Kahn & Members of the Keene City Council,

I am pleased to provide this annual update on the activities and accomplishments of the Energy & Climate Committee (ECC). Over the past year, the committee has worked diligently to advance sustainability efforts, engage with local experts, and immerse ourselves in our local community.

This year, the committee welcomed three new regular members: Dr. Steven Larmon who served as an oncologist and Director of Cheshire Medical Center's Kingsbury Cancer Center for a number of years; Mr. Timothy Murphy, the long-time Executive Director Southwest Region Planning Commission; and Mrs. Maureen Nebenzahl, who is a veteran in the field of real estate project management. Their perspectives and contributions have already enriched our discussions and initiatives.

Additionally, we hosted several guest speakers who offered insights into key environmental and energy-related topics. Dr. Nora Traviss, Senior Scientist at NESCAUM (North East States for Coordinated Air Use Management) & Professor Emeritus at Keene State College, presented on fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and air quality, while Kürt Blomquist, Keene's Emergency Management Director, and Michael Hagan, Plans Examiner & Floodplain Manager, provided a comprehensive overview of the proposed updates to Keene's Hazard Mitigation Plan as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) updates.

The committee remained actively engaged in state energy policy discussions, responding to two requests for comments from the New Hampshire Department of Energy—one regarding a potential political subdivision grant program and another focused on the existing Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) program.

To accommodate the schedules of both existing and future potential members more effectively, we adjusted our meeting time from 8:00 AM on the first Wednesday of each month to 4:30 PM on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

March saw the City Council adopt amendments to the Community Power Plan, increasing the renewable energy percentage in the Keene Basic Plan from 23% to 25%, the Keene Local Green Plan from 33% to 35%, and designating the Keene 50% Local Green option as the new default enrollment option. Keene residents can continue to opt in or out of the program and adjust their selected option without penalty.

In April, the committee participated in Earth Fest, sharing display space with the Community Development Department and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee. Despite the rain, the event was a great success. As part of our outreach efforts, we utilized our fiscal year 2024-2025

budget to purchase a banner and tablecloth featuring ECC branding to enhance visibility at future community events.

On May 12th, we held our annual retreat, where we discussed potential adjustments to our work groups. Topics currently covered by the work groups include community solar; grants, fundraising, and partnerships; education and outreach; legislative tracking; and food security. During the retreat, committee members explored narrowing these existing groups down to three more broad categories: resilience, policy, and outreach. The structure and membership of these groups will be further refined in the coming months.

We are excited about the road ahead and remain committed to advancing sustainability and climate resilience in our community. Thank you for your continued support of the Energy & Climate Committee's work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth Swymer Jr.', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Kenneth Swymer Jr.  
Chair, Keene Energy & Climate Committee