

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 1, 2021**

**8:00 AM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Peter Hansel, Chair  
Cary Gaunt, Vice Chair (Zoom)  
Jake Pipp  
Jude Nuru (Zoom)  
Paul Roth (Zoom)  
Zach Luse  
Suzanne Butcher (Zoom)  
Councilor Bryan Lake  
Andrew Dey  
Clair Oursler, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Raleigh Ormerod  
Ken Dooley

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

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

**2) Approval of Minutes: November 3, 2021 Meeting**

Clair Oursler moved to accept the November 3, 2021 meeting minutes with revisions, Paul Roth seconded and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Revisions as follows:

Line 48-change “he” to Councilor Lake

Line 99- change “to” to “two”

Line 100-change “Ms. Butcher” to “Ms. Gillard”

**3) Energy Plan Work Group Report-outs**

**A) Weatherization**

Mr. Luse stated that Keene Energy Week went very well, the Saturday event was well attended as was the webinar. They also received feedback from some of the businesses that attended. He said they were able to get several new people to sign up for the Energy Newsletter for the city. The solar tour also went well,

and he said the event was a good starting point for next year. Chair Hansel asked for clarification about the Energy Newsletter and Mr. Luse replied that it is the city's newsletter that people can register for to receive updates on the city's energy projects. Ms. Brunner noted that it is not really a newsletter but a list of topics that people can sign up for to receive updates. She said there are topics for energy and sustainability and community power that were created for the energy planning process, specifically. Chair Hansel asked if they received an update about the number of companies that signed up for weatherization through NH Saves. Mr. Luse replied that he asked for an update and did not get an immediate response, but he believes about a dozen companies received the audit as far as he knows.

### **B) Home Energy Labeling**

Mr. Dey stated that the working group had a local realtor join them at their last meeting, Ms. Cassie Eaton, who provided some good information and feedback about the home energy labeling program. She thinks they are on the right track about educating realtors for a program that would apply at the time of sale. He said that she pointed out that it is the brokers who own and control the realty companies and they are the ones they should be reaching out to about this additional work for their realtors. He said that Ms. Eaton pointed out that any real estate transaction involves a lot of paperwork so if they could streamline the home energy labeling into that process that would be ideal in terms of not overburdening the workflow. Mr. Dey stated that he does not have an update about meeting with the Masiello office, but he will reach out to Commissioner Clark about that. He said Mr. Metell was successful in engaging with Mr. Greenwald about the home energy labeling initiative and Mr. Greenwald reiterated the concerns about ensuring the process is voluntary and potential liability about accuracy of information. There was additional concern on his part about how a building performs and how occupants behave, as well as how intrusive and professional the inspections will be, and Mr. Metell assured him that it is a calculation-based evaluation using information that is publicly available. Mr. Dey stated that Ms. Brunner brought up the idea of incentives and there may be a lack of resources in terms of offering those incentives, but the working group continues to have these important discussions. Chair Hansel asked if they have discussed the possibility of volunteers having their homes labeled to model the process to the public. Mr. Dey replied that is a good idea and few members of the committee have already plugged their data into the home energy labeling profile and the results were reasonably accurate, however, it did not generate a label, but it is important to share the tools that exist to share with the public. Chair Hansel stated that he would like to perform a home energy label for his own home. Mr. Dey added that if they do get the program off the ground, they would perhaps offer it to all homeowners and not just those that are looking to sell their homes. He suggested that they write up a few notes about the process to share with committee members at a future meeting.

### **C) Electric Vehicles**

Mr. Roth stated that the EV group had a short meeting on November 17, and they received an update about the Monadnock Co-Op's progress on charging stations. He said the Co-op has enlisted Revision Energy and Charge Point, and their bid date was November 20. He said they are working with the State of NH and the owner had to come up with 20% of the cost and 80% will come from the settlement. He stated that two car dealerships in the area have charging stations: Nissan of Keene and Noyes VW. Chair Hansel corrected that the bid date is sometime at the end of January. He said that Mr. Kondos is working closely with the Co-Op, and they are waiting for some more information from Eversource and are hopeful that the permitting process from the city does not cause any delays. Chair Hansel shared that he visited Noyes and learned that the charging station is only available for their customers. He said it did not appear to be a fast

charger, however, the sales representative stated that it is a fast charger. Mr. Pipp added that the Ford dealership in Swanzey also has a charger, and he is not sure if it is only open to customers but that may be something to check in on.

#### **D) Community Solar**

Mr. Nuru stated that one of the goals of the working group is to compile an inventory of solar development in the city. He said they have gathered data from Eversource showing how solar energy has progressed from 2009-2020. He shared that on the residential side, from 2009-2020, there were 116 systems installed; on the commercial side for the same timeframe there were 34 systems installed. He noted that converts to 736.9 kw on the residential end, and 2,968.59 kw on the commercial side. He said it is important to note that in 2016, 2017 and 2019 there were more installations than any other year on the residential side and on the commercial side, the years 2016, 2018, and 2019 also recorded the most installations. Mr. Nuru stated that in 2019 both sectors reported the highest installations and then there is a marked decline in installations in the year 2020 in both sectors and that is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Nuru stated that overall, there have been more installations on the residential side although the commercial side has more capacity. For example, Filtrine's installation alone is greater than the combined installation on the residential side at approximately 792 kw. He said this implies that they may want to increase their engagement with the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber of Commerce to stimulate interest in solar because one commercial installation has much more capacity. Mr. Nuru stated that the group also discussed the ongoing effort to have community solar systems installed in the city, most notably they talked about the Monadnock Development Coalition which is working on the installation at the Optical Avenue property. In addition, they discussed the Ashuelot River Park location, and to actionize their discussion, they took a walk last Friday to two locations to assess their viability. They visited the potential bike path site behind Antioch University and performed an analysis of the acreage: 0.8 acres which converts to approximately 37,000 square feet and that translates to at least 200 kw system size with limitations. Mr. Nuru noted that there are two distribution power lines along the parcel and based on earlier conversations they know that Eversource's setback requirement is about 35 feet and given those limitations it may not provide sufficient space so they concluded that the bike path may not be a viable site. He stated that the group determined that the Ashuelot River Park is the most viable location in the city because it is flat, has proximity to downtown and to Keene Housing and very close to three phase-power, and therefore the location meets all the necessary requirements. He said this is one of the locations that is being discussed already and the committee will be updated about that conversation.

Mr. Nuru stated that the Tanglewood Residence mobile home park on the western side of Keene was also brought up and there is a possibility to build a system remotely and allocate power to that site. He said the potential game changer is the Build Back Better Bill which has passed the House and he hopes will receive endorsement from the Senate which can open possibilities for all sectors and especially low- and moderate-income communities. Chair Hansel stated that the total kilowatts installation in Keene can be converted to total kilowatt hours per year and the next step is to figure out how that relates to the total consumption in Keene. He said Eversource has the data in two versions, and he is trying to figure out which one is a better measure of total green energy percentage to use moving forward for the green power planning. Mr. Luse asked how they plan to promote more solar energy installation with the Chamber of Commerce. Chair Hansel said he can raise the issue with the Director of the Chamber of Commerce and see what he recommends. He said they have regional issues series periodically and perhaps green energy can become one of those topics and they should make contact soon to see about the possibility. Ms.

Butcher asked if reaching out to the Chamber would help them to reach out to nonlocal decision-makers. Chair Hansel said he is unsure, as the Chamber concentrates on their own members, however, they may have newsletters that go out to other organizations. Ms. Butcher said she has reached out to Genesis over the years and has not gotten a response. Mr. Nuru added that they have an assessment tool for engaging with nonlocal organizations that determines if an organization is registered in NH, and they have found that local organizations are easier to deal with than those that are multinational. He said regarding Hillside, he worked with the former Director of Facilities, who promised that he would introduce him to the new Director but that has not happened yet.

**4) Planning for ECC Annual Retreat**

Chair Hansel stated that they are planning an ECC retreat for next year. Ms. Brunner said part of the discussion today is to determine a date and location for the annual retreat. She said they can do it at City Hall or another location. Chair Hansel stated that they are approaching the end of the second year of the energy plan process, and they have eight more years to achieve their first goal of transitioning all energy to renewables by 2030. He said he is open to suggestions from the committee. Mr. Dey suggested setting goals or milestones along the way. Chair Hansel agreed and said that could be an important topic for the retreat. Councilor Lake asked if they have a time frame in mind. Chair Hansel replied that it typically is held late winter or early spring to account for new membership. He suggested March as a potential time. He said one possibility is to take a regularly scheduled meeting and stretch it out to a few hours, or another option is to meet at another time. Chair Hansel suggested taking a poll to see when people are available. He asked for members' thoughts. Councilor Lake suggested that they focus on the short-term to get the ball rolling; he said there are goals set out in then energy plan so they may want to consider tackling those goals already set out. Chair Hansel agreed that they should review the plan. Ms. Butcher added that revisiting the plan is a good idea, but they should also prioritize the steps and actions that will have the most impact by 2030. Chair Hansel agreed with that suggestion and proposed creating new workgroups or combining work group efforts as well. Vice Chair Gaunt noted that the Sustainability Council and President's Cabinet at Keene State College (KSC) have found very simple infographics to be useful in educating the public and charting progress. She suggested considering how the information will be conveyed visually to the public, for example, they are using a visual called Climbing Mt. Monadnock at KSC. She also proposed translating progress reports to a broader audience and supports the idea of conveying overarching ideas in the form of infographics, as that helps keep progress on track.

Chair Hansel thanked Vice Chair Gaunt for her service on the committee as this is her last committee meeting and encouraged her to remain involved in some capacity.

Councilor Lake suggested that they should have different times available for the poll. Ms., Brunner added that in the past they have had a potluck style retreat and asked what members think of that option. Chair Hansel said late afternoon could be pre-dinner as well. Mr. Nuru stated that to have increased participation, they could look at a retreat after work, for example, from 5-8 pm to not interfere with people's work schedules.

**5) Community Power Update**

Ms. Brunner stated that the Community Power Coalition of NH and the Assistant City Manager in Lebanon, Clifton Below, put together a petition asking the PUC to start the rulemaking process. The Community Power Plan was submitted to the PUC in May and the bill was adopted at the end of October, so at this point the only part they are waiting on is the PUC rulemaking process to take place. The City of

Keene along with some other communities have signed on to a petition to put pressure on the PUC to start the rulemaking process. Chair Hansel stated that it is frustrating that they put effort in putting the plan together and the legislature has done their work and now it is stuck in bureaucracy. He said he hopes that the petition will assist in the effort to get the process going. He asked if there are any questions from the committee. Ms. Butcher asked if there is a timeline on rulemaking. She said there is a 60-day limit on the PUC approval of the plan but is there no limit in the rulemaking process. Chair Hansel said that is what is frustrating because the plan is approved but needs rules to be implemented. Ms. Brunner stated that the rulemaking process did start and as part of that petition the Community Power Coalition submitted draft rules for the committee to consider so there are guidelines, but it is a matter of who will take that on. She said hopefully once they start it, they will not take too long. She said that the Community Power Coalition and the city of Keene' position agrees that it is under the PUC based on the way that it was put into law. Chair Hansel thanked Ms. Brunner and said they will keep an eye on that and keep up the pressure.

**6) Legislative Updates**

**A) PUC Order on 2021–2023 Triennial Energy Efficiency Plan and Implementation of Energy Efficiency Programs (Order 26,533, issued November 12, 2021)**

Ms. Brunner stated that Clean Energy NH put out a strong call to action to the public because this order defunds a lot of energy efficiency programs in NH. Chair Hansel said he believed it to be dead and now it is trying to be revived and it is a serious concern for energy efficiency programs in NH. He said he is unsure if the infrastructure plan or Build back Better would have any influence on this type of energy efficiency implementation in the future, but they should be putting pressure on the NH state government to influence the outcome. Councilor Lake stated that Clean Energy NH plans to challenge the decision in court. Ms. Butcher stated that the Solar Tour website got over 6,000 views in October 2021. Med Kopczynski, Director of Economic Development, Initiatives, and Special Projects with the City of Keene, commented on his role in assisting with the staffing transition and he will be connecting with the committee from time to time. He said he has background and experience in this field and wanted to relate to the committee how difficult it will be to transition from the loss of Mr. Lamb and Ms. Kessler. He said there will be a natural training curve, rewriting the Master Plan and there are many things to do. He asked for forbearance from the committee as it will take a lot of effort from the community Development Department. Chair Hansel noted that they will have less attention from Ms. Brunner in the next few months and asked for an update on the City's proposed 21 in 21 program. Mr. Kopczynski said that Mr. Lamb and he posted signs in the community yesterday and he believes Southwest Community Services is about to go live and he believes the Mayor will announce the program as well. He stated that it is a combined program for neighborhood revitalization centered on the new Russell Park and the intention is to visit the property owners and perform energy upgrades on the buildings and to build safety and envelope improvements.

**7) New Business**

Chair Hansel announced that new membership is needed, and members are encouraged to make nominations.

**8) Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 5, 2022**

**9) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Hansel adjourned the meeting at 9:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner