

Task Force on the Climate Emergency
Minutes for meeting 2/8/2021, 3:30 PM.

1. Call to order: Jen Crandall, Brian Booher, Cornell Knight, Sirohi Kumar, Tobin Peacock, Norm Burdzel, Jill Goldthwait, Margaret Jeffery, Kristin Murphy, Ruth Poland
2. Approval of Minutes: Tobin moves to accept minutes, Sirohi seconds. Minutes were fixed and we accept the fixed minutes as presented. All approve
3. Adoption of Agenda: Jen moves to accept agenda as presented. Sirohi seconds. All approve.
4. Public Comment. No open questions
5. Regular Business

A. Beneficial Electrification-Ken Coburn: Sirohi will record the presentation. BE: powering with electricity that which usually uses some other fuel, and creating that electricity with a renewable source like solar power. Saves money, reduces environmental impact and /or enables better grid management. Important for its carbon reduction, management of the grid, integrating more renewables into grid, cost savings. Costs of solar and wind generated electricity have gone down since 2007. In Maine transportation is 54% of our GHG emissions, followed by residential, industrial, etc. EVs more efficient than gas powered so an easy place to make reductions. Current US home uses 80,000 kWh. In future it would look more like 20,000 with BE. What can BH do? Do microgrid pilot program; ensure excellent broadband; adopt PV Ordinance; Higgins Pit Solar farm etc; Lead with best-in-class; Update building energy codes; offer incentives for weatherization, heat pumps, EVs, charging, storage. Build clean bike/walk/transit; shore power for cruise ships; public education/outreach; work with ANP, Jax, Chamber etc. We can be supportive of State policies and incentives; work with Federal gov't on policies and incentives. Lots of Mainers' money going out of the area to pay for fuel/energy costs.

Jill: What is a microgrid pilot? Ken: Small experimental version of a more dynamic grid that goes both ways, rather than a traditional one-way grid that is built to meet peak demand with one source of energy. Microgrids would serve local communities and could be more resilient. It would mean not relying solely on Versant. Any energy produced on the island through solar or wind would stay on the island. The pilot would be an experiment in that direction.

Norm: lower costs are from subsidies. Where does that tax revenue come from?

Ken: not all of it is subsidies and the unsubsidized are competitive. The technologies will get more efficient and cost effective every year. Norm: grid upgrades are mandatory. Who pays for that? Ken: there needs to be local management so EVs aren't charging all at the same time. Those are improving all the time too. It does have to be managed carefully. Norm: look at Germany. Ken: more expensive now, but cheaper later.

Brian: clarification of Beneficial Electrification vs regular Electrification. If there is cost savings, it is a no brainer to do this. When does one go forward with a big investment? Ken: It is called the pay back period. At what point is your electricity

free? People look at just the dollars. What else counts for you? Can you quantify feeling good about not contributing to climate change?

Jen: the Town also has to remember that the cost of doing nothing would have to be factored in. So by investing we are saving the costs of climate change from doing nothing. Ken: worst case scenario would be paying to prevent and paying to adapt to climate change.

Jill: how scalable is this? If we don't have local buy in, can we scale it down to an affordable level? Ken: Equity is critically important. How do we get everyone EVs? We need to figure a way for everyone to afford to bring down the GHG emissions.

- B. Open discussion with Alf from BH Chamber about how we might cooperate more. The chamber is a membership organization. Alf sees the general landscape of the business community, not the day to day workings of individual operations and what they might be doing to adopt "greener" practices. Mostly willing. Many signed on to ACTT initiative to reduce single use items etc. Alf doesn't know how many inns/hotels had EV charging stations, but they are growing every year. Businesses will always have to consider if a project is going to be financially practical. Business are in need of education and would benefit from presentations like Ken's. Brian: hoping this will be an ongoing dialog. As Chamber members get together we're hoping climate change will be more in the discussion than in the past. BH could be a model destination that is GHG neutral. Alf: Chamber members rely on Chamber to bring tourists here. Chamber has heavily promoted visiting BH. Recently the effort to draw people here has gone down. The need is less as more people are coming without the need for lots of active advertising. Bar Harbor has a well known brand. Share lots of inspirational images and messages. Proud of the fact that we are an eco-destination and promote that. Ruth: our goals include education. What topics and venues would be engaged in? Alf: anything that shows cost savings over a short or medium term. If there are ways to help business to save costs and environmental impact, people will be interested. The medium for how to reach businesses is challenging. The Chamber has had a hard time getting even a few people to join up. However, anything that could go in fliers or weekly newsletters, Alf can include. Ruth: we want to be responsive to the needs of the community. What are the needs of the business community right now? Alf: to say afloat. It has been a challenging year. However this is also an opportunity for change and how can we improve?

Margaret: is there a sector of the Chamber that would lean more towards resource efficiency or more welcome to some of our ideas, rather than us jumping in with 2 feet trying to meet with all businesses? Bike shop? Alf: hotels/lodging have the greatest number of people coming through their doors. That sector has made lots of improvements in the last few years. Maybe infrastructure. Many of the buildings are older and could be made more efficient. Alf would have to think more about which sectors might be ripe for improvements.

Tobin: what sort of projects are the Chamber involved in? How does it operate?

Alf: we actively manage the visibility of BH and MDI, but not outwardly pushing BH as a destination. Publicity. Also actively connect businesses with each other.

Jill: Is it true that Chamber has not made an effort yet to brand the community as an environmentally friendly business community? Alf: There has been some

advertising/promoting BH's green business. Alf encourages businesses to seek out the work of other organizations like ACTT to educate and promote

environmental changes within businesses. Jill: if there is a way to make it easier for businesses to participate in more environmentally beneficial activities we

should all look out for those and promote them. Alf: always willing to come back here and to bring ideas to businesses.

- C. Council report – Jill G. Council accepted our request to spend \$2k of our \$17K on the feasibility study. They desire to know more about the economics of a solar farm. How will we know that it will not cost us more indefinitely. Another question from Council: has the site been looked at to see if there was anything else that the lot could be used for that would benefit the town, like housing.

Ruth: says that the feasibility study will probably answer many of these

questions. Jill: says the economics will get answered but the evaluation of other uses probably won't be part of the study.

Sirohi: we should take the recording of ACTT on solar farms and Ken's presentation on BE are available and could be made available to the public and/or Town for educational purposes. Jill: yes, but a live person is better.

- D. Climate/Renewable Energy literacy. Jill: there are some great resources in this group and would be good to have them do presentations. Also, the editor of the Islander goes to Council meetings. Does she want a press release or an interview to get some educational info in the paper. Ruth: we have to be careful about the research we do and what we put out there and make sure it is accurate. Jill: what do we do when the info is conflicting? Ruth: get the experts with differing opinions could come together to share a unified message.

D. Continuing work on Climate Action Plan

6. Items for next meeting. Climate Action Plan only and how we put together a proposal.

Then first meeting in March Spencer will join us with all of phase 1 and 2 of ghg emissions data for audit.

6. Task Force Comments. Margaret: Ken's presentation was recorded. How can it be circulated? Sirohi will send it Brian and the task force. Brian will share with Ken.

6. Adjournment-Jill moves to adjourn. Norm seconds. All approve. Thank you Ken and Alf for your time and presentations.

Future Work:

A. Tourism carbon impact

i. Cruise ships

B. Climate Justice-- acknowledge impact of climate change and its disproportional impact on lower socio-economic groups and the intersectionality with other crises like racial equity.

Climate change impacts developing countries exponentially more than developed countries and the developing countries are not the ones benefiting from the use of fossil fuels etc.

C. Ground mounted solar array.

D. Community composting.

E. EV chargers

F. Town based incentives for new buildings or renovations to exceed code requirements for efficiency, build electric and/or incorporating solar into design. Tax break? Cash back? What could the town actually do to incentivize? Could you forgive the first year of property taxes on a new build if there a solar array of a certain size or all electric house or passive house level insulation? A few thousand dollars might be enough to encourage some best practices.

G. Public Outreach

i. Engage the BH Chamber of Commerce