

Committee on Environmental Responsibility
Meeting Minutes for 9/1/2009

Present: Dan Nein, Doug Ginevan, Josh Henry, Paul Farnsworth, Pam Wichroski, Julie Rosenbach, Susan Murphy, John Smedley, David Das, Tonya Taylor, Christine Schwartz, Susan Schomburg, Marianne Cowen, Camille Parrish

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) was the agenda item.

The CAP is due 9/15/09. Bates has applied for an extension until the end of January, 2010 at which time we hope it will be presented at the Trustees meeting.

1. Julie reviewed the greenhouse gas emissions inventory (GGEI) for those new to the committee. The 2 largest sources of emissions are stationary sources (heating) and electricity. Julie presented pie charts to compare the emissions without the purchase of "green" electricity and with its purchase. With green electricity – 70% of our greenhouse gases are from stationary sources. Bates total emissions are 10,908 metric ton carbon equivalents. Christine asked how we compared to our peers? Julie said the comparison is difficult because of different variables/assumptions used by everyone doing their calculations and the size differences. Julie said she would try to look into bringing information about emissions per capita and square foot for different institutions to the next meeting.
We talked about the electricity contract that we currently have for green power. The contract ends in 2010 and ME is no longer offering the same contract options. We will go to purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs) at that point in a 2-year contract that will support electrical production from wind and cover the amount of emissions we will generate from having to purchase the standard offer electricity.
2. CAP Outline
Julie e-mailed the outline to us recently. She went through the different sections and who is taking the lead on each section.
John talked about the mitigation options- we are looking at renewable energy sources.
We will need to present different scenarios in terms of implementation and costs in the plan for the college to consider. For instance we may propose a timeline which shows declining use of RECs or offsets as we are able to implement changes at Bates to reduce our emissions. The plan needs to be dynamic with the goal of bringing our emissions to zero. We also need to be certain that the offsets we purchase are legitimately going to avoid future emissions/curtailing present ones. We need to take care of our "low hanging" fruit (more easily implemented emission reductions) before we buy offsets. The Energy Task Force is looking into conservation strategies right now.

A discussion followed about the definition of offsets and RECs. How are they different? What are the options? Can Bates administer our offsets and use the money to invest in our own CO2 reduction? We need an entire meeting devoted to offsets and options. The Stone House Group (SHG) is tasked with presenting us options to consider. We also must be mindful that the cost of offsets will increase with time.

3. Meeting with SHG

The agenda will be a progress report: SHG- should be reporting on the updates to the GGEI and renewable energy options. CER will report on our progress for the CAP.

The meeting will be held 9/10 from 11-1 in New Commons. Julie will find us a location. The meeting will be over lunch.

4. Doug gave us an overview of the Master Planning Committee's work and how the CAP should be a parallel process and operating on the same schedule. We will try to use the public meeting for the Master Plan this fall to update the community on our CAP as well.

Doug emphasized that money will be an issue. CER needs to figure out what we want to see included in the CAP. Presently there is no money in the 10-year budget for CAP implementation.

Marianne asked who would be making the decisions? We will need hard numbers to present and options from which to choose.

Pam emphasized that periodic updates to the CAP will be needed as the cost of alternatives will change and as might technologies.

Julie said to focus on interim dates in the CAP and not just the final date for reaching carbon neutrality.

5. Julie, John, Paul, and Pam will have weekly calls with SHG to check in on their progress. Anyone who wants to attend the calls is welcome.

6. Schedule for CAP and subgroups

The draft CAP sections are due the end of Sept.

Subgroups will meet to work on sections. The subgroups are

- a. Offsets- led by Josh with Doug and David.
- b. Education and Community Outreach- led by Camille with John, Susan S., Julie and Tonya.
- c. Transportation- led by Dan with Susan M.

7. Policy

Doug talked about setting or changing policies that might assist in saving money that could be used to implement the CAP. Might these go into the CAP? For example, specifying amount to be reimbursed for travel and anything above that is not paid for by Bates, or changing building hours to save on heating, etc.

John said that we needed community input and buy-in if we are going to be successful in implementing change.

8. Next meetings

CER will meet on 9/14 at 2 p.m. to brainstorm the CAP sections and options.

CER will meet on 9/28 at 2 p.m. to review the Draft CAP.

Subgroups will meet as needed to work on sections and put drafts in the folder on china so that everyone has a chance to keep up to date on the sections and provide input.