

Sustain Mid Maine Coalition
Climate Change Public Policy Team
Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2013

Meeting started at about 6:35 at the Waterville Public Library. Members present: Jane Edwards, Elery Keene, Tom Tietenberg, Kate Newkirk, Peter Garret and Norm Anderson.

Motion made by Kate, seconded by Tom, to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2013 meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Someone asked a question about which local organization originated the idea of having a natural gas distribution district in the greater Waterville area. Tom said that the Sustain Mid Maine energy team originated the concept, working with the Waterville Economic Development Committee and the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce. It was the Waterville Economic Development Committee and the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce that provided funds to employ Al Hodson to do technical work that formed the basis for defining a service area for the project. Ken Fletcher became leader of the subcommittee relating to the natural gas district, which included representatives from each of the above organizations.

Peter asked about leakage of methane from a natural gas pipeline. He wondered if the people who wanted to form the district were aware of this potential problem.

Tom said that he was aware of estimates for leakage at the natural gas wells, which is about 3% more than leakage of natural gas from petroleum wells. He said that he did not know about leakage in the distribution pipes.

Norm said that methane is normally found in the air in urban areas where natural gas distribution systems exist. It is noticeable.

Kate expressed concern about the possibility that natural gas might be used for a long time. She wondered how long.

Norm said that it might be 20 years. It is hard to know because there are many variables that could affect the long-term viability of this alternative.

Tom said that natural gas is a transition fuel. It helps get rid of use of coal. He said that natural gas will probably delay development of other cleaner energies for making electricity and heating homes.

Someone asked, when will we run out of low-cost natural gas? Someone answered that the payback of installation cost for a furnace that would use natural gas will happen in about five years, comparing the cost of using natural gas to the cost of petroleum as a heating fuel. After the five years that should be a cost savings for people who heat their homes and businesses with natural gas.

Tom said that the Summit Natural Gas company will guarantee that there will be no increase in the distribution cost for 10 years, but will not guarantee the price of the natural gas itself. That could change.

Peter said that he would like to draft a position statement for the to Climate

Change Public Policy Team. It would be a statement relating to sustainability and climate change - our issue - to be considered at our next meeting, and then submitted to the Sustain Mid Maine Board of Directors. He expressed the idea that we should be concerned about reduction in use of fossil fuels, which put carbon dioxide into the air, as compared to other sources of energy, which do not. He thought that we should be more concerned with the impact that burning fossil fuel has on climate change than on the cost of energy.

Tom agreed with this idea, saying that we should pay attention to energy efficiency and other sources such as solar.

It was agreed that we would like to have Peter draft such an agreement. He said that he would make it available by email a couple of weeks before the next meeting for discussion at that meeting, which should be in July.

Jane asked members whether they had any difficulty with the 6:30 meeting time for our team. None of them did. We will continue to have our meetings start at 6:30. The next meeting will be July 22, 2013, at 6:30 PM at the Waterville Public Library.

Jane told the team about the Team Leaders meetings which are now being held regularly. She also told the group that the Sustain Mid Maine Coalition has signed a "letter of agreement" with Running Start Institute. She asked Norm Anderson, who is a member of Running Start leadership, to describe the plans for what the two organizations will be doing together.

Norm gave the team members a brief description of the "Running Start" project. Three members of the Running Start group met with team leaders on June 6. Representatives of "Running Start" included Mike Kelly, Jennifer Kierstead, and Norm. The "Running Start" organization has plans to develop a climate adaptation strategy for an area that would include the Sustain Mid Maine area. It might be somewhat larger. There is an agreement between Sustain Mid Maine Board of Directors and the "Running Start" organization to do this together. The details of how to do this are being worked out. Is planned to do a catalyst sometime in the future that would involve Sustain Mid Maine members and some other people as well. Between now and the catalyst, an effort would be made to do data gathering and prepare a baseline assessment of assets, concerns, and vulnerabilities. Running Start Institute and Sustain Mid Maine Coalition will cosponsor a public event this fall, at which members of the University of Maine Climate Change Institute will speak. The University of Maine Climate Change Institute will also help develop baseline information for people who are interested in knowing more about climate change. This will be done before the catalyst takes place. Sustain Mid Maine Coalition team leaders, education team, and other members will help with planning and education. Norm said that current models that describe global impacts may not be sufficient for appropriate evaluation of the effect of climate change on the state of Maine. We may have immigration that

results from worse climate change impacts on other parts of the United States. After the catalyst there will be some follow-up activities with the people involved.

Jane asked each member to make a brief statement indicating that they would like the Climate Change Public Policy Team to do. This will help provide a basis for agreement on a plan for team activities. She mentioned that in the future we will be developing team goals and prioritizing them, as other Sustain Mid Maine Coalition teams are doing.

Tom said: We should identify places where we as a team can make a difference. We as individuals should write letters to the editor - maybe to relate to Obama's June 25 speech.

Kate said: We should get informed about the legislature. We should be able to testify on positions of Sustain Mid Maine as an organization and relate to the Running Start project.

Peter said: "Sustainability" is a fairly recent word that relates to climate change - a very serious issue. Climate Change is a serious issue. It should be considered as a key factor in almost everything we do.

Norm said: Sustainability is the core function of Sustain Mid Maine. Our policy should be more all-encompassing than just climate change as we relate to legislation with specific issues and legislation. He thinks that this team should be the policy team for Sustain Mid Maine Coalition.

Elery said: Our team was formed after January. We tried to hit the ground running because the state legislature was already in session and we wanted to relate to them in a way to make a difference. Jane Edwards has worked very hard and put in a lot of time to help us accomplish this. She spent a lot of time at her computer looking for legislation that might be of importance, finding out what legislative committee might be considering such legislation and at what time, so that we could try to be present and give testimony, send in written testimony, or listen to find out what is happening. Jane and I have testified regarding several pieces of legislation including LD 825, which was heard by the Environmental Committee. We also attended meetings of the Transportation Committee to support creation of a statewide planning group to consider developing a better bus transportation system. We also supported a proposed bond issue for rail transportation. We attended several meetings of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology legislative committee. We testified on several pieces of legislation including funding for Efficiency Maine, support for the Feed-in Tariff bill, and several other legislative documents supporting "alternative energy" systems. We supported a bill which proposed that the precautionary principle should be used by the Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Environmental protection when approving systems and putting procedures in effect. We should prepare to do these kinds of things and others. We should get input from other teams. More people should testify. I think we should pay more attention to agricultural

legislation and other environmental legislation. We should use the time available to be better prepared when the second year of this legislative group convenes next January.

Jane said: I am very pleased with what we have done so far. I want us to work with area legislators and get input from other teams about things that we should be relating to the state legislature about. Sometime, perhaps in early fall when we have done more work to define our issues, I would like to invite area legislators to one of our meetings so that we can communicate with them and hear about the work of the legislature from their perspective. We should listen to their views on our concerns and let them get familiar with us and the Sustain Mid Maine organization. We need to discuss the issues amongst ourselves and set priorities for what we want to accomplish. We should also relate to members of the other teams. One way can be through the team leader meetings. There may be other ways also.

The meeting ended at about 8:30.

The next meeting will be July 22, 2013, at 6:30 PM at the Waterville Public Library.

Respectfully submitted
Elery Keene