

**Sustain Mid Maine Coalition
Climate Change Public Policy Team
Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2014**

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

Members present - Jane Edwards, Elery Keene, Ernie Grolimund, and Dick Thomas. Doug Carnrick, an SMMC Board Member was also present. Peter Garrett arrived late, a little after 7:20. Dick Thomas left at about that time. Tom Tietenberg had sent an email to Jane saying that he would not be able to attend the meeting.

Minutes - Motion was made by Ernie, seconded by Dick, to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the team: March 24, 2014. Vote was unanimously approved.

Paper written by Dick Thomas - Dick brought copies of a five page document that he wants us to give to John Reuthe to use as a handout for people who want advice about how to make their homes more energy efficient. John has been hired by Sustain Mid Maine to help homeowners in Waterville, Winslow and Fairfield find answers to this question. This should be helpful. It mentions Natural Gas, Heat Pumps, Weatherization, and heating with wood. We began by reading through it, giving him our thoughts as we did.

Doug Carnrick suggested that the title and first paragraph be changed to better describe the purpose of the document.

There was quite a lot of discussion about the segment on wood stoves because it considers health issues as well as impact on global climate change. All agreed that it is important to help people understand this concern as well as the cost comparisons that are also mentioned. Ernie said that it is clear in the constitution of the United States that people be protected from unsafe conditions that may be caused by others. He said that the city of Waterville has a regulation that says that citizens are to be protected from smoke because it can be a health problem for people. He has seen the regulation but did not have a copy of it with him. Ernie said that the code enforcement officer does not enforce this regulation. Dick asked Ernie to send the regulation to him email. He will consider attaching it to the document. Elery said that this regulation may have been adopted by the city many years ago in order to qualify a requirement of the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development so as to be eligible to receive Community Development Block Grants that could be used for urban renewal activities that changed the downtown and other parts of the city. These grants started coming to the city before 1970.

Elery said that he had received a copy of a report from Mike Heavener on April 30 which said that the cost of natural gas is higher in New England than anywhere else in the United States because we do not have enough pipeline capacity to get it here from Pennsylvania. The natural gas companies do not make long term contracts with electric companies for the price of natural gas used to generate electricity, but may do so for other purposes. It is expected to increase quite a lot in the next few years, especially in Maine. Many private companies are reluctant to invest very much in construction of pipelines if they think that the price will go up significantly before

they can recover their investment in a pipeline.

Dick will make revisions to the document and email them to the team members for further review.

Report by Ernie on Wood Burning - Ernie said that he will be working with the Education Team to educate the SMMC Board of Directors about the adverse health effects that result from wood burning.

Dick Thomas had to leave the meeting at this time.

Results of recent session of State Legislature

Ernie reported that Governor Lepage had found some state funds to provide money to encourage people to buy cleaner wood burning equipment.

Jane reported on LD1252 and LD 1260 the two major solar bills that were considered by the state legislature. LD 1252 was vetoed and the veto was sustained. LD 1652 was enacted without the Governor's signature. It includes a study of ways to improve the development of solar energy in Maine.

What Should the Team do this Summer?

Jane passed out copies of an email from Tom relating to the possibilities that were suggested in the agenda. Dick Thomas had already passed out copies of comments he had written for our consideration.

Tom had suggested that we not meet with our legislators because they have just finished a tiring legislative session and we pretty much know what happened. He also suggested that we do not need to meet with municipal elected officials at this time either. He thought that it might be a good to join forces with the "Adaptation" group this summer and do some things individually – such as research, letters to the editor, op-eds, etc. and meet only when it is necessary for joint actions.

Dick's handout stated his preferences among the suggestions for summer activities that were on the agenda. He suggested that we work on the future rather than what we have done in the past.

Peter pointed out that the Sustain Mid Maine vision statement says that we should reduce our carbon dioxide output by 50% by the year 2020. He suggested that we should work on how to do this. For example, how far have we progressed on this so far? What else should we do?

Jane said this goal, in the SMMC vision statement, and how we might reach it, would be a topic that we could research, and also discuss with other SMMC teams, with the SMMC Board, and later with community officials and legislators. If we really want to reach this goal in the vision statement we need to figure out how to do it, and work with our allies and elected representatives

to achieve it. It's also an agenda for us that focuses on the future rather than the past, and is something we haven't discussed already with our fellow SMMC members or our elected officials.

Peter referred to the table on page 4 of the document circulated earlier by Dick Thomas. This provides cost information related to 9 different alternatives. Dick's paper suggests that it would be helpful to also give data telling how much carbon dioxide or other emissions that each item will contribute to global climate change. (Ernie pointed out that burning wood contributes black soot in addition to carbon dioxide. Both contribute to the climate change problem.)

It was agreed that we would focus on the vision of reducing our carbon footprint and how we might do it. We would then share our information with our colleagues and elected officials.

Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be June 23 at 6:30 p.m. at the Winslow Library. We adjourned about five minutes before 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by Elery Keene