

ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 5, 2016

8:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Rm

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Gary Lamoureaux, Councilor
Terry Clark, Councilor
Mari Brunner (arrived at 8:04 AM)
Megan Straughen
Larry Dachowski, Alternate

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planning

Members Not Present:

Andrew Graham
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair
Dick Cornelius, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2) Approval of Minutes – September 7, 2016

Councilor Lamoureaux made a motion to approve the minutes of September 7, 2016, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

Chair Shedd noted corrections:

Page 2, second paragraph: Mr. Cornelius was the one who sent the link to the documentary (not Mr. Dachowski as written).

Page 3, second paragraph, third line: Chair Shedd was talking about “three phase” power, not “frequent” power.

The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed by unanimous vote.

3) Review – Revisions: Draft Community Solar Advocacy Letter

Chair Shedd stated that the CCP has had communications from John Kondo about some legislative limitations on broadening the base for community supported solar. She continued that the CCP voted to request City Council support for a general request for changes that would allow more participation in community supported solar.

Ms. Brunner arrived at 8:04 AM.

Ms. Chalice stated that the CCP can ask the City Council to lobby on an issue they feel strongly about. She continued that this has to do with regulations of regulatory entities. City staff has to be able to advise the City Council on whether it is a good idea for them to support this, but these are very technical matters and City staff do not have Mr. Kondos' knowledge. They are asking him to meet with her and Planning Director Rhett Lamb, to get the Planning Department up to speed, so Planning staff will be prepared when the City Council asks for their thoughts. She continued that as individual citizens, anyone on the CCP can write a letter that has the points Mr. Kondos suggested.

Chair Shedd stated that regarding a previous request the CCP brought to the City Council, there was already a specific piece of legislation in the works and that was probably more helpful to the City Council than a request to support a general concept. She asked if it is premature to bring this request to the City Council tomorrow. If staff has not spoken with Mr. Kondos before tomorrow evening do they need to pull it from the agenda? Ms. Chalice replied that she does not think so. Councilor Clark added that the City Council will probably refer the matter to the Planning, Licenses, and Development (PLD) Committee anyway, so that gives everyone more time. Chair Shedd stated that she will come to the City Council meeting tomorrow.

4) SB 492 – Modifies Allocation of Rebates – Died in House

Chair Shedd reported that this was in the works last spring. She continued that the whole bill died in the House and she assumes it will be back in some form in the next cycle.

5) Climate Action Plan Update – Private Sector Focus – New Goal Recommendations

Chair Shedd stated that the report about the Greenhouse Gas Inventory is still in progress. She continued that it seems that this is the time to set some new goals. Ms. Brunner sent an email suggesting they look at the Climate Action Plan from 2004. The Climate Adaptation Plan was in 2007. There are two parts to this – determining what the CCP's process will be for setting new goals, and determining how they will update the Climate Action Plan with substantive targets that help them reach those goals. The State's plan calls for an 80% reduction of emissions by 2050. The US's "intended nationally determined contribution" as part of the Paris climate conference is a reduction of 26% by 2025. Ms. Chalice asked if that was recently ratified (that is, if at least 55 of the countries have agreed). Chair Shedd replied that she is not sure, but she thinks it is just about there. Ms. Brunner replied that she thinks they reached that a couple days ago. Ms. Chalice asked her to forward her any announcement she finds about that.

Chair Shedd stated that they need to determine the CCP's process for setting new goals.

Ms. Brunner asked if Ms. Chalice knows how it was done last time. Ms. Chalice replied no, she was not here then. Ms. Brunner replied that probably someone on staff or someone from Antioch University New England (AUNE) did it. She continued that she recommends one of those two approaches again. She is not sure the CCP has the time to write a plan. For the goals, however, they should be involved. Discussion ensued. Chair Shedd and Ms. Straughen agreed that it would be helpful to have the assistance of City staff or AUNE students. Ms. Brunner suggested they talk with Abigail Abrash; she would have a good idea of how much work this would entail and whether a student group could do it. Ms. Chalice stated that she could start writing something up if someone else could talk with Ms. Abrash.

Councilor Lamoureux stated that they used to get grants for hiring organizations to come in and write plans. He asked if anyone is aware of any grants for that. Ms. Chalice replied that she has not seen any grant opportunities for this. Councilor Clark suggested they reach out to the great grant writer that the County has. Ms. Chalice replied that she will look into this.

Councilor Clark suggested they talk with the Public Works Department – their projects include elements such as making streetlights more energy efficient. Also, the Airport might have ideas; they have a Master Plan Update coming up. He continued that the City Council has just formed a committee to talk about short term goals. The CCP might ask them what ideas they have for climate protection and what they think is important. Chair Shedd replied that that would probably fall within the scope of the update. She continued that four or five years ago an AUNE class did the matrix/grid that combined the Climate Action Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan, talking with stakeholders that had been identified for particular targets, to assess the progress on the targets. What Councilor Clark is talking about would be part of the substance of the update.

Ms. Chalice stated that the Agriculture Commission presented to the PLD Committee on agriculture issues and a Councilor asked to see the Climate Adaptation Plan because he had not seen it in a long time. He thought it was a good time to remind the City Council of those climate adaptation goals and they could be solicited for their input. The City Council is interested. Chair Shedd replied that early last year the CCP sent the relevant parts of the matrix to departments and committees, and they did not really get any feedback at that point, but she does not think it was sent to City Council. Ms. Chalice replied no, and sometimes the City Council is the prod that begins projects.

Chair Shedd stated that it has been proposed at the Federal level to have all federally funded projects be evaluated for their climate impacts. She continued that sometime last year this committee floated the idea but did not follow up on it, of how they would go about asking the City Council and city departments to consider the impact that any project coming before them would have on climate. Councilor Clark replied that the City Council just codified part of the Fiscal Policies, of purchasing recycled or environmentally friendly products whenever possible.

Councilor Lamoureux stated that Public Works Department does look at projects' climate impacts – for example, that is what they are doing with the lighting project. He continued that the Planning Board would be a place as well, including climate issues as part of their checklists. Councilor Clark replied that the Planning Board considerations are written by State law. Councilor Lamoureux replied yes, but if there is backing coming from Federal regulations that might be something they could add, or at least have projects' impact on climate be part of the discussion.

Chair Shedd asked that they keep that thought (how to codify this) on the active list. Ms. Chalice replied that they had talked in the past about a standard for increasing efficiencies, within projects that are proposed. She continued that the City requires project proposals to either incorporate low impact development procedures if they can, or if they cannot, explain why they cannot. The City encouraging low impact development in this way has had a decent impact. Potentially, climate impacts could be looked at in the same way.

Ms. Straughen stated that she just found out that September 19 was the deadline to submit project proposals to AUNE, but this is still worth looking into. Ms. Chalice replied that it is an ongoing process. She continued that it might take the CCP/Planning Department a while to get something written up. Ms. Straughen suggested they consider making it an internship, which could be more flexible.

Chair Shedd stated that getting back to the topic of updating the CAP, there is quite a spectrum of emissions reductions goals (international, national, and state), as well as a spectrum of timeframes (by 2025, by 2050, and so on and so forth). She continued that the CCP has talked about setting a relatively near range goal, as at least a start. She asked if there are any City-scale precedents they should look at. Their last timeframe was 20 years, 1995 to 2015. She asked if 20 years is too long. Should they set a longer range goal with a near range target?

Councilor Clark replied that that is something the City Council is starting to struggle with. He continued that they have a Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) and department-specific Master Plans, and it seems like human nature is to not think much about the plan until the goal deadline is fast approaching. It might make sense to think of a long-range goal and the interim steps for reaching it, such as what to look at in five years, in 10 years, and so on and so forth. Mr. Dachowski, Ms. Straughen, and Ms. Brunner replied that they like that idea.

Chair Shedd stated that the State's goal is an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050, below the 1990 levels. She continued that she is looking at notes that former CCP member Jen Risley put together. That goal has been adopted by numerous state and city organizations. This is one option for the CCP to consider.

Councilor Clark asked if they should wait until the report on the 2015 goal is complete before they re-write the plan/goals. Ms. Chalice replied that Mr. Lamb said they are not ready to go to the City Council with results yet. She continued that he called for another

draft presentation to department heads, which was held two weeks ago. The department heads' feedback was that the presentation itself would not be an effective way to communicate with City Council, because it is too technical, with too many numbers, and too focused on the intern's concern about making sure they are comparing apples to apples. They want it revamped so it is reduced to 10 slides, with more graphics, and focused on the particular points that are most salient to the City Council. Staff are fine with the data itself, but have charged her with repackaging the presentation. They also decided to take out the part of the report about the Transfer Station, because the City was landfilling at that point and now the City is not so the data is hard to compare. Ms. Brunner questioned the decision to take that out of the report and asked for more information. Brief discussion ensued. Ms. Chalice replied that she will find a better way to communicate this.

Chair Shedd stated that the municipal sector's portion of emissions is very small compared to the emissions of the community as a whole. Ms. Chalice replied that the graphic that had been created to convey that was nixed by department heads, and she is looking for suggestions for a new way of communicating this information. Discussion ensued. Ms. Chalice stated that everyone was very pleased with the presentation that Ms. Brunner had put together, so she would be interested in using that as a template, so as not to reinvent the wheel. She will talk with Ms. Brunner and take a look at what she did.

Chair Shedd stated that when they do put together the presentation to the City Council the "next steps" piece is an important part and something this whole committee needs to be a part of. She continued that they will show that the municipality has done a good job of achieving the last goal, and what is needed now going forward, with an understanding that the scale of climate change is much greater now than it was 15 years ago and there is more urgency. Even if they do not have the whole CAP updated, they should talk about the next steps, and at least have some sense of what new goals they recommend setting, in terms of the big numbers.

Ms. Chalice stated that staff's general feeling is that the municipality has done a great job substantially reducing its emissions, by going after all of the low-hanging fruit, and now the harder work starts. She continued that the last low-hanging fruit project is to use a grant from Eversource to replace all 1,500 lights in the city with more efficient ones. The municipality has done very well reducing emissions over the years, but there is a lot of opinion that there will be a lot of national attention on these results and they have to be really certain that this data is correct.

Chair Shedd stated that the question is how to go for the high-hanging fruit and spread it through the community. Ms. Chalice replied that an entity at a regional planning agency is doing a survey to see what the barriers are for municipalities to come up with more efficient energy sources, because they are coming up with a toolkit. She sent the survey to the City Manager, Public Works Department staff, and others, including the CCP members. The CCP can give their input to the entity creating the toolkit.

Councilor Clark stated that the high-hanging fruit is policy change. He continued that sometimes people do things a certain way because it is the way they have always done things. For example, they have Complete Streets as a concept, but the reality is that when they build streets, they are mostly populated by vehicles. Policy change is a big part of changing that.

Ms. Brunner stated that one idea is to do small demonstration or pilot projects to show the community how things could be. They could give examples, like a project where they close off Main Street to cars for a day, or something else. Ms. Straughen stated that a “Senior Engineer in Energy Efficiency” from Eversource emailed some people from the Coop. She read the email out loud. She continued that this person wants a group to partner with, to do energy audits of local businesses and come up with projects. Discussion ensued. Ms. Chalice asked if they should look into this more. She offered to call him.

Chair Shedd asked if they should focus on big businesses in town. She continued that about 80% of Keene’s businesses are small businesses. If what is talked about in that email is a genuine program to help numbers of them achieve greater efficiencies, that would be helpful. Councilor Lamoureux replied that many times small businesses do not own the properties, so it would involve talking with the owners. Chair Shedd replied that that is where C-PACE would come in. Ms. Chalice replied yes, they keep waiting for the email saying it is moving forward. They are waiting to hear how it is going in Lebanon and how it can work for Keene.

Chair Shedd asked if there are other thoughts. They have not come to any conclusions yet. This item needs to come back on their next agenda. Ms. Brunner suggested the CCP consider creating another working group to do some research on goal recommendations. She is willing to be on this working group if others would join her. Discussion ensued. Chair Shedd stated that she is not sure if the working groups have been doing a lot of work. Ms. Brunner asked if a working group can include people not on the committee. Councilor Clark and Ms. Chalice replied yes. Chair Shedd stated that she thinks Ms. Brunner’s idea is worthwhile. Mr. Dachowski stated that he would be interested in working on this, to improve his information and skills. He continued that with all of the different goals – reductions of different percentages, by different years, based on data from different years – it gets very confusing. It feels like they are not even talking apples and oranges – “it is more like apples and Lego blocks!” Chair Shedd agreed and added that in addition, some VT municipalities do not have emission reduction goals and are instead trying for “carbon neutral.”

Chair Shedd stated that she will try and find out how many NH municipalities have adopted the State goal. Ms. Brunner suggested the Local Energy Solutions (LES) as a resource. She continued that the City is a member of ICLEI. She asked if they can call them. Ms. Chalice replied yes, she will get the CCP the contact information for ICLEI and members can call with questions or information requests. Ms. Brunner replied that they might have information about how to compare the different goals and systems.

6) Other

Ms. Chalice stated that Kate Epsen, the Executive Director of the NH Sustainable Energy Association, will present to the CCP at their next meeting on November 2, 2016. She continued that the meeting will start at 8:00 AM but Ms. Epsen will arrive at 8:30 AM. Ms. Epsen knows all of the ins and outs of the RGGI funds information, which can be complicated. She wonders if she should invite other City staff members or other interested people. Chair Shedd replied yes, these are public meetings.

Chair Shedd reported that Saturday, November 19 is the LES meeting. She continued that the agenda and workshops are not posted yet.

Ms. Brunner reported that the car-sharing presentation went well. She continued that when the report is ready she will share the link to it. There are different operational models of car-sharing and there are examples and case studies of how other regions similar to the Keene region have done it.

Charles Daloz stated that he found out there is an agriculture component to Keene's partnership with Einbeck, Germany. He continued that Einbeck probably has many municipal solutions to climate change issues and he suggests learning more about that. Councilor Clark replied that he mingled with some Einbeck folks and some of the things they are doing are amazing, that Keene is not even thinking about. A lot of policies restrict Keene from doing what they are doing, but it is absolutely astounding. Discussion ensued about the possibility of the CCP getting involved with the Einbeck partnership. Chair Shedd asked Ms. Chalice to check on this – it would be great if the CCP could communicate with a liaison for this.

7) Adjournment – Next Meeting is November 2, 2016

Chair Shedd adjourned the meeting at 9:01 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker