

Wood Biomass Heat/Power Task Force
July 8, 2009, 10am to noon
White Mountains Community College, Berlin, NH

DRAFT
Meeting Record

The following is the best approximation of what was discussed at this meeting. If you find an error, please send it to richard.demark@nh.usda.gov.

Rick DeMark, USDA Coordinator of the North Country Resource Conservation and Development Area opened and facilitated the meeting, noting that Russ Dowd could not attend the meeting. He asked for suggestions of additions to the draft agenda. One item was suggested and that was to leave time to clarify the purpose/role/mission of this Task Force. Several items pertaining to the agenda are posted on the NCRC&D website www.nhrcd.net.

1. Introductions of those present and those on the conference call line. **Please review to make sure you have been listed correctly. Emails from new participants will be added to the NH Wood Biomass Heat/Power Task Force distribution list, unless you ask not to be included. Emails are not available for all. Please forward this as appropriate to those in italics below.**

Attending in person where: Thad Guldbrandsen-PSU, Chuck Henderson-Office of Senator Shaheen, John Dyer- WMCC, Dick Harris-Town of Colebrook, Allison Grappone-Northern Forest Center, Joe Short-Northern Forest Center, Frank Clulow-WMCC, Bill Andreas-BEDCO, Rachael Stuart-NH Charitable Foundation, Pamela LaFlamme-City of Berlin, Kamallesh Doshi-BERC, Scott Piper-Northeast Mill Services, Pentti Alto-SNHU & PJAESD, Andre Caron-City of Berlin, Stephen McMann-Androscoggin Valley Hospital, Peter Riviere-Coos Economic Dev Corp, Pat Garvin-North Country Council, David Van Houten-Bethlehem Energy Committee, Steve LaFrance-Horizons Engineering, Preston Gilbert- SUNY Center for B.F. Studies, Jeff Hayes-North Country Council, *Craig Lyons*, Jim Rubens-Union of Concerned Scientists, Morris Pierce- Univ of Roch NY/Northeast District Energy Corp, Peter Benson- NH Charitable Foundation, David Auger-Town of Groveton, *Eric Eisley*-reporter

Attending via conference call line where: Laura Simoes-Office of Senator Shaheen, Tom Gross-UNH, *Dan Cabirov*-UNH, *Chris Skoagland*-NH DES, Julie Moran-Colebrook Energy Committee, Ray Sebold-Crotched Mtn Rehabilitation Center

2. Status of District Heating projects in the North Country and other parts of NH. It would be great if some folks involved in the Colebrook district heating project could come prepared to provide an update. Groveton, Lancaster Berlin, and others as well.

Dick Harris and Julie Moran reported that Colebrook is in discussion, but that much more understanding is needed within the town and potential consumers of a district heating system.

Julie Moran asked if the task Force could advise the Town on how to proceed.

Peter Riviere said this was a common issue for all towns considering district heating systems. He noted that the US Forest Service had contracted with Yellow Wood Assoc in VT to help communities move forward. The closure of the Ethan Allen plant could provide another opportunity for heat not only for Colebrook, but for other communities as well.

Kamalesh Doshi reported that BERC was investigating stand alone heating systems for the school and Recreation Center in Colebrook. It was apparent that this was not common knowledge among Colebrook participants of this meeting and that it was recommended by the meeting facilitator that the various parties involved in Colebrook need to share notes and strategies.

Andre Caron noted it was not surprising that this wasn't common knowledge within Colebrook as schools and communities are being approached by various vendors and company representatives and that competition in this area was growing.

Morris Pierce reported that he had spent the last 2 days visiting several institutional scale facilities in the north country. He is hoping to move at least 3 projects forward and hopefully at least one through the DOE district heating program due July 14. He also reported that he had secured grants in NY State and Vt for projects in those states and that he is developing relationships with manufacturers of modular biomass heating systems as well as entities that would develop, finance and operate district heating systems. It was verified that this work was being done under the auspices of the Northeast District Energy Corporation centered in Buffalo, NY.

Preston Gilbert noted that NICERTA is a big source of working capital and grants in NY State and that he is here in NH working on a plan for revitalization of the former Wausau mill site in Groveton.

David Auger reported that the local committee that would lead the district energy project in Groveton is on hold. Is waiting for help, essentially of the nature proposed to come out of the "Roadmap" project. In addition he reported that work continues on options for the Wausau site and that the plan for Phase 1 of the business park is just about complete.

Jeff Hayes clarified that Preston Gilbert was working under contract with NCC using the Groveton District Heating Feasibility Study as a companion study to the new strategic reuse plan. This new plan will more fully investigate alternative uses for on-site heat, beyond district heating, geared to industrial applications.

Preston Gilbert added that NH is not along with idle mill sites. That they can represent real opportunities for commercial/industrial rehabilitation projects.

Peter Riviere reported that Lancaster's district heating interests have changed from a centralized CHP to smaller institutional scale heat plants (such as the hospital) that could, in theory eventually be connected in a loop.

Kamalesh Doshi reported that BERC is also helping Berlin collect energy use/need data and particularly with the hospital which could be a stand alone heat or CHP system

Penti Alto suggested that these institutional scale systems should not be looked at as competitive within then community, but that compatibility should be a priority for potential to link the de-centralized systems at a later date. He added that SNH Univ is looking at low cost distribution systems and that eventually, like they have done in Europe, loops of heat/power generated from multiple and diverse fuels and renewables (including solar/wind) is possible.

Scott Piper commented that all communities considering a centralized heat source will likely experience some problems and that multiple sources is smarter.

Preston Gilberts suggested that all of these communities need information and public relations assistance, leadership development within the community and that assistance is need at the policy and on the ground practical levels.

Steve LaFrance commented that much of the "on the ground " preliminary work for Groveton is done. Public meetings demonstrated support, but that now the district heating project is not moving forward. Is it because interest has shifted to other communities. We just need to figure out how the systems will be paid for and how they will be operated.

Peter Riviere said that the Coos Symposium break out groups on distributed energy validated the need for much education.

Julie Moran added that bankers and other commercial funders need to better understand the potential of district heating sysytems.

3. Review and discuss questions and recommendations for distributed wood biomass heat/power created at the Coos Symposium, May 19-21, 2009.-Joe Short and Rick DeMark

Joe Short reviewed the nature of questions raised about distributed energy at the Coos Symposium.

Rick DeMark reviewed the recommendations made by the break out groups to help advance the development of distributed energy in Coos County.

NOTE: all of this information was passed out at the meeting and is available by going to www.nhrcd.net

Thad Guldbrandsen commented that perhaps “public relations” is not a good term to use for the nature education and information sharing that is needed within the communities. That it is important to be careful and cautious about the educational process.

Jeff Hayes agreed.

Frank Clulow asked if it had been considered that the goal of getting buy-in from residential customers is perhaps unrealistic as most north country people are quite comfortable using their own wood stoves and would balk at being tied to a central system?

4. Status of other institutional scale wood biomass heat/power projects around NH.- Rick DeMark and others

Rick DeMark reported on various institutional and community scale project he was familiar with happening around the state, making the point that this was not just a Coos County activity.

5. Status of RGGI Proposal submitted by NCRC&D on behalf of this group, and suggestions for other funding avenues.

Rick DeMark reported that there is still a possibility that the RGGI proposal will be funded by the NHPUC. *Additional note: North Country RC&D was contacted this week that indeed the “Roadmap” proposal will be funded under NH RGGI. More to come on that later.*

6. ACES (Waxman-Markey Bill) and potential funding sources- Jim Rubens.

Jim Rubens asked the individual on the Task Force to make contact with the NH Congressional delegation and in particular Senator Gregg to encourage federal funding of this Bill. He passed out information to those attending and will distribute more via email.

7. Other activities/actions affecting biomass:

Rick Demark passed out information on the following topics. If you did not get them, please contact him for the information.

- Biomass Crop Assistance Program.
- Status of Clean Air Cool Planet Local Energy Committee assistance
- Dept of Labor-\$500 Million for Clean Energy Job Training
- NESCAUM-Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management

8. Other items of relevance

Peter Riveire commented that NH OEP was really just gearing up for what he thought could be significant renewable energy funding. That people should visit their website and keep monitoring progress.

Rachael Stuart commented that it was critical that people be present and involved in the energy discussions at the NH PUC

Thad Guldbrandsen led a short discussion trying to clarify the role of this Task Force. There seemed to be general consensus that this group continue to act as a forum and provide support (particularly in the area of information sharing) as capable to community projects. That the task Force needed to remain unbiased and neutral regarding various technology options and not promote any particular business or service. That the Roadmap proposal, whether funded or not is enough of a mission as the group needs

In addition, while it will not be operational, John Dyer at the White Mountain Community College will have a gasifier on display.

John Dyer lead a tour of the yet to be operational wood gasifier at the WMCC.

The next meeting of the task Force was not determined, but general consensus again said that it should be within 2 months.