

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair
Gary Lamoureux, councilor
Megan Straughen
Councilor Terry Clark
Dr. Chris Brehme
Larry Dachowski, Alternate
Dick Cornelius, Alternate

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planner

Members Not Present:

Mari Brunner

Guest

Charles Daloz, vice chair of the
Agriculture Commission

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

2. Approval of February 1, 2017 minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hansel to approve the minutes, as amended with minor corrections noted in emails sent by Ms. Brunner and Ms. Straughen. It was seconded by Mr. Lamoureux and passed by unanimous vote of the committee.

3. Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GGE) Inventory Update status

Ms. Chalice said she had met with Planning Director Rhett Lamb on the GGE Update and had drafted an outline based on input from staff and from the Director regarding what the GGE report

would need to contain. Ms. Chalice said that the city has a proposal based on that outline from Mari Brunner, planner for the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC). She said it has been decided that the city doesn't have the \$8000 for the cost of that proposal. She said instead a pared down version would be generated that recreates the 2008 report, using data from 1995 and 2015 with an analysis summarizing the difference between the two. In this pared-down version, there would be no case studies of how this was accomplished in Keene and no interviews to find out what people thought about those efforts.

Ms. Chalice said it is hoped that this abbreviated version of the proposal, which makes use of a document with which Ms. Brunner is already familiar, would mean getting a finished report more quickly and at less cost. She said SWRPC proposal would take six months to complete.

Recognizing the fact that methodologies have changed between 1995 and 2015, Chair Shedd asked if the formatting would be the same. Ms. Chalice said that the formatting would be the same, but the challenge would be to resolve the inconsistencies arising from the differences in methodologies. In the end, she said, the presentation and graphics in this version will be straightforward and bare bones.

Chair Shedd said she hopes that at some point the city would be able to generate some of the analytical aspects of the report that will have fallen by the wayside in the present effort.

Ms. Chalice said that if Ms. Brunner is not available to do the report in a timely manner, then Planning Director Lamb is considering asking someone else to do the report.

Chair Shedd said representatives from Antioch Climate Center leadership, with whom she had met at one of their meetings on February 8th, offered to do an external review of the updated report. She noted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Antioch University (AUNE) Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience and the City of Keene spells out their involvement with the GGE inventories. She expressed appreciation for the offer, which she said might provide helpful feedback.

4. Report-Back of Antioch Climate Center Meeting

Chair Shedd explained the MOU with the AUNE Climate Center calls for monthly meetings between upper level staff at the Climate Center and the city, but she added that regular meetings had stopped occurring. She said Antioch Climate Center leadership is open to resuming the process, but suggested that the initiative come from the city. When she talked with Planning Director Lamb, she said, he wanted the initiative to come from the CCPC.

Chair Shedd read the terms of the agreement in the MOU:

The parties will identify specific activities and areas of focus through discussion and priority setting at the senior staff level, and as determined by the City Manager and

AUNE President, as needed. The parties intend to meet monthly to plan and execute partnership activities.

Activities may include collaboration to 1) evaluate, design, and implement, a range of resilience and preparedness actions; 2) pursue external grant funding necessary to accomplish these activities; and 3) identify and engage stakeholders who may be affected by these actions and/or other partners who can contribute to the success of actions.

The parties anticipate that priorities may include initiatives focused on:

- A. Civic Leadership and Public Engagement/Education*
- B. District Heating and Weatherization*
- C. Downtown Stormwater Management & Community Preparedness*
- D. Economic Development*
- E. Food Security*
- F. Greenhouse Gas Inventory Updates*
- G. Health Indicators*
- H. Keene Energy and Agriculture Project*
- I. Transportation Management (including Pathways Expansion)*
- J. Urban Tree Planting*

Vice Chair Hansel suggested the MOU needed to be updated. Questions arose as to whether the draft MOU, from which Chair Shedd read, was ever signed. Chair Shedd said she believed it had been signed. One change that would need to be made, Vice Chair Hansel said, was the reference to the president of Antioch, which is now the position of provost.

Chair Shedd said that Planning Director Lamb was looking for fairly general encouragement from the committee that this process be resumed.

Vice Chair Hansel made a motion to recommend the reinstatement of regular contacts between City of Keene staff and Antioch Climate Center senior-level staff to plan and execute partnership activities, in accordance with the 2014 MOU. It was seconded by Ms. Straughen, and passed by unanimous vote of the committee.

5. Follow-Up: Community Solar Advocacy Letter

Chair Shedd reported that Ms. Chalice had contacted the mayor's office a month earlier about this issue, followed by her own contact with his office during the previous week. Chair Shedd said that it seemed to be on the "back burner." She said that since then Ms. Chalice had sent another copy of the draft letter to the Mayor's office. Ms. Chalice reported that the positive news is that with staff help she had been able to get together the mailing list that is ready to go.

Ms. Straughen reported that there would be a Community Solar Presentation, hosted by the Monadnock Sustainability Network (MSN) on March 23rd from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at The Barn in Harrisville.

6. Follow-Up: Retreat

Chair Shedd expressed appreciation for the members' work in preparation for the retreat held on the previous night. She described the process used during the retreat to brainstorm potential priorities and evaluating them in SMART terms: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time specific. She said the intention would be to accomplish the identified priority in the next two years.

She said the guest facilitator, Christa Daniels, program manager of the Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience at AUNE, brought an interesting way of thinking about priorities, graphing the various priorities according to their expected impact and feasibility.

She listed the three top proposals, as follows:

1. Develop recommendation to the City Council to create at least a part-time position for an officer of energy sustainability, including in that recommendation an analysis of how the position functions in other municipalities and potential mechanisms for funding the position.
2. Follow up on specific recommendations in the Comprehensive Master Plan regarding energy efficiency and home weatherization by putting together a summit of stakeholders, including possibly two workshops. The first would bring together officials from state and city government involved in energy, codes, and housing, as well as officials from educational institutions, contracting companies, and energy providers (Eversource). The workshop would evaluate what currently exists in the area of energy efficiency and consider how weatherization could be expanded in the residential sector. That workshop would be followed by a second one for consumers.
3. Take action on some of the city's Action and Adaption goals involving food security related to increasing the number of community gardens, developing neighborhood composting facilities, and identifying past, present, and future agricultural lands in the city, with the goal of protecting at least 10 percent of agricultural land. There could be a number of other collaborators on this priority, such as the Agriculture Commission and the Monadnock Conservancy.

Discussion of Priority 1:

Chair Shedd said the facilitator recommended that the decision on priorities be reached through consensus rather than through a vote. Ms. Straughen added that the facilitator suggested that the

consideration of options should include an evaluation of three types of impact: cognitive, behavioral, and emotional.

Vice Chair Hansel said that the sustainability officer was a top priority for him because a person in that position would help implement and facilitate the other goals of the committee. In addition, he said, the functions of this position are already being performed by people on staff with the city, so that should be considered in calculating the costs of that position. He said the costs could be shared with other public or private entities.

Ms. Chalice said that every message she got as a staff person is that the city is in no position to add people to staff, but added there are exceptions for every situation. She said there is a reorganization of the Planning Department underway, and that there is a plan to add a person to help with permitting.

Chair Shedd said that in her discussion with the Planning Director he was not encouraging about the prospects of getting additional staffing. Councilor Lamoureux agreed that message has been sent at this time, but that there is a business case to be made about the payback of the position that would be of interest to the City Council.

Ms. Chalice said there is hope that the payback analysis could be related to further efficiency savings already realized by the city through the Energy Services Companies (ESCO) contract.

Ms. Straughen and Mr. Duchowski both said that this effort to get a sustainability position might entail a longer time frame, but it is worth raising the issue and persisting with it. Ms. Straughen added that the efforts to get the position could be a sideline goal while the committee pursues other goals.

Ms. Chalice noted the impact of the city's action versus the potential impact of the community's action, the city accounting for about 2 percent of the GGE. She said she liked the idea of doing research into what other communities are doing. She said there is so much more potential impact on the community level.

Vice Chair Hansel suggested that the committee lobby at the same time for the school district to share this proposed position. In response to a question from Ms. Chalice about Chair Shedd's conversation with the Planning Director, Chair Shedd said she hadn't gotten any sense from the Director that there was a need to "put the brakes on" even exploring of this position.

Mr. Daloz said he would like to see the committee look to coordinating the position with the business community and surrounding towns, to begin to think in terms of the bioregion.

Discussion of Priority 2:

Chair Shedd said there is a clear mandate in the Comprehensive Master Plan for a community wide weatherization program. She said that this was one of the committee's targets from last

year's retreat, but that the committee had made little progress with it. She suggested that the committee zero in on a specific project, such as convening a summit, using input from state level departments about funding for energy efficiency projects.

Vice Chair Hansel said weatherization is a way to reduce air quality problems, and he pointed out that there had been a history of supporting that goal in Keene, as was evidenced by a wood stove trade-in program that the city had undertaken at one time. He said there might be potential for leveraging some funding for the weatherization program from other groups concerned about air quality.

Chair Shedd said that this project would address a broad goal of the committee to educate the public, reaching a wide range of people from officials to contractors to landlords to members of the public. She noted all the work being done by Keene housing to improving the energy efficiency of its buildings.

Chair Shedd pointed out that the goal was to set one project as the priority, and have a second priority "on tap" so that if substantial progress is made on one, the committee can get started on the next priority.

Discussion of Priority 3:

Dr. Brehme said that he believed community gardens would be a positive use of space, of rights-of-way, and of vacant land, and have a direct impact on GGE. This would be tied in to the larger scale protection of agriculture and the promotion of small scale agriculture in the city. He said with whatever priority is selected, projects that result in tangible and visible benefits will generate the kinds of emotional and educational impacts the committee hopes to create. He said community gardens have the potential to do that.

Ms. Straughen agreed, adding that the community gardens priority offered opportunities to partner with groups already working in this area. She suggested the committee may discover opportunities to enhance and further work already underway. She saw potential for outreach and education in this priority.

Chair Shedd mentioned other agricultural efforts that might be considered, pointing out that there was a pilot program that allowed for the grazing of sheep and goats in the rights-of-way under power lines some 20 years ago.

Ms. Straughen mentioned the economic aspect of community gardens, that they could be a visible asset for the downtown. Chair Shedd added that there might be some opportunity for indoor agriculture on vacant lots. Mr. Cornelius said existing buildings could be used for hydroponic agriculture and explained that other communities have put vacant buildings to use for indoor agriculture.

Reaching Consensus:

Mr. Straughen said she could support either the weatherization or food security priorities, adding that she thought the sustainability officer is a goal that could be tangential to whatever project the committee undertakes.

Ms. Chalice said that there is the possibility of working with the Agriculture Commission on the issue of food security and community gardens without making that the priority of CCP.

Vice Chair Hansel agreed, saying that CCP should find out what is happening in the area of food security and determine without making it a top priority. He said he was more in favor of weatherization, which is a large part of CCP's mission and which is achievable. It would be even more achievable, he said, if the city had a sustainability officer, but the officer didn't need to be the committee's primary mission.

Mr. Duchowski said he said he felt good about all three of the options, adding that he could see links between the energy efficiency priority and the other two, so that in pursuing energy efficiency the committee would not need to lose sight of the other priorities.

Dr. Brehme said he could support either the energy efficiency or the food security options, and that the pursuit of the sustainability officer could dovetail well with the energy efficiency energy theme. He said that perhaps the committee could bring in a sustainability officer from another city to speak at the summit, helping to make the case for the need for one in Keene.

Councilor Lamoureux said that if the committee goes through with the weatherization program, it would be the kind of success that would help the committee attain its goal of getting a sustainability officer for the city.

Chair Shedd said that energy efficiency was her number one goal going into the retreat.

Having heard from all the committee members, the Chair said it was clear that all expressed support for making the energy efficiency/weatherization the committee's top priority for the next two years.

In response to a suggestion from Mr. Daloz that the CCP make a request to the Ag Commission to work cooperatively on food security, Ms. Chalice said she would suggest that it be put on the agenda of the next meeting of the Agriculture Commission.

Chair Shedd asked that committee members give thought before the next meeting about what the committee needs to do to move toward the goal of an energy efficiency/weatherization program. Vice Chair Hansel suggested that the committee think about identifying the stakeholders, and Chair Shedd said she would send Ms. Chalice the list of stakeholders she had developed. Ms. Straughen suggested that the committee take ten minutes at the next meeting to visualize the achievement of this priority, imagining what was entailed in that achievement.

Chair Shedd said that by next month the committee might have heard back from the Button-Up Program, whether we have made it on their list to have a Button-Up workshop this year.

Announcements:

Ms. Chalice made the following announcements:

A People's Climate Event, organized by a subcommittee of the Monadnock Progressive Alliance, will be held in Central Square on April 29th. That subcommittee is looking to coordinate with other groups. It was decided to put the event on the agenda for the CCP meeting in April.

Municipal Solar Arrays: Keene is seeking proposals for solar arrays to be located on city-owned property with a March 9th deadline.

Bio Energy System Validation has been awarded recently to WV Engineering, to evaluate the installation of a biofuel energy generator system at the landfill.

The Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Program (EP3) Committee, internal to the city, is looking for efficiencies in the city.

7. Follow-Up: Regional Energy Hub Concept

Chair Shedd said there was nothing new to report on this subject.

8. Follow-Up: Pending NH Legislation

Chair Shedd reported on an update from the NH Sustainable Energy Association about pending state legislation. She said the bill to repeal the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is staying in committee, but that it wasn't rejected outright, so it will continue to resurface.

In response to Chair Shedd's invitation to members to follow the progress of specific relevant bills, Ms. Chalice volunteered to follow up with bill HB559 (Relative to RGGI auction proceeds spending on Energy Efficiency (EE) programs).

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 AM.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 5, 2017