

**Sustain Mid Maine Coalition
Climate Change Public Policy Team
Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2013**

Meeting started at about 6:35 p.m. at the Waterville Public Library. Members present: Jane Edwards, Elery Keene, Kate Newkirk, Norm Anderson and Peter Garrett. (By speaker phone)

Motion made by Kate, seconded by Norm, to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2013 meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Because an important part of the agenda was to consider Peter Garret's draft proposal for a policy position relating to use of natural gas as a fuel, Kate decided to call Peter using her cell phone to find out if he was on his way to the meeting. He was at home. It was decided to involve Peter in the discussion by telephone. We could all hear him on Kate's phone, being used as a speakerphone, and he could hear us.

Elery read segments of the Sustain Mid Maine Coalition January 19, 2009 strategic vision statements for the year 2020, and from the January 26, 2013 strategic vision statements for the year 2020. They indicate that our vision has been and continues to be supportive of Peter's recommendation that we try to substantially reduce the use of fossil fuel as a source of energy. Copies were distributed to those present. Elery read the segments aloud so that Peter could know what was being referred to.

January 2009 vision statement for the year 2020, paragraph five: *"We invest in the best available strategies and infrastructures for energy generation, distribution and use. Where we use energy, we give priority to local, renewable resources. Through practices of energy conservation, generation and efficiency, we have reduced our carbon footprint and our use of fossil fuels by 50% since 2009."*

January 2013 vision statement for the year 2020, paragraph five: *"We invest in the best available strategies and infrastructures for energy generation, distribution and use. Where we use energy, we give priority to local, renewable resources. Through practices of energy conservation, generation and efficiency, we have reduced our carbon footprint and our use of fossil fuels by 50% since 2009. For our world to be sustainable, we must approach the ultimate goal of eliminating the use of fossil fuels."*

The more recent 2013 statement adds language that emphasizes the ultimate goal of eliminating the use of fossil fuels.

We each, including Peter, had a copy of Peter Garrett's July 17, 2013 draft proposal for a policy position relating to use of natural gas as a heating fuel and for production of electricity. Jane read the first, second, and third paragraphs aloud.

Peter's draft concluded with a list of suggestions:

“We must keep our focus on items that we know have beneficial results, both for the economy and for reduction of climate change effects, such as:

- Weatherizing all buildings and improving the efficiency of household appliances (Efficiency Maine is our local agency to assist with that),*
- Improving the efficiency of vehicles and transportation (largely involving personal choices, but also design/re-design of towns and cities)*
- Reducing production of methane and carbon dioxide from human activities (see <http://epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/ch4.html>)*
- Proceeding with research and implementation of alternative energy sources (e.g. solar, wind, geothermal)*

To focus on anything else is short-sighted and, as this brief account of natural gas facts demonstrates, can be counter-productive and ultimately foolish.”

Norm especially liked the bullet statements on the second page. He suggested that we use the following statements as we develop a revised policy statement that we will present to the Sustain Mid Maine Coalition Board of Directors:

*We support a policy of energy conservation and energy efficiency.
We support the transition to non-fossil fuel energy sources as quickly as possible.
We do not accept the idea of using natural gas as a transition fuel.*

Others seemed to like Norm’s statements quite well.

It was also suggested that we use the segments of the two vision statements cited above as a preamble to our policy statement to the Board of Directors.

Peter Garret was asked to rewrite the statement with some revisions, incorporating these ideas into it. Peter agreed to do so. Peter said that he would like to see this policy statement published as an “OP ED” piece in our newspaper, after approval by the Board of Directors. There was general support for this idea.

Elery expressed concern about legislation approved by the State of Maine this spring that relates to natural gas. It was included in what was called the Omnibus Energy Bill. The Sierra Club was the source of an article in the Bangor Daily News, which said that this legislation included authorization for the State of Maine to have a bond issue for \$200 million. The money would be used, together with money from other New England states, to build natural gas pipelines from Pennsylvania and New York State to New England. The purpose would be to bring more natural gas obtained by the fracking process to New England where it would be burned to produce electricity. Elery had heard a representative of the New England OSI tell the legislative committee that this was needed because the existing pipelines do not have sufficient capacity to meet the demand at certain times of the year. Other New England states are also being asked to do this. The New England states need to raise money to do this because the private sector does not want to do it. Apparently the private sector understands that there is a risk to this investment

that they do not want to take. Elery wonders if the states should take this kind of risk. Elery is concerned about the effect that burning this natural gas would have on our climate change problems, and also about the adverse environmental effects of the fracking process.

Others also expressed concern about the effect that burning this natural gas would have on our climate change problems, and also about the adverse environmental effects of the fracking process.

There was general agreement that the Climate Change Public Policy Team should incorporate these ideas into a policy statement to be considered at our next meeting.

Peter will prepare a revised draft policy statement and circulate it to the membership of the Climate Change Public Policy Team by email prior to the next meeting for consideration. Team members will use email to provide feedback to Peter. We would like to be able to approve our policy statement on this topic at our next meeting and get it to the Board of Directors as soon as possible.

The next regular meeting will be at the Waterville Public Library at 6:30 p.m., August 26, 2013.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Elery Keene