

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 2, 2015 8:00 AM 2nd Floor Committee Rm, City Hall

Members Present:

Dr. Ann Shedd, Chair
Jennifer Risley, Vice Chair
Thomas Powers, Councilor
Peter Hansel
Andrew Graham (8:02 AM)

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planning (8:34 AM)

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Richard (Dick) Cornelius, Alternate

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2. Minutes of November 4, 2015

Councilor Powers made a motion to approve the minutes of November 4, 2015. Ms. Risley seconded the motion and noted a correction – on page 5 in the discussion about composting; “Monadnock Sustainability Network” should be “Monadnock Buy Local.” Chair Shedd noted a typo on page 6; in the third paragraph under agenda item #10 – “Mr. Brunner” should be “Ms. Brunner.” The minutes were approved as amended.

3. Climate Adaptation Plan Subcommittee Summary

Chair Shedd reported that she has nothing to report regarding the building and energy goals. Ms. Risley stated that regarding car-sharing, she met with JB Mack (of Southwest Regional Planning Commission, SWRPC) and they are moving forward. Chair Shedd asked if that is mostly through the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST). Ms. Risley replied yes and they reached out to Prof. Brehme and there might be an opportunity for students to take this on as a special project. They will meet soon.

4. Status of NH Net-Metering Cap Letter Request

Chair Shedd reported that Ms. Chalice may have a further update on this when she arrives. She continued that the Finance, Organization, and Personnel (FOP) Committee met and discussed the CCP’s request for the City Council to send a letter to the State suggesting raising the cap. The FOP Committee amended it to: “suggest that the State remove the cap.” This proceeded through the City Council and the letter will go out this month.

Chair Shedd reported that she spoke recently with Marlborough, NH Representative Marge Shepardson, who anticipates a bill to raise the cap to be fast-tracked in January to be on the Governor’s desk on February 1. She continued that the bill is to temporarily raise it from 50 megawatts to 75 megawatts with some further provisions. That is good news for other projects in the pipeline that might bump into the cap. Mr. Hansel stated that the Monadnock Food Co op solar project has slipped in under the cap. He continued that he is hopeful that in the next couple of days they will reach a final agreement with the Co op.

5. Regional Energy Hub – <http://www.nhenergy.org/regional-energy-hubs.html>

Ms. Risley reported that the New England Grassroots Environment Fund had been putting staff time and money into the NH Local Energy Solutions, an organization that the CCP has talked about. She continued that they updated their website and identified six hubs in NH that are working as energy committees/groups. The maps do not include Keene or southwest NH. Last year the CCP took on the responsibilities of an energy committee so they should look at reaching out and see if they can be added. It would be great to have the CCP's activities shared.

Mr. Hansel asked what the purpose of an energy hub is. Ms. Risley read the description from the website. She explained that the point is for energy groups in the state to be able to know what each other are doing instead of working in isolation. Previously, it was hard to know, when people were not updating their websites. NH Local Energy Solutions sends out monthly updates on what the different groups are doing. It creates a network.

Chair Shedd stated that they could recommend that the CCP be part of the eastern Monadnock group, or a separate group. She asked if the committee needs to vote, or has thoughts or questions. Should they wait until next month when people have had more time to look at the information? Councilor Powers replied that that is a good idea. Chair Shedd replied that this seems like a good opportunity for coordinating efforts instead of working in isolation.

Ms. Risley stated that in October 2014 the CCP's charge was revised, but she is wondering if that ever got officially adopted. She has been trying to find it online to see, but did not complete that in time for today's meeting. She continued that Ms. Chalice did not think that the CCP is an energy committee. Councilor Powers asked if that revision was made at the same time that CCP membership was changing. Ms. Risley replied possibly. She continued that it was when Karen Purinton was working in the Planning Department. She could not find the Mayor's signature on the revision. The charge is in Section 2-1092 (of Division 19 in Article V of Chapter 1 of the City Code). Councilor Powers replied that he will look into it.

Chair Shedd stated that local energy committees are largely tasked with municipal energy improvements instead of community-wide. She continued that it seems like the CCP's charge includes functioning as a local energy committee in conjunction with City staff but should not be limited to that role. Ms. Risley replied yes, that was the language. She read out loud from the charge. She noted that there were two places where the language in the charge was changed to reflect what Chair Shedd just said. Chair Shedd stated that the Climate Action Plan includes both municipal and community-wide aspirations, and that will be on January's agenda.

6. Antioch University New England (AUNE) Climate Center Updates

Mr. Graham reported that they are taking in a few registrations [for the upcoming conference in Baltimore] and reporting on the travel grant from the last conference in order to try to receive those funds again. He continued that he inquired about whether or not any of the conference will be recorded and he does not think it will happen live, but some of the sessions will be recorded. The webinar series AUNE has been doing came out of the 2014 conference. The webinar series will continue beyond this conference as well so the content will continue to be available. People can let him know if they have accessed that, have problems accessing it, or have questions.

Chair Shedd asked why the webinars used to appear in local listings, like the Keene Sentinel, but have not been advertised in a long time. She suggested the City screen the webinars here in the conference room once a month, open to the public, like Ms. Purinton had been doing for a while. They could try it for a couple months. Mr. Graham replied yes, that could be an outreach event.

Chair Shedd replied that she will work with him to see what it takes to get it set up, and also talk with Ms. Chalice. Mr. Graham stated that he found out later that AUNE had been having a lot of technical difficulties at the room on campus that Chair Shedd and others were once locked out of, when they tried to attend the webinar there.

Mr. Graham gave information about the keynote speakers at the conference, which include Mark Jacobson from Stamford and Bill McKibbin (via the Internet from VT). He continued that some students from Christa Daniels' class are working on a report on the history of and human impacts of flooding in Keene. If the CCP wanted, they could come and present their findings, maybe at the February meeting. Mr. Hansel asked if they will present to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Graham replied that he does not think they have plans to do that but they would probably be willing to present their work wherever they are asked to. Mr. Hansel replied that it might make sense for the CCP and Conservation Commission to join together for the presentation.

Mr. Graham reported that they talked about the possibility of offering a workshop on climate change communication. He continued that he has had the opportunity in the past couple years to go to some seminars. The Center would be interested in discussing it with this committee since the CCP is a de facto energy committee. They are the faces in Keene of the people talking about climate change adaptation. The workshop would be about making sure they are current on the best practices for talking to people who might not be up on the science or care about climate change, or might want to know how it will affect their homes, businesses, or habits. If that is of interest they can schedule a discussion in the winter. Chair Shedd replied that it would be nice to reach out to a broader audience. She continued that people outside of this committee and outside of Keene might want to learn those techniques. Mr. Graham replied yes, his sense is that it is a "train the trainers" type of thing, to give people already working in the field the tools to bring others on board and expand the movement.

7. Other Climate Group Updates

Chair Shedd reported that two weeks ago the Citizens for Climate Lobby had their annual meeting in Nashua. She continued that James Hansen spoke and "minced no words." She went to a great workshop on how to get your letters to the editor published – the person leading the workshop has had over 400 letters published over the past several years, all over the country, on climate change. She also attended a workshop on moving the middle through calm discussion - not even trying to address the climate deniers, but addressing the people who are on the fence or do not know or care. This might be what Mr. Graham is talking about. Mr. Graham agreed.

Chair Shedd reported that last night Next Gen Climate had a panel at the Keene Public Library. She continued that Mari Brunner was a panelist and Jim Gardner was there, too, and a member of the Sierra Student Coalition was linked from Paris. There was not huge attendance. Most people there are already very much on board. Education about the UN process was helpful, and people gave thoughts on how to tie it in locally. It was nice to see a multi-generational event.

Chair Shedd stated that there is a significant climate action conference happening in Paris now. She continued that this Sunday at noon on Central Square there will be a rally about it, and she encourages people to attend.

Ms. Risley reported that some time back the City had applied with some other towns to the 100 Resilient Cities Challenge, and was not chosen. She continued that the "10% Resilience Pledge" is specifically for the Mayors involved with the 100 Resilient Cities program, but it would still be good to ask Mayor Lane to be involved. She read the pledge, which is about pledging 10% of

the City's budget towards climate change adaptation and resilience goals. The 100 Resilient Cities program gives money. Maybe Keene will get chosen in the next round. The template is interesting. She continued that Chair Shedd had made the point/question of "Gee, I wonder how much we ARE spending on climate adaptation goals – what if it is only a very small percentage?" This would get people looking at the budget and the lack of resources they have to achieve the goals they have for climate change adaptation.

Mr. Hansel stated that some mayors have a lot of power, but others do not. Ms. Risley replied that this is Mayor Lane's second term. She continued that if he could come up with some kind of pledge it would be at least a talking point and a way to get the message out. Mr. Hansel stated that how you define climate adaptation change expenses is interesting to figure out.

Councilor Powers stated that after the first of the year, the City Council will work on setting goals for the next two years. He continued that at least one goal should be about climate protection and adaptation. Chair Shedd asked what the process will be. Councilor Powers replied that they do not know yet. He continued that a professional facilitator from the City's insurance carrier will help. Discussion continued and Chair Shedd asked if the CCP should submit a formal request to the City Council that climate change receive strong consideration during that activity. Councilor Powers replied yes.

Ms. Risley made a motion for the CCP to request that the City Council have climate change action and adaptation as an item in the goal-setting process for the next two-year cycle. Mr. Graham seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Risley stated that MBL is trying to leverage the closure of Vermont Yankee and talk about economic development strategies. She continued that MBL estimates that the loss is 30 million dollars per year. MBL determined that if everyone in the region shifted 10% of their retail purchases at chain stores to retail purchases at local/independent stores, that would generate 27 million dollars per year. It pertains to this committee because one of the CCP's goals is supporting local businesses, and it also shows that the loss of an economic force that is not resilient (nuclear energy) can result in a strategy of resilience.

Mr. Hansel asked if there is a way to measure that to see if they are succeeding. Ms. Risley replied that it would be challenging, but there are initiatives through MBL that try to track success, like a survey to local businesses about their annual revenue, and tracking spending through a receipt contest. She continued that it is not actual data but it is trends, which is the best they can do right now. It would great to commission a more formal study in the future.

Mr. Hansel asked if the CCP needs to take action on the letter from Friends of Open Space that was attached to the agenda packet. Chair Shedd replied that the Friends are asking for sponsorship. She continued that she thinks the Conservation Commission has signed on as a sponsor. City sponsorship would allow the Friends to access Heberton Hall without a rental fee, she thinks. It sounds like a nice opportunity to bring various groups under one roof for a while and do outreach to the public. She thinks sponsoring it would be a reasonable offer to make.

Mr. Hansel made a motion for the CCP to co-sponsor the forum on Tuesday, April 10, 2016, for Friends of Open Space of Keene. Councilor Powers seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Hansel stated that to follow up about composting, he had said he would check with the person who brought up the topic with him. He did. The person handed him some information. There is a website listed and information about a composting program in Portland, ME – there are two areas that they can look into to see what other communities are doing. He has not had a chance to follow up on that. Chair Shedd stated that those would be nice models to follow. Brattleboro, VT has municipality scale composting.

Ms. Chalice arrived at 8:34 AM.

Chair Shedd continued that they will keep this on the agenda for January. She asked if they should discuss it further among themselves or see if Duncan Watson can come next month. Mr. Hansel said yes. Ms. Chalice asked if she should invite him. Chair Shedd replied yes.

Mr. Hansel stated that a year and a half ago, his company, Filtrine, contracted with AUNE students to do a project that determined Filtrine's carbon footprint. He continued that it was quite revealing. There are very few examples of companies that size doing it in the country. The students were breaking new ground with the methodology they were using. He wonders if the CCP should look at it and pursue other businesses' use of this kind of model, and work with AUNE students to accomplish that. For example, the hospital and school district. They could probably take advantage of some of the work that has already been done.

Ms. Risley replied that the CCP used to do the Green Business of the Year Award, and when they were trying to decide whether to continue it, the Chamber of Commerce, the Hannah Grimes Center, the City, MBL, and the Southwest Regional Planning Commission met and asked "Is this program meeting our goal?" They decided the answer was "no," so they looked for alternatives that businesses could do to cut emissions. There are a couple opportunities but they are not available yet. One promising tool was supposed to be available in April of this year but kept getting put off. It is through the B Corp certification, scaling it into a 20-minute assessment and giving the information to a hub like MBL that would share the information with others.

Mr. Hansel stated that it was discouraging to Filtrine to see how big their footprint is for being such a small company. He continued that it would be enlightening for other companies. Chair Shedd stated that the Climate Action Plan calls for the City creating a position titled something like "Sustainability Coordinator." She continued that she wonders whether some of these national businesses that have settled in the area have a national Sustainability Office. If none of them feel like they could sustain a full time position, maybe it could be a shared position that could be a resource for the City and the local businesses.

Ms. Risley replied that the Co op has its own sustainability program. She continued that on a monthly basis, they punch extensive numbers in and compare the Monadnock Food Co op to other co ops all over the nation. It is detailed and takes a lot of work.

Ms. Chalice asked if the software ICLEI has come up with to determine carbon footprints is something that is used nationwide, so they could compare apples to apples. Mr. Hansel replied that Michael Simpson at AUNE might have an answer. Ms. Chalice stated that it would be nice to use something that is as uniform as possible so they could make sure their information is consistent with others' information. Ms. Risley replied that it gets challenging, with all the different kinds of businesses. She continued that she has not looked recently at what is available. Mr. Hansel stated that when you take each component, like a waste stream, you get data on what

represents a carbon footprint. He continued that a lot of that is available. It is a matter of gathering it all together and making it relevant.

8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Intern Recruitment - Status

Ms. Chalice stated that she spoke with Rhett Lamb about ICLEI and planned to meet with Ms. Brunner yesterday but that did not happen and they will reschedule. She continued that they will make sure they are clear on the responsibilities and a work plan that meets the City's and CCP's goals for the work to come. Hopefully that will be taken care of in the next two weeks. She can start on the details for getting that work position created. They are making good process.

Chair Shedd asked if this will still get launched early in the new year, like they had talked about. Ms. Chalice replied that she hopes so. Chair Shedd stated that she assumes the data collection and analysis will take quite some time. Ms. Chalice replied that they have enough funds for either two interns or for one intern to work for an extended time. She continued that they will decide that once the person they hire starts to get into the nuts and bolts. Ms. Brunner did work with a bunch of data that had been done by people before her. Once the person they hire begins to get into the nuts and bolts, they will get a handle on how smoothly the work will go, compared to how it went years ago, to see whether it will be best to have one intern or two.

Chair Shedd stated that the goal was completion by June. She asked if that is still possible. Ms. Chalice replied yes, she will continue to try for that. Chair Shedd asked if there is anything else the CCP can do to keep this on schedule. Ms. Chalice replied that they can continue to push – they can call Mr. Lamb and ask him, too, if there is anything the committee can do.

Chair Shedd asked if anyone had other thoughts on monitoring the City's and the community's GHG emissions. Mr. Graham stated that he hopes that someday many businesses and places in Keene will undertake these carbon footprint measurements and they can do a municipal-level study of the carbon footprint.

Chair Shedd asked if anyone knows other cities that have taken this on. Ms. Risley replied that ICLEI might have information. Ms. Chalice stated that ICLEI seemed to have a specific municipal system/program that they were asking for municipalities to do their GHG plans from. She asked if that is different from what they did with the last inventory. Ms. Brunner replied that in the past ICLEI had an older software program that they used for the first two GHG emissions inventories, and now there are new software programs. She continued that there is one specifically for municipal emissions and one for community emissions, and they used both programs. Ms. Chalice replied that that sounds good, and they can continue along in the municipal realm. Ms. Brunner replied that it looks at just the City, not private businesses or home owners; that is a separate entity. Ms. Chalice replied that they will continue both.

Chair Shedd stated that with any of these tools the outcome is only as good as the input. She continued that they discovered at Filtrine what the detailed look can be. Mr. Hansel replied yes, and yet it was not complete – it did not include information about transportation for materials, and people coming in and out of the facility. That was beyond the scope. But the students studied Filtrine's processes in place, their waste, the materials they use, and so on and so forth.

Chair Shedd stated that things change in Keene - for example, they have some new, large retail establishments on West Street that trucks deliver to. Does the software factor that in? Ms. Brunner replied that "area daily average traffic" is a part of it, including class of vehicle.

Chair Shedd asked Ms. Brunner for other thoughts. Ms. Brunner stated that regarding the timeline, all of the data collection had happened 4 or 5 years earlier when she was doing this work, so that was confusing and tricky and putting the report together took through June. She continued that there are two inventories, for municipality and community; maybe two interns could split it that way. She was doing about 10 hours a week. So another option is to have one intern doing more than 10 hours a week.

Ms. Chalice replied that she likes the two intern idea. Chair Shedd asked if the data is centralized. Ms. Chalice replied that she talked with Corinne Marcou, who was collecting the data for the Public Works Department. She continued that previously, the person doing the data collection had formed a personal relationship with a different person in each building. Ms. Marcou tried to get a system with more consistency. Now a person at the Recreation Center will be taking it over. It remains to be seen how much process had been made in pulling those numbers together. It might be easier to get the number from the electric company, although they charge a fee. Or, Ms. Marcou thought they could work with the energy broker (who helps the City negotiate on these things) and get the numbers from him/her. It would be discouraging to have to go building to building again. The energy broker might be the best opportunity with the least cost and the most consistency.

Mr. Hansel asked if she means for electricity and fuel. Ms. Chalice replied yes. Mr. Hansel replied that the person who pays the bill should have that information. Ms. Chalice replied that for a while it was done building to building. It was just recently that the Acting City Manager started to pull it together and have Ms. Marcou sign all of those bills. She has alerted Ms. Marcou that this work is upcoming and that there will be a new person coming with questions.

9. Member Recruitment

Chair Shedd stated that at the City Council meeting this week Ms. Brunner will be designated as a full member of the committee and Mr. Hansel will move up to a full member. She continued that since they are losing Ms. Risley they will only have five members. Councilor Powers stated that Ms. Risley can stay until she gets replaced if she chooses to/is able to. He continued that he had a conversation with the Mayor. Ms. Brunner will have to be reappointed in 2016 because the vacant slot she is entering expires at the end of the month. Mr. Hansel spoke in favor of Ms. Risley continuing on and others expressed positive words about Ms. Risley's work with the CCP. Chair Shedd asked if Ms. Risley is willing to stick with the committee until she is replaced. Ms. Risley replied that she will think about it.

Chair Shedd reported that Prof. Brehme is interested but will be on sabbatical in 2016 and thus wants to be kept in mind for 2017. She spoke of other possible members and asked if anyone else had ideas. Ms. Risley stated that someone at the Co op might be able and interested.

Ms. Risley asked if there is a way to get non-Keene residents permission to be CCP members. Councilor Powers suggested that Chair Shedd meet with the Mayor to talk about these challenges, because anything is possible. Ms. Risley replied that she knows of people who are not Keene residents but who work in Keene, and want to join, and one has expertise in energy efficiency. Ms. Chalice replied that that is important to mention to the Mayor, and asked if these people should write a letter of interest with their qualifications. Councilor Powers replied no, they should first have a conversation with the Mayor about how not allowing non-Keene residents affects the efficiency and efficacy of the group. Ms. Risley spoke of how she assumes other committees, such as the Agriculture Commission, struggle with this, too.

Chair Shedd thanked the committee, Ms. Brunner, and Mr. Gardner, and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

10. Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Shedd adjourned the meeting at 8:59 AM. Mr. Graham stated that he will not be in attendance at the January 6 meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker

Edited by Michele Chalice