

**Sustain Mid Maine Coalition
Climate Change Public Policy Team
Meeting Minutes
November 25, 2013**

Meeting started at about 6:35 p.m. at the Winslow Public Library.

Members present: Ernie Grolimund, Dick Thomas, Kate Newkirk, Tom Tietenberg, Jane Edwards, and Elery Keene.

Motion was made by Jane, seconded by Tom, to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2013 meeting with the correct date. Motion approved unanimously.

Elery made a report on the two meetings of the Municipal Natural Gas Advisory Committee attended by Dick Thomas, Jane Edwards, and Elery Keene. It looks like this group will be supportive of funding a person to offer advice to people in area municipalities about choosing the best way to heat homes and businesses whether it be natural gas, heat pumps, or another system and also encourage appropriate weatherization of buildings. This advice could be paid for with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds available as a result of the construction of natural gas pipelines in these municipalities.

Tom mentioned that the Sustain Mid Maine Coalition Energy team will be meeting in early to mid December. A chairperson has not been chosen at this time.

Jane passed out some information from Central Maine Power Company, which accompanied this month's bill, encouraging people to use heat pumps to heat buildings.

Elery opened discussion of the Sustain Mid Maine Coalition "opinion piece" to be published in a December issue of our local newspaper. Several members of the team have been writing drafts and discussing the language by e-mail since our last meeting.

The paper compares the costs and benefits of installing heat pumps as an alternative to installing natural gas furnaces in local homes and businesses, now that natural gas service is coming to our area.

Elery told the group that we had taken a draft of this document to the Sustain Mid Maine Board of Directors and received a very favorable reaction, with considerable useful input from Board Members Clough Toppan, and Sally Harwood.

Dick Thomas brought a couple more proposed changes tonight. After considering them, it was decided that generally the group was happy with the version presented to them in advance of tonight's meeting. However they voted unanimously to amend the document by adding the word "relatively" in the first section under the heading "**Which is Greener**". And they voted unanimously to replace the last sentence in the paragraph immediately after that with "This leakage prevents gas from being a green fuel". Then the group accepted unanimously the document as amended, to be their contribution for a Sustain Mid Maine Coalition "Op-Ed" in a December issue of the Waterville Sentinel (and probably in the Kennebec Journal as well) Elery said that he would revise the document to include the changes approved and send it to Jane, who would forward it to Linda Woods as our first "op-ed" article.

Dick then asked whether we thought he could submit the same article to "350-Maine" (a statewide environmental advocacy group) for distribution in the local papers where this organization has active community groups. Most of the members believed that he should re-write the article and submit it in a slightly different form, but covering the same general information, without any reference to Sustain Mid Maine Coalition. We recommended that he talk to Linda Woods about this idea, and perhaps to the local newspaper as well, as the newspaper may have some proprietary interest in the op-ed due to it's agreement with Sustain Mid Maine Coalition about accepting and publishing a series of op eds from the organization.

We discussed whether we should change the date of our December meeting because if we meet as usual on the fourth Monday of the month the meeting would be too close to the upcoming holidays. At first we thought we would try to meet on the 16th, 17th or 18th of December, but

Kate talked to the staff and determined that the Winslow Library space was not available on those dates. December 11th and 19th ARE available. Kate will "doodle" members and see whether either of those dates are acceptable options for a December meeting.

It was discussed whether we should change our regular meeting time -- on an ongoing basis. Meeting at six instead of six thirty was discussed, as was the possibility of meeting somewhere else so we could meet later. Those present wanted to keep meeting at six thirty, and to keep meeting at the Winslow Public Library. Members believed that it was best to be concise and finish business in a short period of time, as we have been doing, than to extend the length of our meetings.

Members discussed whether we wanted to meet more often. Elery described that one alternative would be to have a regularly designated second meeting date, and simply not use it if there was no need to use it. However members did not want to plan a regular schedule of more frequent meetings. Instead five of the six members present voted to keep the once a month meeting schedule we have and only depart from it as necessary, having a vote on each occasion when we might need to meet more frequently.

We discussed how we wanted to organize our work during the upcoming legislative session. Elery described how Jane had communicated with committee clerks and used the legislative system to become aware of bills we might be interested in, and to obtain copies of them. Jane said that she didn't think she could continue to monitor all the relevant committees and all the relevant legislation, and asked whether other members would be willing to monitor one of the legislative committees. Tom volunteered to monitor the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, Ernie the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Kate the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee and Jane the Transportation Committee. Each of these members would follow the committee schedule of a committee and report back to the group, letting us know what legislative bills might be of interest and when the hearings on them would be held. Those who can't attend hearings can still write to legislators, call those who represent them in the legislature, etc. We will work together in organizing this further at our next meeting.

Just before we adjourned at eight P.M. Elery distributed a one-page outline of problems related to burning wood that was written in early October by Ernie Grolimund. We will discuss this at another time.

Submitted by Elery Keene and Jane Edwards