

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 7, 2016 8:00 AM 2nd Floor Conference Rm

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Peter Hansel, Vice Chair
Terry Clark, Councilor (arrived at 8:27 AM)
Mari Brunner (arrived at 8:04 AM)
Megan Straughen
Larry Dachowski, Alternate
Dick Cornelius, Alternate

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planning

Mayor Kendall Lane

Members Not Present:

Gary Lamoureaux, Councilor
Andrew Graham

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM and roll call was conducted.

2) Approval of Minutes – August 3, 2016

Chair Shedd noted a spelling correction to last month's minutes: on page 8, "Eve" should be "Yves Gakunde."

Mr. Hansel made a motion to approve the minutes of August 3, 2016 as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dachowski and passed by a unanimous vote of 5 to 0.

Chair Shedd reported that the Local Energy Solutions Conference will take place in Concord on November 19.

Ms. Brunner arrived at 8:04.

Chair Shedd continued that the CCP (Andrew Graham) will present to City Council on September 15. Ms. Chalice added that a different entity might actually write the report, but Mr. Graham will present it. Chair Shedd encouraged committee members to attend.

Chair Shedd reported that in the agenda packet there is a link to a documentary that Mr. Cornelius sent that he thought might interest the committee.

3) Keene's Energy Future – Mayor Kendall Lane

Chair Shedd reported that the Keene Sentinel recently covered Mayor Kendall Lane being honored with a climate award, and the article alluded to the possibility of the City having a 100-acre solar farm. Mayor Lane replied that the award was for the City, not him personally. Chair Shedd asked the Mayor to speak about what the CCP can do to help with the Climate Action Plan or grease the legislative wheels.

Mayor Lane reported that there are three areas he wants to touch on that will potentially have a significant impact on the city. First, the Public Works Department, for a number of years, has been working on biodiesel fuel. He continued that they currently sell about 85,000 gallons a year to other entities to use for a variety of purposes. These include Keene State College (KSC) and Home Healthcare. The City uses the biodiesel for most of its heavy equipment. It has been a tremendously beneficial product for the City. It is basically food waste converted to biodiesel. The City has been approached by companies interested in marketing the product. The first step would be for the City to look at protecting their proprietary interest in the production of the biodiesel fuel and they are beginning that process. They would look at licensing the use of the material and allowing other entities to market, sell, and use it. It is a product that has a tremendous amount of potential, particularly for larger users of heavy equipment, as a way to reduce their carbon emissions. Mike August at the Public Works Department has been very proactive in promoting the use of this product. Mayor Lane continued that he suggests having Mr. August come in and talk to the CCP about this.

Mayor Lane continued that the second area is: making City buildings/infrastructure more energy efficient. This one is more of a struggle and he is not sure what the answer is. The City – through this committee, and other folks – has done a lot of work on this and the City has done a good job reducing its carbon emissions. The private sector, less so. That sector has been a more difficult nut to crack. The Monadnock Food Co op has erected a solar array on their roof and there are a few other businesses in Keene and the region that have adopted fairly significant energy efficient mechanisms but the public in general has not been aware of the need and advantage of doing this. They need to educate, encourage, and promote this. The amount that the City itself can do to reduce its carbon emissions is becoming less and less. The City has done what it can. They have done the low-hanging fruit as well as significant work that has had a major impact. To have a significant impact in the region they have to bring the private sector on board. It is about making the private sector aware of the options for adopting energy efficiency mechanisms and the great paybacks that come with those options. It is incumbent on the City – and this committee can help – to educate the private sector and to encourage energy efficiency.

Mayor Lane continued that the third area is the solar array. They have had meetings with entities interested in constructing a large solar array in Keene. There are several others throughout the state. There are two requirements for this: first, the model that most companies use requires at least 100 acres and it needs to be near infrastructure. The high-tension lines need to be nearby to tie in to this. An advantage of large scale solar array is it is not shared energy. The energy will go directly into the grid and is not subject to a cap. There is no limitation on the ability to do that, the way there is with small scale solar projects. The City has been approached and has had discussions with companies. They talked with the company that is doing the one in Fitzwilliam and provided them with plans for several areas in the city that have possibilities, such as the airport. It is not common in New England to put solar arrays near airports but in other parts of the country it is common, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) does allow them with certain guidelines. Mayor Lane spoke of the potential for doing this at the airport, and the questions they have about the location. He continued that if there is public support for it they would entertain the idea. Chair Shedd asked about other potential sites. Mayor Lane replied the Transfer Station is a possibility. He continued that finding 100 acres in Keene that would be suitable is somewhat difficult. If anyone has 100 acres they would like to use for this he would be happy to talk with them.

Mr. Hansel asked if bringing power to the Transfer Station would be the main issue; there are no high-tension wires there. Mayor Lane replied that it would require an investment; there is no three phase power there. That is the limiting factor at the Transfer Station. He continued that they are conducting a study to see how long the methane gas will last at the Transfer Station. They will have to work hard to try and make that site available. There is a lot to be done. It will be a question of the high-tension wires/infrastructure being made available there.

Mr. Hansel asked, regarding the biodiesel, how scalable it is. Can it be increased? Mayor Lane replied yes. He continued that a question the City has been wrestling with is whether the City should in fact manufacture it and sell it directly, or license other companies to do it. He continued that he has been in favor of the former, although there are problems with that. There is some legislature that prohibits a municipality from being involved with a private business like that. The City Attorney is currently researching what the possibilities and limitations are. He continued that Mr. August has more expertise in this topic than he (Mayor Lane) does, plus enthusiasm, and he encourages the CCP to have him come in.

Mr. Hansel asked if biodiesel can be used for heating as well as vehicles. Mayor Lane replied that he does not think so. Chair Shedd asked if the SAU purchases any biodiesel from the City. She continued that that might be a way around the City being a “vendor.” Mayor Lane replied that he does not know. He continued that they are having conversations with the SAU right now about joint energy efficiency work, along with Peterborough and a few other communities. They have been meeting on a regular basis, through the purchasing agents, to look at energy efficiencies that can be achieved. He is

not sure where that stands. Ms. Chalice replied that maybe people involved with that could come speak with the CCP as well.

Mr. Hansel asked, regarding the second point about the private sector, which does need attention: can they find some champions out there that they can work with, that can be examples to the rest of the community?

Councilor Terry Clark arrived at 8:27 AM.

Mr. Hansel suggested the college, the hospital, or a company such as a C&S, as someone to approach and join forces with. Mayor Lane replied that the Co op immediately comes to mind – they can track the efficiencies they are able to achieve with their new solar array. They are right at the beginning of the process. He continued that he knows the hospital has done some work, but they have gone the propane route. Mr. Hansel replied that they are taking certain steps and could be encouraged to take other steps. He continued that they could follow how they are doing and use that information to inspire others. Chair Shedd replied that the CCP has talked before about what scale of business they want to look at – the college and hospital are large. Mayor Lane replied that the larger the businesses they are addressing, the more of an impact they will have, such as Smiths or C&S. He continued that he likes Mr. Hansel’s idea of working with businesses to try and track the impacts of the changes they make. There is a fairly short payback on investments, and working with those companies would be very worthwhile. He continued that that is where they will get the largest impacts for the investments that get made. Mr. Hansel replied that other smaller entities may be more representative of the general businesses in the area. Mayor Lane replied that 80% of the businesses in this area qualify as “small businesses.” Mr. Hansel replied that maybe they should look at both.

Ms. Brunner asked what happened with the 10% Challenge. Mayor Lane replied that it was the 15% Challenge. Ms. Chalice replied that that was years ago and she is not sure where it is at. Mr. Hansel spoke of his business’s involvement in the past. He continued that it was a great thought but not really followed through, and the tracking was not scientific. Ms. Chalice offered to find out more information for the committee about this. Mayor Lane stated that he recalls that the reduction reached 13% or 14% but that was mostly the City’s contribution and the private sector’s reduction was smaller. Chair Shedd replied that the municipality’s share of emissions is such a small slice of the pie. Mayor Lane agreed and replied that that is why it is so important to get the private sector on board.

Ms. Straughen stated that the Co op is tracking everything. She continued that she has the data and spreadsheets and reports monthly to the National Co op Association. She would be happy to share this information with the CCP. The Co op’s Finance Director is doing work on the return on investment and he could help out with that information, too. The Co op did a lot of energy efficiency measures as they were opening. As an overall case study it might be nice to look at – how insulation, windows, solar, etc., can all come together.

Chair Shedd stated that the Communications Working Group has been talking about how to have a public presentation about the GHG Inventory Update. She continued that perhaps they could have some case studies from local businesses on various scales that are making process. This is in the preliminary phases but on the radar screen.

Mr. Cornelius added that the Co op is composting and Duncan Watson (from the Public Works Department) spoke with the CCP about City compost issues. Mayor Lane replied that several food generating companies that have food waste could work together to create a larger scale composting operation. He continued that there are a number of grocery stores, food service for the schools, and plenty of restaurants. Individually it may be difficult for them, but on a combined basis, if there was a site available that they could all use, it might be worthwhile. Discussion continued about composting. Mr. Cornelius stated that Mr. Watson spoke with them about a composting site for the City that fell by the wayside.

Ms. Chalice stated that she is wondering about the portfolio manager – a free program that provides a basis for the City to more efficiently track its energy use and efficiencies. She is thinking of the City setting up a challenge, so the City can show its energy reduction and entities could challenge each other, using the software. She wonders if there is a way to talk about adopting the portfolio manager, as the GHG Emissions report goes forward, to set up a dynamic that gives other businesses a way to look at their energy efficiencies.

Mr. Hansel replied that the way you measure is very important and can change from entity to entity. He continued that having a uniform way to do it would be great, so they have data that is comparable. Mayor Lane replied that some companies are better than others at keeping data and measuring greenhouse gas costs. He continued that they would need to find a way to make it simple across the board for everyone. Ms. Chalice replied that she will look into whether there is someone that can come speak to the CCP about the portfolio manager. Ms. Brunner replied that there are webinars on the topic. Ms. Chalice replied that maybe the CCP can get together to watch a webinar and invite others to join them.

Mr. Cornelius asked how the CCP Committee is constituted. He continued that he joined because a friend suggested it to him, but he has no special expertise or education on this topic. Every now and then the committee suddenly needs new members and starts asking friends if anyone is interested. Can Mayor Lane can send a letter to local educational institutions to recruit potential new members who have education and expertise in this topic? Higher level representation on this committee would be helpful. Chair Shedd replied that they may have an opening coming up if Andrew Graham moves on.

Ms. Straughen stated that recently she learned that many local businesses do not even recycle. She continued that it seems like low-hanging fruit to her but she does not know what the barriers are. Mayor Lane replied that he does not know how to change that dynamic; it is not just downtown businesses, but also downtown apartment buildings and

he finds it disturbing. Chair Shedd replied that she thought there was an ordinance requiring local trash companies to recycle. Councilor Clark replied that it only applies to residential entities. Ms. Straughen replied that she wonders if there is a way that businesses could join together to recycle, helping with cost and space issues. She is not sure if the barriers are finances, or space, or not caring, but this seems like low-hanging fruit and it could make a big difference. Mayor Lane replied that he, too, recently became aware of how little recycling is being done downtown – he takes his recyclables home because it does not get done through his rental space downtown. Mr. Hansel suggested they look at other communities for examples of how to do this. Discussion continued about the lack of recycling in downtown areas. Chair Shedd suggested they at least start with entities connected with the City.

Councilor Clark spoke of incentives to businesses, like having savings, although he knows it is difficult to monitor. Mayor Lane replied that the City tried incentives, such as waiving the tipping fee for recycling. He continued that to some degree, part of the need is to educate the trash haulers, whom he often sees dumping recyclables in with the other trash. There needs to be some mechanism to monitor and track this to some extent so they can identify those who are not recycling. Chair Shedd suggested they dedicate an upcoming meeting to recycling and compost issues and identify who else to have come in, such as Mr. Watson again. Mr. Hansel suggested having someone from a trash hauling company in.

Ms. Chalice replied that the City's recycling situation does not have a fabulous economic outlook. She continued that as satisfying as recycling is she is thinking that focusing on the portfolio manager would have more of an impact right now. The City has reduced its emissions by 20.7% in this ten year period, and that is so astounding, that her instincts are to step up a step and focus on somehow inspiring local entities to follow the City's lead. Being able to light a fire under C&S would be great and have a larger impact, for example. Mr. Hansel replied that he agrees – recycling can be satisfying, but it would take a lot of work for a small impact.

Councilor Clark asked if businesses can piggy-back on the ESCO program that the City took advantage of. Mayor Lane replied that it was a private contract with Honeywell, not federal, so anyone can do it. Ms. Chalice stated that on the agenda is having the committee write a letter to advocate for community solar. She continued that they have not talked about the committee writing a letter about C-PACE. Chair Shedd replied that Mr. Maslansky told them there were details the Jordan Institute has to work out before signing on more legislatures. Ms. Chalice replied that she will check on that. She thought the hitch was figuring out the details of how monies will be gathered. Mr. Hansel replied that it seems like once they get the bugs figured out in Hanover, NH that would be a good model to follow. Brief discussion continued on C-PACE. Ms. Chalice stated that she will follow up and see if there is something the CCP can do to nudge this along and advocate for it to the City Council.

Ms. Brunner stated that they ran out of time for the first 10-year monitoring period. She asked if the City has plans to do another Climate Action Plan and set goals or if that is up

to the committee. Mayor Lane replied that that is up to the committee. He continued that the City would be happy to participate. For the next 20 years they need to really focus on the private sector. The additional impacts they can get out of the City are pretty small. Chair Shedd replied that the CCP has been talking about going to the City Council with proposed goals and targets. She continued that they are looking at State, national, and international targets. And yes, they need to take it to the private sector. Ms. Brunner suggested a re-write of the Climate Action Plan, which is from 2004 and is thus due for updating. Ms. Chalice suggested the CCP revisit the differences between the Climate Action Plan and the Climate Adaptation Plan, which Ms. Brunner has information about. Mayor Lane replied that the 2007 one was not just a small, local affair. He continued that he has spoken to many groups across the country. The Climate Adaptation Plan is one that municipalities all across the country have been looking at. He spoke to a group of dozens of mayors and planned on explaining the Adaptation Plan to them but they already knew all about it – it has provided national leadership for carbon emissions reduction and how municipalities can interact with that. Municipalities have been analyzing, adopting, and using it. The impact of it has been significant. It is part of the ethos of how the City of Keene does business, but the people in Keene have no idea the impact of the decisions that have been made here impacting other areas of the nation. Mr. Cornelius added that it is on the EPA website.

Chair Shedd and the committee thanked Mayor Lane for joining them today. Mayor Lane left at 8:57 AM.

Chair Shedd stated that there is a lot to follow up with that they will incorporate into future agendas.

4) Discussion – NH’s New Energy Efficiency Resource Standard

5) Discussion – Community Solar Advocacy Letter

Ms. Chalice asked if there are certain points the committee wants her to emphasize while drafting this letter, or if she should use her own judgement and pull from John Kondos’ written comments and CCP conversations. Chair Shedd replied that one point to emphasize is that they advocate for allowing more smaller investors to participate in solar projects, rather than only “qualified” investors. Ms. Chalice read out loud from the recommended wording from Mr. Kondos’ memo. Mr. Hansel replied that a really important point is allowing non passive income investors to participate. He continued that the Co op had an investor who wanted to participate but was unable to because his financial advisor told him, “You cannot – you do not have the right kind of income.” That is a key issue. Ms. Chalice replied that she will give it a whirl and put it in the packet for next month and see what the CCP thinks about it. Chair Shedd thanked her.

Mr. Cornelius made a motion for the CCP Committee to task Ms. Chalice with drafting a Community Solar advocacy letter, to send to the City Council and Mayor for their consideration. Councilor Clark seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

6) Report Back: Communications Working Group – Community Presentation/s of GHG Inventory Results

Ms. Brunner reported that the group has not met.

Chair Shedd stated that there is information in the agenda packet about NH's new energy efficiency resource standard. She continued that it will change how monies are available for energy efficiency projects. They might need someone from Local Energy Solutions to talk with. Also, she has not been able to track down information on whether the bill passed to change the distribution of funds from the RGGI stream. It was going to increase the amount for low-income energy efficiency projects but the rebates were going to go to commercial entities instead of residential entities. Ms. Chalice replied that she thinks it is still in discussion. Chair Shedd replied that she thought a decision was going to be made in June. It would be good for the CCP to find out about this.

7) Adjournment – Next Meeting is October 5, 2016

Chair Shedd adjourned the meeting at 9:03 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker