
**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
Cross-Sector/Non-energy Breakout Session
MEETING MINUTES**

ATTENDANCE

Attendee	Title	Organization	Present
Charles Rothenberger			√
Anji Seth			√
Lilian Ruiz			√
Patrice Gillespie			√
Thomas Worthley			√
Amy Paterson			√
Benda Watson			√
Chris Donnelly			√
Kathy Fay			√
Kimberly Stoner			√
Martha Kelly			√
Samual Tubman			√
Shanté Hanks			√
Steven Wallett			√
Thomas Swarr			√
Alec Shub			√

Breakout Session NOTES

Facilitated by Charles Rothenberger, Save the Sound

- Charles Rothenberger opened the discussion to thoughts and reflections regarding the cross-sector and non-energy report for the Mitigation Strategies working group of the Governor's Council on Climate Change
- Patrice Gillespie explained that she participated the Plans of Conservation Development (POCD). She went to the planning and zoning commission to express that there should be a chapter devoted to clean energy and energy efficiency. However, they were not taken seriously. 10 years later they tried again and only succeeded in getting the words "energy resilience" inserted into the POCD. They were concerned about greenhouse gas emissions and power outages. There's a lot of reinventing the wheel here. The state POCD should include guidance on how towns can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Towns should have to report to the state on their greenhouse gas emissions so that progress can be tracked. A lot of time is wasted around POCD.
- Lilian Ruiz replied that the council is having conversations. We need to be more assertive when it comes to where we can locate renewable energy sites, especially when it comes to solar. We could be killing one thing by investing in another. The soil is the largest sink of carbon for us in the state and something that we can manage.
- Kimberly Stoner stated that the Connecticut siting council is responsible for the location of large farms, whether on farmland or forested land. The siting council said we need the killingly gas powered powerplant and they are the ones that passed it along, deciding that it was needed.
- Kathy Fay said that she has been interested in finding out who sits on the Siting council.
- Charles Rothenberger said that an articulation of our climate goals is important. The Siting council refused to even entertain the discussion of the killingly power plant. We need to think about what will need to be done in addition if the power plant goes forward.
- Thomas Swarr asked, what types of projects need to be subjected to a full environmental review? He said, there's too much wiggle room. Maybe it does not matter who is actually on the siting council.
- Amy Paterson stated that one of the issues with the evaluation process is whether they are looking at the cost and impact of increasing emissions. It takes years for renewables like large scale solar to catch up and pay off. There is an offset of carbon sequestration due to the clear cutting that is occurring. A cost benefit analysis would be really helpful.
- Charles Rothenberger recounted who is sitting currently on the siting council and mentioned that the decision about killingly pre-dates the current chair.
- Patrice Gillespie said that the previous chair turned down the application for Killingly twice because they decided that the powerplant was not needed. The chair had explained that even if towns laid out plans about where they would like solar and where they would not like to see solar, the siting council is not legally bound to abide by those preferences. However, it does help them to decide when a developer comes to town.
- Charles Rothenberger said that we want to put in rules so that the criteria for decision making is clear and so that it does not matter who the decision makers are on the council.
- Brenda Watson said that in Bernie Pelletier's presentation, he noted that diversifying the board with more advocates needs to happen more across the board. People who get appointed to these councils have connections to money and power, often being appointed by politicians and have connections with big business. We need to diversify the voices and start looking at who sits on these councils.

- Charles Rothenberger agreed and said we need more low-income residential members on boards as well as the inclusion of the small business community. Current representation is of big business, which represents the voice of few, whereas small businesses do not really have advocates.
- Kimberly Stoner said that DEEP is both energy and environment. While it would be great if those two things could be integrated, I don't really think that has happened. That is reflected in the CT Siting council.
- Martha Kelly agreed with Kimberly Stoner.
- Lilian Ruiz agreed. She mentioned that even though the council on soil and water conservation is not well known, because they have been defunded for years, they are under DEEP. If you cannot reach DEEP, reach out to them. They have a DEEP representative sitting at their meetings and so if they can be of any help in making that liaison, they are there to assist.
- Chris Donnelly said that in reports he wrote for DEEP 8-10 years ago, they say this is something to think about but they never did anything to assure that they could move forward correctly. He expressed that he appreciates the discussion about how governing bodies should be doing things but nothing is going to happen until the average person believes in climate change.
- Amy Paterson said that she agrees with Donnelly. One thing that struck her when she was doing the report was education and outreach. She said that across all the working groups that is going to be a challenge. We need to be able to reach people so that things resonate with them.
- Kathy Fay disagreed and expressed that the GC3 is about what the state can do.
- Amy Paterson replied that it requires a multifaceted approach. It comes down to local and community action as well. We need to make sure it is a top-down approach as well as a bottom-up approach.
- Chris Donnelly said that DEEP has potentially ceded some leadership and they need to take some of that back.
- Anji Seth said that this is a big conversation right now. Is it individuals that are responsible or government and corporations? When you look at the scale of what needs to be done, it is clear that the answer is government and corporations. What policies can the state put in place that will make it easier for individuals to make the right decisions? Policies should be in place to make it so that people have to do the right thing.
- Lilian Ruiz said it is hard for the individual to think about something as elusive as climate change when they need to be thinking about their own paycheck.
- Amy Paterson said that we need to make sure that land owners understand the importance of forest to mitigating climate change because a lot of forest land in Connecticut is privately owned. Therefore, it really will require bottom-up and top-down approaches.
- Anji Seth suggested creating policy to help incentivize these things for land owners.
- Amy Paterson agreed with Anji Seth.
- Charles Rothenberger noted the time and adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.

NOTE: All Agendas and minutes and working group reports can be found [here](#)