

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

9:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Rm, City Hall

Members Present:

Jennifer Risley, Chair
Robert Kelley, Vice Chair
Thomas Powers, Councilor
Dr. Ann Shedd
Megan Kennedy (left at 9:46 AM)
Richard (Dick) Cornelius, Alternate
John Kondos

Staff Present:

Karen Purinton, Planning

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Danny Veercamp

Chair Risley called the retreat to order at 9:00 AM and gave an overview of the agenda.

1. Individual Member Goals for Committee

Each CCP Committee member introduced him- or herself spoke of his or her background and/or interests in terms of climate change, as follows:

- Dick Cornelius believes that it is important, but difficult, to move the government, so climate change must be addressed by individual changes in behavior.
- Dr. Ann Shedd believes it will take policy-level encouragement for individuals and institutions to change their behaviors.
- Karen Purinton's focus is people – she wants folks to be healthy and have access to clean resources. She would like the committee to set goals and priorities.
- Bob Kelley is particularly interested in improving air quality, and addressing the pollution of wood-burning stoves, maybe by advocating for the Fire Department to not issue fire permits when the air quality is not good.
- Jen Risley is excited that it is possible to create change and improve people's quality of life. She wants the CCP Committee to continue working with the matrix to create partnerships and awareness.
- Megan Kennedy's focus is on food sustainability and local food development. She is interested in networking, outreach, and communication; she wants to start conversations about climate change with others.
- Councilor Tom Powers believes in the importance of taking action, not just talking. It is best to approach climate change both ways, individually and collectively. Focusing on just a few issues helps the CCP Committee get things done, instead of getting bogged down.

2. Revisit Charge of Committee

Chair Risley distributed copies of the committee's charge, and read/summarized each function they are charged with and the recommendations that accompany each.

Ms. Purinton noted that the Climate Adaptation Action Plan from 2007 (CAAP) came out of and supersedes the Climate Change Local Action Plan from 2004. She continued that last fall they talked about whether to revise these functions and guidelines but decided to hold off because there was significant membership change. These functions and guidelines can be altered with approval from the City Council.

Councilor Powers questioned whether the CCP Committee even has the control or authority to do some of these functions, and whether wording thus needs to be changed. Discussion ensued, and Chair Risley suggested #1 be "Promote the goals and measures of the local climate action plan..." (instead of "coordinate" the goals). Councilor Powers suggested changing #2 to "Assist with updating the local climate action plan..." instead of "Update the local climate action plan..."

Ms. Purinton noted that she has been working with the City Attorney on how best to word #5, which currently states, "Make recommendations to local boards and committees..." She continued that last year there was an issue when the CCP Committee passed a motion to ask the City Council to take a position on a specific project happening in the city. The City Attorney refocused the committee; the committee should take more of a broadscale view, focusing on policy, not individual projects. Dr. Shedd added that the City also clarified that the CCP Committee's comments need to go through the City Council instead of directly to outside agencies (such as the EPA).

Mr. Cornelius suggested changing #5 to "Make recommendations, through the City Council..." Discussion ensued, about the fact that not *everything* needs to go through the City Council, and about not tying up communications unnecessarily by sending them through the City Council process and potentially missing deadlines for commenting, and so on and so forth. Ms. Purinton will talk with the City Attorney for clarification. Dr. Shedd suggested a subcommittee be formed to continue working on updating the functions and guidelines, if necessary.

3. ICLEI Membership Resources and Other Resources Available to the CCP Committee

Ms. Kennedy reported that she researched what NH Local Energy Solutions has available for resources, found at nhenergy.org. She spoke about the organization's online offerings, including regular webinars on a variety of topics, listings of workshops and events; training webinars; handbooks, guides, and reports; and technical assistance. She continued that the website also has case studies on various topics (like retro fits to buildings, and waste water), grant programs, an e-newsletter to subscribe to, and calculators (such as a carbon calculator for small towns and campuses). An especially interesting and interactive page is "Climate Vision 2020." There are also maps (e.g. showing where energy commissions are located in NH) and listings of regional energy collaborations, and much more. She encourages people to visit the site.

Chair Risley asked if Monadnock Energy Resources Initiative (MERI) should collaborate with Mr. Pregent (regarding solar panels). Ms. Purinton replied that she does not know them. Chair Risley replied that they would be great to talk with.

Chair Risley stated that Ms. Purinton had mentioned that the City and Antioch University New England (AUNE) had entered into a formal partnership, and she wanted to find out more about that. She continued that she was surprised by its implications to the CCP's work. She distributed copies of a handout about the partnership, which states, in part, "The multi-year effort will focus on implementing provisions in the city's Master Plan, as well as Climate Adaptation Plan." Ms. Purinton stated that the CIP includes a community vulnerability assessment, which will be the first real project the City and AUNE do as partners. The assessment will look at the city's infrastructure and compare the results of a "no action" scenario versus other scenarios to address climate change, such as flood control. The assessment will show the results and costs of "do nothing" versus the other strategies, which AUNE will help identify. She added that AUNE also repopulated the website for the Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience, which is just getting off the ground. The agreement will take shape over the next couple years.

Chair Risley asked if AUNE is aware that the CCP is promoting the CAAP so they can be a partner. Ms. Purinton replied that Christa Daniels is the Director of the Center and hoping to host a community forum on flooding in the east side of Keene. She continued that there would be an opportunity for the CCP to be involved. Dr. Shedd stated that it would be great if a liaison from the Center came to CCP meetings. Chair Risley replied or vice versa.

Mr. Cornelius asked if this agreement was entered into by the City Council, and if the CCP Committee was involved. Councilor Powers replied that the City Council approved the agreement, which there had been lots of informal discussion about between the Mayor, City Manager, and the AUNE President. He continued that the partnership is about more than climate change issues – it is a way of formalizing things the City and AUNE have already been doing. It will be helpful for grants and other initiatives.

4. Review Climate Adaptation Plan Matrix

Chair Risley distributed copies of the matrix and explained the differences between this version and the previous one.

Ms. Purinton stated that the Climate Adaption Action Plan was developed in 2007, and identified issues and set goals. She continued that in 2011 and 2012, AUNE students helped create this matrix. The matrix identifies each area (e.g. Agriculture, Emergency Services, Public Health), calls out the players involved, and gives an idea of progress or of whether certain items are not addressed at all. The City Council adopted the matrix as an appendix to the CAAP.

Ms. Kennedy left at 9:46 AM.

Ms. Purinton continued that the matrix helps implement the goals of the CAAP. Some sectors have the CCP named as a partner, but others would not have the CCP involved, such as Agriculture – there is already an Agriculture Commission in the city, and Flora & Fauna is better

addressed by the Conservation Commission. Sectors that are most relevant to the CCP, in her opinion, are Energy Systems, Buildings and Development, and Climate Appropriate Economy.

Chair Risley stated that the CCP Committee created this matrix and then gave it to the AUNE students to work with. She continued that the students interviewed key players and returned a revised document to the CCP. Dr. Shedd added that sometimes when the students asked, “How are you doing with the plan?”, some people replied, “What plan?” She herself found it accidentally online. It is not on the Conservation Commission’s radar at all. Chair Risley replied that previously, when she did not fully understand the CCP’s charge and functions, she felt like the matrix was a side project. She continued that once she understood the charge, she knew that the matrix was definitely something the CCP should have been doing.

Councilor Powers stated that he agrees with Ms. Purinton’s suggestions. He continued that he also thinks they should focus on transportation (a major polluter they can really affect change with) and making sure City government complies with all the other rules. Chair Risley asked if others agree that these four areas are the ones they want to go forward with, and if they should form a matrix subcommittee.

Dr. Shedd proposed forming a subcommittee to re-examine what the City’s carbon emission reduction targets are and what they should be, since there are differences between the City’s current targets, the State plan’s targets, and recent targets announced by the Obama administration. She continued that the CCP spends a lot of time studying, planning, revising, and so forth, and she would love to see them doing things with concrete measurable outcomes. Ms. Purinton replied that 2015 is the City’s end date for the current goal for carbon emission reductions, and then they need to talk about a revised target, which would be a good time to work on aligning with the State goals. Councilor Powers replied, and also getting the two City plans in sync.

Chair Risley asked if the CCP agrees with focusing on the four areas of the matrix. CCP members replied yes. Chair Risley stated that she will convene a subcommittee for moving forward with this. She asked if they also want to have a subcommittee to work on taking the reduction goals from the three places and putting them into one document so they can think about aligning them. Discussion ensued. Ms. Purinton stated that if the CCP wants to recommend that the City’s targets/goals be changed, that would require involvement from others, like the Planning Director and the City Council, but on their own, the CCP can compile the information to look at it.

3. ICLEI Membership Resources and Other Resources Available to the CCP Committee

Chair Risley returned to this agenda item.

Ms. Purinton stated that ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability – is an organization that assists municipalities in reaching climate change goals. The City is a member, for about \$700 per year. Page 14 of the agenda packet shows what the City has access to as a member, such as webinars, toolkits, and resources. She continued that the most useful resource they provide to

the City is the ClearPath software. It is a great resource that an intern in the Planning Department will use to create a greenhouse gas emissions inventory for 2015.

Ms. Purinton continued that ICLEI also offers EPA Portfolio Manager, a program that tracks municipal energy usage over time and compares it to peers based on square footage. She explained how they are doing a pilot project, through the Code Enforcement Department, looking at the Keene Public Library's energy usage. She added that they are getting past the point where they need to learn more; they need to DO more. This software from ICLEI is the biggest benefit – it is complex and detailed. Doing an inventory is a huge undertaking that would be even more difficult without the resources from ICLEI. The City does not do annual inventories due to lack of resources, but maybe that should be a goal. If so, there needs to be more City Council-level support for that.

Chair Risley stated that Monadnock Buy Local (MBL) is a member of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE), and if the City were a member of MBL they would have free access to BALLE resources. She continued that one such resource is the Quick Impact Assessment (QIA) businesses can take to see where they are at with their triple bottom line (“people, planet, and profit”) and how they can improve. She gave more information about the QIA, and stated that this could further the CCP's goals quicker than the Green Business of the Year Award. Once she finds out how much the QIA will cost, she wants to write grants and partner with the City or Chamber of Commerce to make this happen. It is a great opportunity for the CCP.

Chair Risley continued that page 2 of the BALLE handout talks about developing Localist policies that foster local living economies. There are many resources and kits to help municipalities create policies for local procurement, for example, buying from independent companies instead of chains, to keep more money in the local economy. Ms. Purinton replied that the City has an internal group called Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EP3), which looks at purchasing policies and issues such as informing employees about sustainable products.

Mr. Cornelius asked how these topics relate to the matrix. Chair Risley replied that these are some groups that could help the City/CCP meet some of the goals related to the local climate appropriate economy and the economy in general.

Councilor Powers stated that they need “a method for coming back to the basics.” He spoke about how helpful it would be if clear, consistent procedures were developed to assist City staff in making sure infrastructure projects are implemented in a way that is consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). Dr. Shedd added, and the low-impact development standards. Councilor Powers continued that each project should have a checklist staff goes through to make sure they are doing things correctly – for example, meeting the lighting standards set by the Planning Board. There are sometimes too few staff members, inundated with too much work, and thus there are a lot of omissions. A clear process, with checklists, would help them do projects correctly and efficiently. Mr. Kelley added that technology changes so rapidly that it is not always right to do a project the way you have previously done it. Others agreed and discussion ensued about solar power as an example.

Ms. Purinton stated that she will share these thoughts with the EP3 group. Councilor Powers added that it is important to remember, in general, that it is not always necessary to spend a lot of time and brainpower trying to create a document/policy/checklist from scratch. He continued that usually someone else/some other group has what you need if you can just find the template.

5. Set Goals For Upcoming Year

Chair Risley initiated a discussion on the CCP Committee's goals for the upcoming year. The CCP members re-capped the goals they had come up with today, and Ms. Purinton recorded them on the easel. The goals, in no particular order, were as follows:

- Align the CMP, local Climate Adaptation Action Plan (CAAP), and NH's Climate Adaptation Plan (NHCAP), regarding greenhouse gas emission reduction goals
- Identify a checklist for climate adaptation goals for city projects
- Focus the matrix work on four areas: Buildings and Development, Energy Systems, Climate Appropriate Economy, and Transportation
- Make suggestions for updating the local CAAP
- Advocate for an annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory
- Have the City and CCP create a community outreach plan that includes funding

Mr. Cornelius spoke of an article he read in the Keene Sentinel about federal tax incentives for solar panels. He asked if there are City incentives. Ms. Purinton and Councilor Powers replied that there is a one-time, readily-available tax exemption. Mr. Cornelius replied that he does not think the Sentinel reporter knows that. He wonders if they should talk to the reporter. Ms. Purinton replied, or write a letter to the editor. She continued that the CCP had a goal of sending four letters to the editor per year. They should have a plan in place for this.

Dr. Shedd stated that she has ideas for subtopics for the goals they have listed. Chair Risley replied that that is good; they have not talked about that yet, and also need to talk about measurable outcomes. Mr. Cornelius asked if promoting individual solar panels fits in with these goals. Chair Risley replied yes.

Councilor Powers stated that the next step is to prioritize the goals, address each one with subtopics, and create an action plan. Chair Risley replied that she thinks they need to first think more/discuss more about what these goals mean. Councilor Powers suggested they talk about these goals at each meeting. Dr. Shedd added, and look to see who else is already engaged in efforts relating to those four categories.

Chair Risley asked if there is consensus that the goals they have listed are appropriate for the CCP to take on this year. Councilor Powers replied that he is good with the list. Dr. Shedd stated that annualizing the inventory will not happen this year. Ms. Purinton replied that if the CCP does not see any of its resources in 2015 going towards advocating for an annual inventory, they should take it off the list. She continued that they may not be able to do everything and they need to focus. Dr. Shedd stated that Mari Brunner, a few months back, had given the CCP recommendations on doing outreach on social media. Chair Risley replied that the recommendations were a little too much for the CCP to take on, but they can do outreach via letters to the editor.

Chair Risley stated that they will prioritize the goals later, once they have had more time to get on the same page. Councilor Powers asked that they prioritize them at the next meeting.

Dr. Shedd noted that they have unfinished business from the 8:00 AM meeting they just had, regarding whether the CCP wants to co-sponsor an event about the proposed pipeline. Ms. Purinton suggested changing the wording of the motion to take Senator Molly Kelly out of it, in case she does not host the forum.

Dr. Shedd's motion from the previous meeting, for the Cities for Climate Protection Committee to pursue co-sponsorship for an informational event about the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline, was seconded by Councilor Powers during the previous meeting.

Councilor Powers spoke in support of the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Dr. Shedd stated that she will reach out and see how Sen. Kelly is doing with this.

6. Adjournment

The retreat adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker