



ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE (ECC)

AGENDA

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

4:30 PM

City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Approval of Minutes** – May 27, 2026
3. **Invasive Species Removals** – Bob Milliken, Keene Conservation Commission Member
4. **Annual Report to City Council**
5. **Community Power** – Program Updates & Content Ideas for Mailer
6. **Work Groups** – Organization, Leaders, & Membership
 - a. Policy (*Meets as needed*)
 - b. Resilience
 - c. Outreach
7. **Task Groups**
 - a. Communication Plan
 - b. Benchmarking Dashboard
8. **Staff Updates**
9. **New Business**
10. **Next Meeting:** July 22, 2026 at 4:30 pm

Link to ECC Google Drive Folder:

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

**City of Keene
New Hampshire**

ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

4:30 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Gordon Leverage, Chair
Maureen Nebenzahl, Vice Chair
Councilor Bryan Lake
Paul Roth
Timothy Murphy
Lisa Maxfield
Jake Pipp, Alternate (Voting)
Charles Redfern, Alternate (Voting)
Catherine Koning, Alternate (Voting)
Matthew Boulton, Alternate (Voting)
Rowland Russell, Alternate (Voting)

Staff Present:

Megan Fortson, Planner
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner (left early)

Members Not Present:

Annu Joshi Bargale
Steve Larmon
Clair Oursler

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Leverage called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

City Councilor Ed Haas and Keene resident, Diana Duffy, introduced themselves as guests.

2. Approval of Minutes – March 25, 2026 & April 21, 2026

A motion by Dr. Koning to adopt the March 25, 2026 meeting minutes was duly seconded by Mr. Roth and the motion carried unanimously. A motion by Mr. Murphy to adopt the April 21, 2026 meeting minutes was duly seconded by Mr. Redfern and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Bicycle Pedestrian Plan Update – Focus Group Activity

Ms. Brunner arrived at 4:35 PM, provided handouts, and displayed maps on boards in the room. Members of the City’s Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC), Councilor Haas and Ms. Duffy, were also present as guests. Ms. Brunner explained that at this time, the City was in the process of updating its Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan. The City was one of the early

28 adopters of a Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan in 1999; Dr. Russell noted there was actually a 1994
29 document that Jim Gruber laid the groundwork for and Dr. Russell would send it to Ms. Brunner.
30 The City’s Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan had not been updated since 1999. Ms. Brunner thought
31 the 1999 Plan had been used very effectively by both the BPPAC and partner organizations.
32 However, she said things had changed and so the City was undertaking a process of updating the
33 Plan. As a part of that, there would be a series of input sessions and the BPPAC was looking for
34 interested organizations and groups for a series of focus groups. Also, starting in late June and
35 early July would be a series of bike and walk audits funded through an AARP grant; a commitment
36 of three to five of each. Ms. Brunner was looking for ideal places and willing groups to help carry
37 out those audits. Some will be advertised to the general public so specific groups could be related
38 to them.

39
40 Councilor Haas asked what a bike/walk audit comprises. Ms. Brunner replied that they are based
41 on predetermined routes that are walked or biked. You can walk as a group with a map and follow
42 a checklist of items that you score on that route, or you can bike and follow predetermined stops
43 along the route and make notes. The idea is to have a diversity of people participating in the group.
44 This grant would allow for purchasing a foldable wheelchair, so even if there is not somebody
45 participating in the group who uses a mobility device, the group can be sure to consider those
46 needs. Feedback from the audits can help identify specific things that could be improved along
47 those routes. They can also be used to identify observed driver behavior of note that can help
48 inform strategies in the plan as well.

49
50 Chair Leverage asked if the audits are about access to things/places in the City, because he did not
51 see recreation represented; is that a separate conversation? Ms. Brunner thinks they include all of
52 the above: biking and walkability of Keene, and bike routes as a method of transportation, but also
53 a draw for tourism and a recreational asset. It has a big impact on our economy. The City worked
54 with a team of students from University of New Hampshire (UNH) a few years prior, who looked
55 at the economic impact of Keene’s rail trails on the downtown and recommended ways to improve
56 that through wayfinding and more. Dr. Russell said there were two separate studies actually, one
57 with Keene’s downtown trails in 2022 and then in 2023/2024, a separate study again with UNH
58 on mountain biking and economic benefits. Ms. Brunner was unaware of the mountain bike one
59 and Dr. Russell would send it to her; Drummer Hill and some other locations around Keene with
60 mountain bike trails draw people into the community and they often stop at a local store or stay
61 for a weekend, etc. Dr. Russell said the 2022 study produced a great locator map of trails in New
62 Hampshire with sponsoring businesses along the trails. Vice Chair Nebenzahl is a part of a
63 Thursday walking group, the Cheshire Walkers of approximately 20 people, who she said would
64 definitely use a map with businesses listed like that.

65
66 Ms. Brunner began explaining that she wanted the ECC and members of the public present to
67 participate as a focus group in an activity. She provided a handout with instructions. She asked
68 everyone to interact with the maps around the room using dot stickers to identify dangerous areas
69 in red, areas for improvement in yellow, and good areas in green. Participants could also use
70 markers to draw on routes they walk/bike. They could use sticky notes to make comments, such
71 as, “drivers run lights here.” She commented on how sticky notes were used well by the High
72 School focus group. This portion of the activity would be 10 minutes, and the group would

73 reconvene to discuss the areas that could use the most improvement. Then, everyone would get
74 one sticker and be asked to vote for their top location to narrow down the higher priorities.

75
76 Councilor Haas saw dots on one of the maps and asked if this exercise was expanding out of the
77 Roadway Safety Action Plan and places identified therein that are hazardous to walk and ride;
78 would this task be overlaying on that? Ms. Brunner said no, those were just landmark markers that
79 the Councilor was seeing on the map. At this time, there was a public survey running for this
80 project and they very intentionally tried not to make the questions duplicative of the Roadway
81 Safety Action Plan survey but rather to build upon them. She said the real value of these activities
82 is narrowing in on where the priorities are. She thought this effort could help develop strategies
83 for the ideas from the Roadway Safety Action Plan and strategies for what to work on next (e.g.,
84 programming, policies that the City could implement, education campaigns).

85
86 Mr. Redfern asked permission to take photos of the activity for the Pathways for Keene website
87 about planning. Ms. Maxfield asked not to be in photos.

88
89 Mr. Boulton said this way of thinking seemed focused on things to improve, which is excellent.
90 Another way of thinking about it could be about the assets or things to enhance to draw people
91 toward the resources as another way of thinking that surfaces opportunities.

92
93 Keene Citizen Tom Duston asked if cemeteries would be appropriate for walking and cycling and
94 Vice Chair Nebenzahl said yes, her walking group uses them.

95
96 The focus group breakout lasted approximately 10 minutes from 4:50 PM–5:00 PM and members
97 of the public participated.

98
99 The group reconvened and Ms. Brunner asked the group what areas seemed to need the biggest
100 improvements and what are the greatest assets:

- 101 • Improvements:
 - 102 ○ West Street:
 - 103 ■ Keeps you from getting east–west besides some back ways that are not
 - 104 marked.
 - 105 ■ Particularly, the bottleneck at the east–west / north–south bottleneck at
 - 106 Island and West Streets.
 - 107 • Dr. Russell mentioned BPPAC bike/pedestrian counts that showed
 - 108 50 plus cars running red lights at that intersection in a two-hour
 - 109 period.
 - 110 ■ Even walking along West Street and this intersection with the light feels
 - 111 dangerous.
 - 112 ■ Major patches of difficulty west of the Library, where the connectivity goes
 - 113 in and out and creates hazards. There is no connectivity between the nice
 - 114 downtown and the Jonathan Daniels Trail.
 - 115 ○ Transitions on and off bridges: they are not always well plowed in the winter, and
 - 116 they have dangerous bumps due to the height difference between the bridge deck
 - 117 and the finished grade of the path.

- 118 ○ Most of Court Street is challenging for bicycles, particularly Upper Court Street,
119 where there is no sidewalk or it is quite damaged.
- 120 ○ A hole in the network from Gilbo Avenue to Emerald Street to transition across that
121 corner of trail, where there is no signage. There is only an implication about
122 sidewalks. It is unclear that the trail begins down at the end of Emerald Street all
123 the way down to Island Street.
- 124 ○ South Main Street at Wyman Way: dangerous left turn. Ms. Duffy is curious to see
125 the bike/pedestrian audits at that intersection. She said sidewalks should be safe
126 places to walk in the wintertime but also safe places for kids to hang out.
- 127 ○ More traffic calming into the urban zone: the flashing lights have helped but it is a
128 mindset. People coming off of RT-101 do not slow until the roundabout. The City
129 had made some progress with traffic calming, but having more safety measures in
130 place would be nice.
- 131 ○ East Keene is darker and more residential, while west Keene is more illuminated
132 and urban.
- 133 ○ The need to “teach people to walk” more than a few blocks instead of driving.
- 134 ○ Lower Winchester Street: there is no sidewalk from Market Basket to Krif Road,
135 no real shoulder, and speeding drivers. The bridge there is narrow and people try to
136 cross with motorized scooters and carts trying to get to the store and it is very
137 dangerous and/or backs up traffic. It would be nice for nearby residents to be able
138 to walk to Market Basket safely or bike into town from that part of Winchester
139 Street. That quarter mile keeps people from accessing a lot because it feels so
140 unsafe. Ms. Brunner confirmed that the Winchester St bridge reconstruction project
141 was pushed out another two years by the state.
- 142 ○ The intersection of Optical Avenue, Eastern Avenue, and Marlboro Street:
143 everyone treats it as a yield not a stop and it is dangerous.
- 144 ○ Visibility at pedestrian crossings: better lighting around them so they are more
145 luminous at night or during the rain. For example, the new roundabout south of
146 Walmart.
- 147 ● Assets:
 - 148 ○ It is a fairly compact City and not as widespread as other communities.
 - 149 ○ The City has a plan and culture of access when doing big projects (e.g., bike paths
150 during the Route 9 project).
 - 151 ○ Finding transitions and pathways that are not obvious to identify with more signage.
152 Mr. Redfern had set a meeting with Deputy City Manager, Andy Bohannon, about
153 appropriate signage.
 - 154 ○ General walkability: this is a walking City, which may be its greatest asset. Vice
155 Chair Nebenzahl was drawn to that coming from New York City. She cited
156 everywhere she could walk without a car.
 - 157 ○ There are more cemeteries in the residential neighborhoods of east Keene.
 - 158 ○ Variability: flat and hills.
 - 159 ○ Sidewalks are getting wider.
 - 160 ○ Gems for walkability: Drummer Hill, Greater Goose Pond, and Stearns Hill. The
161 problem is safe access to them on foot or bike. Particularly, Goose Pond is
162 compounded by Upper Court Street and East Surry Road. They also have limited
163 parking.

- 164 ○ A lot of nice trails on the west side that people are unfamiliar with, such as near the
165 YMCA; a lot of technical mountain biking but easy biking as well. It is not just the
166 rail trail but side trails too.
- 167 ○ A lot of loops in town that are the perfect length, such as Optical Avenue–Marlboro
168 Street being exactly one mile. There is another three-mile trail.
- 169 ○ Appel Way: provides the east–west connection and connects to Wheelock Park,
170 which is a fantastic asset to connect the City. Vice Chair Nebenzahl agreed with
171 Councilor Lake that it is a great walking asset, which her walking group loves to
172 use when accessing Wheelock Park.

173
174 The Committee members spent five minutes voting on their top asset and top concern each, from
175 5:25 PM to 5:30 PM. Ms. Brunner did not provide the results as a surprise.
176

177 Ms. Brunner, Councilor Haas, and Ms. Duffy left the meeting at 5:30 PM. Chair Leverage thanked
178 Ms. Brunner for facilitating.
179

180 **4. Local Solar Success Stories**

181 **a. Cedarcrest Ground-Mounted Solar Array, 91 Maple Ave**
182

183 No comments.
184

185 **b. Keene Housing Authority**
186

187 No comments.
188

189 **5. Community Power Mailer – Content Ideas**
190

191 No comments.
192

193 **6. Work Groups – Organization, Leaders, & Membership**

194 **a. Policy (Meets as needed)**
195

196 The Work Group will meet as needed and Chair Leverage said there was nothing pressing at this
197 time.
198

199 **b. Resilience**
200

201 Dr. Russell reported that the Work Group had a list of questions to forward to the appropriate
202 parties within the City that he would send to Ms. Fortson. The Work Group would also be meeting
203 on June 9, 2026 at 2:00 PM via MS Teams.
204

205 **c. Outreach**
206

207 Dr. Koning said the Outreach Work Group organized a meeting for June 6, 2026 at 4:00 PM.
208

209 **7. Task Groups**

- 210 **a. Communication Plan**
- 211 **b. Benchmarking Dashboard**

212
213 Chair Leversee said the Committee would organize these Task Groups at the next meeting. They
214 would be drawn from the Committee as a whole, thinking about what has to be done, and who
215 wants to participate. Mr. Roth thought that aligned with Dr. Russell’s point about matching
216 resources with benchmarking

217
218 Ms. Maxfield asked if the Task Groups have to follow quorum rules. Ms. Fortson said yes, they
219 cannot have more than five people, otherwise these groups would exceed quorum per RSA 91-A.
220 Dr. Russell suggested involving community members who are connected to the groups.

221
222 **8. Staff Updates**

223
224 Ms. Fortson reported that Emily Duseau departed as Planning Technician, so all communications
225 should be addressed her moving forward. She would be missed. Mr. Murphy asked Ms. Fortson to
226 send Ms. Duseau a thank you note on behalf of the Committee and there was consensus; Ms.
227 Fortson agreed.

228
229 Ms. Fortson also reported that the City Council would be holding its first Public Hearing on the
230 Budget on June 4, 2026 at 7:00 PM before voting on the Budget on June 18th. ECC members could
231 attend on June 4th to share their support for the Assistant Sustainability Planner position again. Ms.
232 Fortson thanked everyone who attended the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee
233 meeting in support. Mr. Boulton asked if there was a prospect on where the position was headed.
234 Ms. Fortson said City staff were cautiously optimistic but ultimately it would be a decision of the
235 City Council. Staff hoped it would be approved so they could move forward posting a job
236 description and everything online. Attending the June 4th meeting would reiterate how important
237 this position is to the ECC.

238
239 **9. New Business**

240
241 Mr. Redfern asked if anyone had seen an enlarged postcard from Eversource Energy that seemed
242 misleading, indicating that if you sign up for the Eversource saver program, you get \$100. It is
243 misleading because you have to switch to Eversource but that is not clear. He wondered if anyone
244 was concerned about it. Chair Leversee looked at it and looked it up online and he believed it was
245 clear that you must convert. Mr. Redfern thought it might have been the small print. Discussion
246 ensued about how that would mean switching from Community Power. Those on Community
247 Power still get an Eversource bill because of supply and distribution components.

248
249 **10. Next Meeting: June 24, 2026 at 4:30 PM**

250
251 **11. Adjournment**

252
253 There being no further business, Chair Leversee adjourned the meeting at 5:36 PM.

254
255 Respectfully submitted by,

256 Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
257
258 Reviewed and edited by,
259 Megan A. Fortson, AICP - Planner

From: Terri Hood
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2026 5:26 PM
To: Minutes Staff Liaisons
Subject: Request for Annual Reports from City Boards and Commissions

Importance: High

Hello, Minutes Staff Liaisons,

This is a reminder that last year the City Council voted to request that City boards and commissions provide an annual report to the Council summarizing their activities during the previous fiscal year. The Council requested that reports be submitted annually on or around July 1. Submission of an annual report is entirely voluntary.

If a board or commission chooses to provide a report, it may do so in one of two ways:

- 1. Submit a written report, which may be distributed to the City Council through Council mailboxes by the Staff Liaison; or**
- 2. Request placement on the agenda of a City Council Standing Committee to provide an oral update.**

Please place this item on an upcoming agenda for each board or commission you support so members can discuss whether they would like to participate and determine the content and format of any report they wish to provide. Any annual reports received will be posted on the applicable board or commission webpage for public review.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Terri



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.

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

Kenneth Swymer Jr.
Chair, Keene Energy & Climate Committee

From: Patrick Roche
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2026 10:57 AM
To: Mari Brunner; Megan Fortson
Cc: Peter Lawlor; Max Stewart; Allison McNeill
Subject: Re: Keene Community Power - sample reports & Priority Power intro memo
Attachments: Keene Community Power Memo_2026-06.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Good morning Mari and Megan,
 We've collaborated with Priority Power and attached is our memo for both the City Manager, City Council and Energy & Climate Committee regarding the sale of Standard Power's interests in the program.

Below, I've also included data on program participation before and after the transition.

- I think the City can be very encouraged by the participation in the new default, which is just 2% lower than before the transition. The City took a bold step to increase its renewable energy dramatically, and the data suggests that your participants were largely on-board with that change.
- Both the lowest-cost option and the 100% option saw small increases in participation.
- As you anticipated, there was some attrition, likely due to natural account closures and the fact that we did not conduct a sweep. We'll monitor the next Eversource rate announcement and circle back with you regarding a potential sweep.

Renewable Energy in Each Option	Pre-Transition (Prior to Mailing Notification for New Contract)		Post-Transition (May 2026)	
	#	%	#	%
25%	332	5%	465	8%
35%	5,766	91%	16	<1%
50%	58	1%	5,430	89%
100%	156	2%	160	3%
Total	6,312	-	6,071	-

*Default option in each contract highlighted in dark green

I will follow up soon regarding the other items we discussed, including changing the default for low-income customers, net metering draft legislation, and the best time for an update to the Energy & Climate Committee.

Best,
 Patrick Roche
 Director of Innovation, New England
 Good Energy, L.P.

Date: June 12, 2026
From: Patrick Roche, Director of Innovation
 Good Energy, consultant to Keene Community Power program
To: Keene City Manager, City Council and Energy & Climate Committee
Re: Update on Community Power Consulting Services

Honorable Mayor Kahn, Members of the City Council, City Manager Ferland and Members of the Energy & Climate Committee,

I am writing with an update on the consulting services for the Keene Community Power program.

For this update, we thought it would be helpful to start with a brief history of the program. The Plan for the program was developed starting in fall 2020, when Good Energy, L.P. and our partner, Standard Power, were contracted by the City as full-service community power consultants. Keene Community Power launched in June 2023.

Good Energy brought experience working with regulators and managing over 60 active community power programs in Massachusetts to help Keene develop one of New Hampshire’s first community power programs. Our role has included plan development, electricity supply contracting and procurement, public education and outreach, customer support and ongoing program management. On a day-to-day basis, our work has been closely coordinated with and directed by Senior Planner Mari Brunner.

In May 2026, Standard Power sold its interests as a consultant in all retail power supply contracts to Priority Power Management, LLC. As a result, Standard Power is no longer affiliated with Keene Community Power. This change has no impact on the current electricity supply contract, which has prices fixed from December 2025 until December 2027, nor the level of community power consulting service provided to Keene.

Moving forward, Good Energy will be the primary point of contact and will serve as lead on all aspects of service for Keene Community Power. Priority Power will provide additional support for the program as needed.

For any questions, comments or concerns about the program, please contact Good Energy or Ms. Brunner. Contact information for myself, as well as the City’s dedicated client manager, Allison McNeill, and our general support information are listed below.

Keene Community Power support contact information:		
General: support_nh@goodenergy.com	City’s Dedicated Client Manager: Allison McNeill 857-557-4943 allison.mcneill@goodenergy.com	Additional Support: Patrick Roche 617-202-0797 patrick@goodenergy.com

Current program options, prices and additional information at KeeneCommunityPower.com.