



## ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE (ECC)

### AGENDA

Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 8:00 AM

City Hall, Second Floor Council Chambers

#### **Members:**

Zach Luse, Chair

Paul Roth, Vice Chair

Diana Duffy

Jake Pipp

Councilor Raleigh Ormerod

Jude Nuru

Peter Hansel

Clair Oursler

Kenneth Swymer

Councilor Bryan Lake

Beth Campbell

Lisa Maxfield, Alternate

Chuck Redfern, Alternate

#### **Staff:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes – February 1, 2023
3. Energy Plan Work Group Report-outs
  - a. Energy Efficiency/Weatherization
  - b. Electric Vehicles
  - c. Community Solar
  - d. Renewable Energy Loans
  - e. Outreach and Education
4. Discussion about Food Security – Rowland Russell
5. Upcoming Events
  - a. Keene Climate Café – March 2 at 6:30 pm, Keene Public Library
  - b. ECC Annual Retreat – April 11, 1-3 pm, Recreation Center Room 14
  - c. Monadnock Earth Festival – April 22, 12-4 pm, Monadnock Food Co-op
6. Community Power Update
7. Legislative Update
8. Committee Membership
9. New Business
10. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 – 8:00 am
11. Adjourn

Link to ECC Google Drive Folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1O1WIR0fADTNijRt13v3DU7k2FwxXDcGs?usp=sharing>

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

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4  
5 ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

8:00 AM

Council Chambers,  
City Hall

Members Present:

Zach Luse, Chair  
Paul Roth, Vice Chair  
Councilor Raleigh Ormerod  
Councilor Bryan Lake  
Peter Hansel  
Jake Pipp  
Jude Nuru  
Beth Campbell  
Clair Oursler  
Kenneth Swymer, Alternate

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Diana Duffy  
Linsey Edmunds  
Charles Redfern, Alternate  
Lisa Maxfield, Alternate

8  
9 **1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

10  
11 Chair Zach Luse called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

12  
13 **2) Approval of Minutes- January 4, 2023**

14  
15 With no changes or edits suggested for the minutes, Chair Luse requested a motion to approve  
16 the January 4 minutes. Mr. Peter Hansel motioned to approve the minutes and Councilor Bryan  
17 Lake seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

18  
19 **3) Energy Plan Work Group Report-Outs**

20  
21 **A) Weatherization**

22  
23 Chair Luse updated the group, noting that the postponed Button-Up Workshop was held on  
24 January 31. They expected a good turnout, but he has not heard final attendance. He is working  
25 on scheduling a Window Dressers recap to determine next steps. Window Dressers just had a

26 meeting of their own that he was not able to attend to discuss plans for next year. Discussions  
27 included home energy labeling and how that might fit into their workgroup.

28

29 **B) Electric Vehicles**

30

31 Councilor Lake noted that the Electric Vehicle workgroup had some scheduling conflicts and  
32 were not able to meet in January. They are hoping to resume meeting in February. He noted he  
33 has been working on the side and recently started working with Ms. Mari Brunner to get details  
34 and numbers on the different types of vehicles in the area to see how the community is growing.  
35 He also has been gathering notes around potential ideas for incentive programs for electric  
36 vehicles.

37

38 Chair Luse asked if Councilor Lake knew if the plans for redeveloping Main Street included  
39 plans for electric vehicle charging. Councilor Ormerod mentioned that he had asked City  
40 Engineers and was told that Main Street itself is not the ideal location, and that some of the side  
41 streets and public blocks seem like they will be a better choice.

42

43 Councilor Lake agreed, saying the charging stations create a high priority spot. Mr. Paul Roth  
44 added that he heard the necessary electrical infrastructure does not run down Main Street and for  
45 that reason, to do it on Main Street would be a challenge. Cars can be parked longer on side  
46 streets, allowing the Main Street spots to have more turnover.

47

48 Chair Luse welcomed Mr. Jude Nuru.

49

50 Mr. Clair Oursler wondered whether there had been any additional contact with Home  
51 Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS) regarding electric vehicles. Mr. Peter  
52 Hansel said he had not been to any other meetings since the initial contact and was not aware of  
53 the status of the study to convert the public transit system.

54

55 Mr. Roth asked if anyone had any updates on the Monadnock Co-op and the status of their  
56 project, to which no one in the group had any updates.

57

58 **C) Community Solar**

59

60 Mr. Hansel shared that the Community Solar group met and had a lively discussion regarding the  
61 sites they have and the potential for getting at least one or two of those sites up and operating this  
62 year. They decided to have Mr. Hansel send an e-mail to Duncan Watson requesting more  
63 specifics on those sites. It looks like the sites with potential are the Rose Lane and Monadnock  
64 View Cemetery site. Currently, those sites have the most potential to be developed this year.  
65 There were some good discussions regarding potential funding, but much is still left to be  
66 determined.

67

68 Chair Luse asked if Keene Housing was being discussed. Mr. Hansel was not sure if Keene  
69 Housing was being considered as an off-taker for either of those sites. He added that an off-taker  
70 for Monadnock View Cemetery would be Cedarcrest. He was not sure who would be considered  
71 an off-taker for Rose Lane or whether that would be open for community members to be  
72 involved. Ms. Brunner added that she thought Duncan Watson had a great suggestion of creating  
73 a list of potential solar sites along with benefits and drawbacks of each property that could be  
74 developed for solar. This list could then be made available to the public for anyone to view and  
75 use as a resource to help developers with a starting point. She asked if the Committee would like  
76 to pursue this idea.

77

78 Mr. Hansel asked Ms. Brunner if Will Schoefmann would be the person of contact if the  
79 committee wanted to put that information into a map of some sort. Ms. Brunner confirmed and  
80 suggested also looking for an intern to help with it.

81

82 Councilor Ormerod asked if this list would have a minimum lot size or if it would include some  
83 of the new conservation district. Mr. Hansel thought anything above a half acre would be  
84 considered, but mentioned that they are looking at anything above a half acre and up to two  
85 acres. A lot of that size will allow for up to 100 kilowatt. Over 100 kilowatt requires more space,  
86 but also pushes the project into a different realm concerning the type of project. They are  
87 focusing on 100kw or less to serve approximately 20 homes.

88

89 Mr. Roth asked how the list would collate the characteristics of a viable property and how to  
90 obtain the variables that would be above reproach with the public. He noted the need to be  
91 transparent, but also the desire to want to advertise what the constraints are. He asked if there  
92 was any standard for sharing what the constraints are and whether it is possible to publish or  
93 offer education to the public. Mr. Hansel said that was a good point and suggested referencing  
94 any information and material available regarding sites.

95

96 Ms. Beth Campbell asked if a solar development consultant had already been utilized. Mr.  
97 Hansel responded that Keene is a “SolSmart” city and as part of that designation, the town is able  
98 to utilize services of their consultant. Ms. Brunner added that the City of Keene is ranked a gold  
99 community (there is one other level above gold) through the United States Department of Energy  
100 (USDOE) SolSmart program, The SolSmart Program has a consultant they hired that works with  
101 communities. The City of Keene has worked with that person, but she does not believe that we  
102 are officially working with any developer.

103

104 Ms. Campbell asked if there would be a bid process for that and Ms. Brunner confirmed that it  
105 would have to go through a competitive bid process.

106

107 Mr. Jake Pipp asked if the Community Solar group, while investigating sites, had looked into  
108 some of the big box stores and utilizing their rooftops. Mr. Hansel noted that it was an excellent  
109 idea and they did look into that when they first started looking into it. Target already has some  
110 solar on their roof and many of these corporations are not local and can be quite cumbersome to

111 contact. Mr. Jude Nuru added that unless the organizations themselves are interested in  
112 developing their site, it can be quite challenging and often there are complications. He noted that  
113 because of that, community solar proponents often tend to go for the low hanging fruit.

114

115 **D) Renewable Energy Loans**

116

117 Mr. Hansel reported that they did not have a meeting. He has had some conversations with  
118 various groups in the area. Specifically, he talked to people connected with Monadnock  
119 Interfaith Group, who are trying to figure out if there is interest in the area for renewable energy  
120 loans. He also met with Cody Morrison with MEDC, who is looking at a loan fund for the area.  
121 It is primarily connected with commercial application rather than single-family residences, but  
122 there is potential for multi-family development or mixed-use development.

123

124 **E) Outreach and Education**

125

126 Chair Luse discussed that outreach and education had a good meeting with plans to work on a  
127 success story of 310 Marlboro Street regarding their wood chip boiler. He noted there was an  
128 article written for Green Energy Times that they will either reference or rewrite to create a  
129 success story to promote through social media and the Green Energy website. He noted that they  
130 have a few other success stories that they plan to utilize in the future. They are also working on a  
131 marketing and communication plan for anything around energy efficiency. The plan is to focus  
132 on educating people rather than generating or creating our own content in an effort to have more  
133 impact with less time-consuming work.

134

135 Mr. Roth added that in discussing the planning for the April retreat, they realized that they have  
136 roughly 200 people and e-mails addresses that they can utilize to push out information.

137 Chair Luse recognized Nancy Gillard and Carolyn Jones, and asked if either of them minded  
138 providing an update on the Button Up workshop last night. Ms. Jones shared that there were 35  
139 people who attended from Keene and surrounding towns. They plan to have another one in the  
140 spring where they plan to include more of the surrounding towns.

141

142 Mr. Hansel asked if there was any discussion about the funding for the button up process. Ms.  
143 Jones responded that if someone qualifies, they pay 75% up to \$6,000. Mr. Hansel asked if that  
144 money was available at the same level. Ms. Jones responded that it was, but cautioned that there  
145 is potential of that money being cut into.

146

147 **4) Community Power Update**

148

149 Mr. Bob Hayden, Standard Power, and Mr. Patrick Roche (on zoom) joined and presented to the  
150 Committee. Mr. Hayden was pleased to announce that community power is very close to  
151 launching at this point. Mr. Roche added that they wanted to provide an update and as the group  
152 knows, the public utilities commission and City Council both finally approved Keene's plan. He  
153 continued, "With those two approvals, Standard Power has looked to ensure that all the other

154 pieces of the market were in place. The big one that we needed to wait for was purchase of  
155 receivables, or POR. This is a policy that helps minimize risk for suppliers of nonpayment. If  
156 you do not pay your bill, both the utility and the supplier are not paid. The utility can eventually  
157 recover the nonpayment through their rates. The supplier does not have a good way to be paid  
158 without initiating something like collection action. With POR, states like Rhode Island and  
159 Massachusetts have this, and the idea is that the utility company calculates a discount percentage.  
160 Essentially, it is an uncollectable percentage each year and the supplier is guaranteed that the  
161 utility will purchase and will pay them for their receivables minus a discount rate. If the discount  
162 rate is 2%, they know that whatever they have their billings at, they will get paid.”

163  
164 He continued, noted that as part of the Public Utilities Commission rules that were put into  
165 effect, there was a timeframe placed for each utility to propose its own POR program. He added  
166 that they wanted to wait and see what those proposals would look like because those will have a  
167 big impact on whether a supplier would be able to bid. The proposal from Eversource is looking  
168 pretty much like the Massachusetts Eversource proposal. The issue now is that Eversource stated  
169 that in order to set this up, they have to make changes to their billing system and those changes  
170 will take an estimated eight months. The good news is that when POR goes into place, they have  
171 proposed that any receivables on the books currently will be purchased at the discount rate. Mr.  
172 Roche said that they are working with the city to move forward on the bidding process with the  
173 goal of looking at a May launch. They are in the process of working with the suppliers to  
174 confirm their involvement and work through potential contract terms and conditions.

175  
176 Mr. Roche said that they are hoping to run a bid at the beginning of March, which would enable  
177 the launch for May. They have also been working with a few other communities that had their  
178 plans approved. There are discussions of doing a group bid with those other communities where  
179 they would go out together and make a joint selection on the supplier and get effectively the  
180 same base pricing. He noted that this is a new market where POR is not in place yet and the more  
181 things that can be done to make this an attractive opportunity for suppliers is really important and  
182 scale is one of those things. The suppliers are bidding on opportunities, we need to get their  
183 focus and attention, and the group bid is one of the ways to do that.

184  
185 Chair Luse asked if there was any sense of where the rate might be for the default plan. Mr.  
186 Hayden responded that it is hard to say, but there are examples we can give. Townsend, MA has  
187 historically saved 2-4 cents. In the marketplace in general, Standard Power is pricing electricity  
188 for commercial and industrial customers and they are enjoying rates considerably lower than the  
189 20.221 cent that was put in force today. He noted that today is the first day of the new rate. It  
190 went from 22.556 cents to 20.221. He added that it is still in this high plateau area of rate and  
191 part of the reason to get a start as early as May. They have found that the number of people  
192 surveyed to who prefer lower rates has gone up considerably in the past 6-12 months.

193  
194 Mr. Hansel asked when the outreach to the community would begin assuming a successful bid is  
195 obtained in February. Mr. Hayden responded that would happen immediately.

196 Mr. Hansel followed with asking if there was a term they were focusing on. Mr. Hayden  
197 responded that normally they look at a range of dates, typically somewhere between 15-40  
198 months. He noted that in many ways, they are looking for that sweet spot that is best for the  
199 community.

200  
201 Mr. Roth asked if there was any benefit to surveying the public again given the timeframe of the  
202 previous survey. Mr. Hayden responded that while the market has changed, he is not sure  
203 surveying the community again is of all that much benefit. He added, “We expect to have a  
204 standard product and then a 50% and a 100% option as well. The things the town asked for and  
205 are aligned with the rules are in that plan. Everything moves in the right direction and the cost  
206 for that extra chunk of renewables is very reasonable. As you move up towards 100%, the cost is  
207 higher, but still less than utility rate.”

208  
209 Mr. Roth noted that Mr. Hayden’s experience would be very valuable in helping communicate  
210 that to the community. Mr. Hayden noted that Keene had about 100 respondents. Milford had  
211 about 115-118 and they will be assimilating that data in the near future. He stated that what has  
212 changed since the last survey was the volume of people who wants the cheapest rate possible  
213 along with the number of people who want more renewables. The group discussed the cost  
214 difference as the ratio of renewables increase.

215  
216 Ms. Brunner said one request of the Community Power Committee was that a calculator be  
217 included for the public to determine the total cost of the bill utilizing the data from their bill. Mr.  
218 Roche confirmed that they will be incorporating that into the Keene website.

219  
220 Mr. Nuru said he understands that in terms of economic of scale, the more towns included will  
221 impact the rate. He asked if more towns are added, whether that would influence the rate further.  
222 Mr. Hayden said the reality of what they find is that when they are buying a small number of  
223 hours; say ½ million kilowatt-hours versus a large business using 5 million, there is significant  
224 difference. That difference is much greater by volume in the early upticks of total volume. When  
225 one gets to 100 million that is the end as that is where the economy of scale peters out. He  
226 suspects that the number will be somewhere between 65 and 80 million kilowatt hours. They  
227 have a few extra towns to get to that 100 million before they get to the economy of scale.

228  
229 Mr. Nuru also asked about community power aggregation and community solar. He noted that  
230 some people want the lowest rate, but have the appetite for renewable energy. As such, many are  
231 investigating generating their own renewables. He asked if the City of Keene buys into this  
232 program and later on develops a system of renewables to utilize, could they be allowed to pull  
233 out of the deal to meet the needs of those who want the lowest possible rate while still utilizing  
234 renewable energy.

235  
236 Mr. Hayden suggested expanding the opportunity of what the town looks at to below 100kw  
237 because of the metering values. He mentioned Swanzey as a current example as they have



238 approved a solar project location. It will be more than they need, so there is potential to team up  
239 with Swanzey. Right now, solar at value costs less than brown power.

240  
241 Mr. Hansel said he knows there will be some sort of funding to promote energy efficiency in our  
242 region and asked about the status of that. Ms. Brunner said that the City participates in a group  
243 net metering arrangement. The money the city receives from that is put into a fund that will help  
244 seed the energy efficiency fund and that the goal is to come up with a plan to utilize that funding.  
245 Ms. Brunner said it might be supplementing NH Saves or creating a completely new program,  
246 she is unsure at this point. She believes any approval would probably go through city council.  
247 Mr. Hayden suggested considering a 2/10 of a cent add-on for the all power that goes into a  
248 community power fund.

249

250 **5) Legislative Update**

251

252 Chair Luse said he has only been able to look at one bill. There are a number of them out there  
253 and he suggested that Committee members subscribe to the Clean Energy New Hampshire  
254 newsletter and take their recommendations on reaching out, testifying and making comments.  
255 The one he has been looking at is HB246, which takes the Renewable Energy Fund and rebates it  
256 back to everyone in NH, but it is estimated to be less than \$10/resident. He noted that this would  
257 annihilate the fund. There is still time to comment and suggested people look at it. The City of  
258 Keene is a municipal member of Clean Energy NH, so committee members should be able to go  
259 onto the Clean Energy NH website and create an account to access their member page. The  
260 member page has more detailed information, updates and spreadsheets for tracking available for  
261 members.

262

263 **6) Annual Retreat**

264

265 Ms. Brunner said two people responded last night bringing the total respondents up to nine. The  
266 top choice for a date is April 11, 2023 from 1-3pm. Mr. Clair Oursler added that he was able to  
267 make it on this date and time. Ms. Brunner will send out details in the near future.

268

269 **7) Committee Membership**

270

271 Chair Luse reminded everyone that there are two regular open positions and a couple of alternate  
272 positions open. If members have any recommendations for potential members, it would be good  
273 to get additional people up to speed for when there is any turnover.

274

275 **8) New Business**

276

277 No new business noted.

278

279 **9) Next Meeting: March 1, 2023-8:00am**

280



281

282 **10) Adjournment**

283

284 There being no further business, Chair Luse adjourned the meeting at 9:08 AM.

285

286 Respectfully submitted by,  
287 Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

288

289 Reviewed and edited by,  
290 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

**From:** [Rowland Russell](#)  
**To:** [Mari Brunner](#)  
**Subject:** ag commission/food security  
**Date:** Thursday, February 16, 2023 10:16:56 AM

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Hi Mari,

Hope this finds you well on this spring-like day! I met with the mayor yesterday to discuss food security and related items within the context of city infrastructure. We agreed that a first step would be getting on the agenda to discuss this with 2 committees which seem to have some connection with food security; the Energy & Climate Committee (a section on food security w/ goals was included in the [2007 Climate Adaptation Plan](#), and the Conservation Commission (some of the [Ag Commission's goals](#) were purportedly incorporated into this group).

George suggested I contact you to let me know about next meetings of both of these groups and to add me to the agendas if possible to discuss policy/planning re: food security, community gardens, etc. Following those discussions, we would assess whether it makes sense to:

- form a subcommittee of one of the existing committees
- establish a limited term (perhaps 1 year) ad hoc committee to research potential policy/planning considerations in this realm, then make recommendations
- reboot the Ag Commission as a standing committee with a new charter

Let me know if you have any questions.

all best,  
Rowland

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Rowland S. Russell, PhD  
IT Special Projects  
ES Adjunct Faculty  
[Whole Terrain](#), Managing Director  
[Friends of Public Art](#), Board Chair  
[Walldogs in Keene](#), Executive Committee  
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It could be that there's only one word and it's all we need. It's here in this pencil. Every pencil in the world is like this. ~ W.S. Merwin

Concerned about the  
climate crisis?

**CLIMATE**

**CAFE**

**THURS, MARCH 2**  
**6:30-8:00PM**

**KEENE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
60 Winter Street  
Heberton Hall

Concerned about the climate crisis? Hopeful? Overwhelmed? Want to help but not sure how? A Climate Cafe is an open, nonjudgmental space for talking about what matters, sharing experiences, and seeing what ideas emerge. Climate Cafes are happening all over the world - come be part of the first one in Keene!

**LISTEN. BE HEARD. CONNECT.**

**FREE REGISTRATION ON EVENTBRITE:  
[KEENECLIMATE.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://www.eventbrite.com/keeneclimate)**

**Keene Climate Cafe**