

Sustain Mid Maine Coalition

Public Policy Team

Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2015

The meeting started at about 6:35 at the Winslow Public Library.

Members present: Jane Edwards, Elery Keene, Doug Carnrick, Tom Tietenberg, Dick Thomas and Peter Garrett..

Jane chaired the meeting. Minutes were taken by Elery.

Minutes: Tom made a motion to approve the minutes of December 1, 2013 with an amendment relating to the concept of the Archimedes screw idea for generating electricity. The motion was seconded by Jane. Approval was unanimous.

Brief activity reports by members: Tom said that there will be a CCL item on Public Radio at noon on March 2. It is the "Maine Calling" show.

Dick said that there may soon be a climate change demonstration soon at TD Banknorth related to the IPP pipeline.

Doug said that he is planning a trip to Florida and may not be able to attend the next meeting.

Jane talked about a public hearing relating to metal mining regulations on February 25. She said that mining relates to climate change because of ways that it can affect our environment in a wet climate like that of Maine. Jane, Elery, and Peter intend to testify, asking that the regulations be improved so that our environment can be protected.

Jane said that she and Elery will be attending meeting of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology committee regarding issues relating to fossil fuel and climate change. They attend one meeting which was an orientation on issues. This is especially important for new members of the committee. All but 3 members of the committee are new. The first presentation was by Mr. Vannoy, the new Chairman of the PUC.

Jane mentioned that PUC member David Little had disagreed with the other two PUC Commissioners regarding the proposal for Maine to commit up to \$75 million per year for the next 20 years to help pay for construction of a new, privately owned, pipeline to bring fracked natural gas from eastern Pennsylvania to western New England – probably through Massachusetts into western New Hampshire. Little's lengthy written comments explaining his reasons for opposing this commitment make a lot of sense.

Peter Garrett arrived at the meeting at about 7:30.

Expansion of Power line capacity to get electricity to the Waterville area. This had been mentioned at the January 26 meeting. Mike Stoddard, head of the Efficiency Maine organization had mentioned at the SMMC annual meeting that Efficiency Maine had made funds available to the Boothbay area to assist with generating alternative electrical energy in the area so that additional wires did not need to be built. This could be Solar, hydro, or Archimedes screw. Elery has had a conversation with Waterville City Engineer, Greg Brown about this. He suggested the idea of generating electricity by burning wood because it is a fuel available in Maine and is not considered to be a fossil fuel.

Dick Thomas left the meeting at 6:45, because of another responsibility.

Peter mentioned that he is looking into the possibility of solar panels being placed on the roof of a barn on a farmer's property near Peter's house. He said that up to ten different families could access solar energy from this source if they were willing to contribute their share to the cost of the project. He and the farmer would be the first two. Everybody present indicated an interest in doing so.

There was discussion of who in SMMC should provide the leadership to find ways to generate electricity within the Waterville area so that additional transmission capacity would not have to be built by CMP. Tom suggested that SMMC should re-establish its Energy Team to do this. A new team leader would probably be needed. Mike Heavener is acting as the team leader for the Energy Team, but it would be too much to expect for him to lead this effort with all of the other things he has to do.

Commission Report on Acidification Maine Ocean Waters. Jane had sent to members information about the report of a new State Commission that tells about the great increase in the amount of acid in the ocean water near Maine which is being caused by the increasing amount of carbon dioxide in the air and in the water. This acid is having a terrible effect on ocean life such as lobsters and shellfish especially, and other kinds of fish also. The warming up of ocean water is also a problem. This seems to be a greater problem of the coast of Maine, perhaps because there is a large area of fairly shallow water which is called the Grand Banks. Jane is glad that this report has been created. She would like it better if it had proposals for what to do about it.

There was no discussion of the report of hydroelectric power in Maine.

Legislative Committee assignments Tom volunteered to monitor legislation to be taken up by the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. Peter volunteered to monitor legislation to be taken up by the Transportation Committee. Kate has volunteered to monitor legislation to be taken up by the Agriculture Committee. Jane volunteered to monitor legislation to be taken up by the Environment and natural Resources Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

Other Discussion Peter said that he had attended a group meeting where several people had an opportunity to speak to Senator Susan Collins about climate change. He said that Collins told them – Be practical. Get together with other Republicans and celebrate small victories. There was discussion of the CLEAR ACT, which was sponsored more than a year ago by Susan Collins, but which was not approved by the Senate. Peter has accepted the responsibility to be the liaison contact with Susan Collins for the CCL (Citizen's Climate Lobby) urging her to support their proposal for putting a federal fee

on sale of fossil fuel. The money received would be distributed to all families in the United States. This money could be used to invest in alternative energy such as solar power, or to pay for other expenses as needed.

Peter went to a monthly meeting of the E2Tech organization in Portland about climate change.

The next meeting will be March 23 at 6:00 p.m. at the Winslow library.

Elery Keene