

Draft
Meeting Record
NH Institutional/Community Scale
Biomass Heating Task Force
10am, January 14, 2009
Langdon Woods Dorm, PSU

Attending in person: Peter Riviere, David Atkinson, David Van Houten, Julie Moran, Thad Gulbrandsen, Dan Davis, Don Post, Pentti Aalto, Dennis Bacon, Ray Clark, Bill Crangle, Steve Huntington, Ray Sebold, Bill Andreas, Chris Recchia, Joe Short, Sara Smith, Russ Down, Jeff Hayes, Pat MacQueen, Pat Garvin

Attending via phone: Jan Barrett, Mike DeFrietas, Dave Auger, Rick DeMark, Joanne Morin, Charles Neibling

Agenda Item 2 (Welcome): Bill Crangle provided an introduction to Langdon Woods, the site of the meeting. It is a LEED certified (Gold Level) building which includes a co-gen facility which provides electricity and heat for the building. On the coldest days, this saves \$150,000/day in fuel costs. The development process focused on **collaboration** (students, faculty, administration) and **sustainability**. They are working towards being carbon neutral. A feasibility study towards this goal can be found on RC&D's website.

Thad Gulbrandsen presented a powerpoint (emailed to all): "Collaboration for Biomass and Distributed Energy in NH & the Northern Forest." Emphasizing complementary interests and collaboration opportunities, the presentation listed some of these opportunities: grant funding, feasibility studies, business plans, design/build contracts/cooperatives, community scale ESCOs, communications & education planning, workforce development, regulatory issues, fuel assistance, other mgmt/efficiency tools and concerns. All agreed to continue to work towards common interests & to collaborate, show funders we know what we are talking about and are working together.

Agenda Item 3: Meeting Record of Dec. 17, 2008 were corrected to add Kevin McKinnon's name to the Communications/Education Committee.

Agenda Item 4 (Community Project Updates):

Julie Moran/Colebrook: getting people interested, especially schools, to develop customer base

David Van Houten/Bethlehem: working on getting school interested

Peter Riviere/Lancaster: letter sent to property owners in business district (load date, fuel use, square footage, etc). Will follow up with personal contact.

Pat MacQueen/Berlin: no formal proposal but huge potential, especially with possibilities of biofuel co-generation

Dave Auger/Groveton: preliminary engineering done, including phases of project but treading water right now, need community energy committee to flesh out a project.

David Van Houten/Grafton County Complex: feasibility study and recommendation to proceed will be presented to the Commissioners; and is "shovel ready"

Rick DeMark/RC&D: individual building biomass conversion feasibility studies at schools and other public buildings in Boscawen, Walpole, Penacook, Charlestown, Loudon, Concord, Dover and Haverhill have been completed through a US Forest Service Wood Biomass Jump Start Grant and are posted on the North Country RC&D website. Also Londonderry and Kearsarge school districts are known to be looking at biomass fueled systems.

Peter Riviere/Lancaster: The WMRHS/Whitefield is preparing a bond issue for all 5 schools.

Unknown: A school in MA is trying gasification of wood chips.

Unknown: RC&D is a good clearinghouse site for projects & updates.

Charlie Neibling: industrial wood pellet boilers from Sweden are now available, he will send email info to all. Jaffrey is working on a biofuel waste water treatment plant

NOTE: This group does not imply any endorsement of any product, but is open to public and private resources, regardless of competing interests.

Pentti Aalto suggested looking to Europe and other parts of the country for more examples.

Agenda Item 5 (Northeast District Energy Corp): On 1/6/09 Rick DeMark and Russ Dowd of NCRC&D and Jan Barrett, Kevin Donovan, and Mike DeFrietas of the NDEC met to discuss NDEC's business model or template for advancing district heating systems in NH communities. Russ Dowd explained that what emerged from the conversation was that it is a complicated issue and no template can exist as each community is different. All agreed that a business plan must be in place for any project to move forward. NEDC is positioning itself as a not for profit turnkey option for communities to utilize, but any project must meet a degree of readiness for NEDC to get involved.

Rick DeMark said that the meeting concluded that "Degree of readiness" could be preliminarily described as: 1. A sufficient customer base for heat/hot water has been identified 2. The entity has decided on a preference for ownership and management of the district heating system; 3. The type of system has been determined.

Jan Barrett commented that NEDC is a new corporation, and still organizing and defining their role. There are others who can do some or all of the same activities or services. NEDC is one partner, but there may be others. For now, NEDC's goal is to move projects forward, they are still listening to need and defining their role. There are many variables to a turnkey solution, and NEDC is several months away from such as "product."

Agenda Item 6 (Biomass Energy Resource Center): Chris Reechia reported increasing opportunities, thanks to Tillotson funding, the Mahoosic Initiative, and the Grafton County Complex project funded through the US Forest Service Jump Start Grant. Colleges are taking the lead in converting heating plants to biofuel. BEREC is technology-neutral, open to learning about all types of technology. Reechia said it will be important to show that the first project works, demonstrates success and matches expectations.

Through their Tillotson Grant, BERC has been finalizing feasibility studies for Lancaster & Whitefield Elementary schools, the WMRHS. They are in the data gathering stage for Berlin (district energy), Berlin schools, Colebrook schools and Recreation Center, Lancaster County Court House (a mini-district), White Mtns CC and the Androscoggin Hospital.

The practicality of piping is a major concern for residents and towns; digging up streets is always a big issue. Rick DeMark suggested that BERC and NDEC collaborate, due to overlap of projects.

Reechia added that BERC's role is to work with both community scale as well as institutional scale projects. New projects utilize hot water, but they can work with steam where it already exists. BERC's primary roles are: pre-feasibility/feasibility (sizing & economics) and procurement and management of construction. BERC does not own or operate systems.

Agenda Item 7 (Northern Forest Economic Stimulus): Joe Short summarized the regional sign-on letter, which was based on the recommendations from the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy initiative (SEI), the NF Biomass Energy Initiative and the Northern States Border Commission. Stimulus should focus on infrastructure, workforce development and renewable energy. Rick DeMark said he could distribute the sign on letter via email to meeting participants. Joe Short continued to say that any stimulus will likely come through existing agencies (EDA, USDA-RD, RC&D, etc.). Agencies will look for specific projects that are "shovel ready," will look for demonstration sites for making change over to renewable energy. A list for NH has been developed, it is not prioritized, but state's interest in infrastructure may compete with energy-specific projects.

Chris Reechia mentioned the Farm Bill Section 399A (Efficiency & Sustainability) and Section 9014 (Community Wood Energy), as additional places to look for funding energy projects.

Joe Short also mentioned the Forest Investment Zone grant which will provide \$2 million over 5 years. This is a collaboration between the Northern Forest Center and BERC.

Agenda Item 8 (Communications & Education planning): David Auger reported that this committee has not met, and that he is the facilitator but it needs a chair. It would be good to find someone with PR background. The brochure developed last year by the Wood Biomass Jump Start Project was sent to the communications committee. Rick will set up a conference call for the committee at a later date.

Agenda Item 9 (Evaluation): Russ Dowd asked all meeting attendees to offer their comments on what they thought of this meeting and the role of this group. What follows is a summary of those comments:

- This fits with the Coos Action Plan, but needs to deal with ownership/management issues and determine which projects are economic development (ie: will create jobs)
- Meetings face to face are useful, effective way to find commonality
- Keep listing working projects, adds credibility, real world substance
- Good format to educate community reps
- Education of group and education of community is key
- Thanks for sharing with VT
- Payback for projects matters
- Efficiency of buildings matters
- Resources like Jordan Institute are available for efficiency issues
- Diversity of group is unique and should continue
- Network approach is very important
- Don't forget to review why and what group is doing, what it wants to accomplish
- Joanne Morin from the Air Resources Division at DES mentioned the Climate Change Action Plan which will be coming out shortly. While it will promote wood for heat and power, it will emphasize efficient systems. Recent violations of particulate standards will generate negative publicity, so beware.

A summary of suggestions for next steps:

- Provide tech support: business plan, legislative support, engineering support, concerns about competition with large power producers
- Focus on jobs, develop a strategic plan
- Develop a mission statement to guide future direction

Rick DeMark suggested that going into the future that a task force like this be of limited purpose and lifespan, that it must develop a mission statement, principles and methods of working together, and how to track progress. Rick DeMark asked the Communications Committee to draft these (see item 8). Thad, Russ and Rick will provide input to the Communications Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30pm