

## Public Safety, Emergency Management, Public Utilities and Energy Conservation Focus Group held July 20, 2017

**In attendance:** Melissa Everett, Clean Water Fund; Patrice Gillespie, Clean Water Fund; David Radha, Conn Water Company; Rebecca French, UConn CIRCA; Kathleen Schomaker, Town of Hamden; Cathy Lezon, Eversource, John Hill, SCCRWA; Martin Madon, Hamden; Carl Amento, SCRCOG; Eugene Livshits, SCRCOG; Rebecca Andreucci, SCRCOG; Rebecca Augur, MMI; Nick Armata, MMI

### Discussion Summary:

- Eversource has updated their emergency management plan and response structure to include community liaisons during emergencies.
- Eversource has been proactively:
  - Installing stronger, storm/flood resistant infrastructure including telephone poles and transmission wires
  - Removing substations in floodprone areas
  - Installing smart devices throughout the grid that will allow the company to diagnose and in some cases repair issues automatically.
- RWA is implementing energy efficient projects in order to reduce costs and carbon emissions from its operations.
- RWA looking at installing solar, including floating solar
  - Floating solar requires smaller solar panels than traditional terrestrial mounted solar panels.
  - Studies are ongoing regarding both the project's cost effectiveness and the environmental impact on aquatic life.
- RWA generally seeks to protect high quality open space within its watershed, so solar farms are not appropriate; however, floating solar is a unique opportunity.
- Communities and the region should better plan for green energy and infrastructure.
- SCRCOG can play a role in assisting members by providing resources and guidance on opportunities (locations, technologies, etc.); interfacing with existing utilities and renewable energy providers and DEEP/ PURA; and navigating the complexities introducing more renewable energy into the regional system.
- Water Utility Coordinating Committee Planning (WUCC)
  - Designed to coordinate between utilities companies and towns
  - Frequent breakdown in planning between water companies and municipalities – utilities not always made aware of local POCD updates
  - Can COG play a role in better coordinating water supply and local land use planning?

- Local energy taskforces have set up a helpful peer to peer network with leadership from Clean Water Fund, targeting:
  - Energy resilience
  - Mapping pathways to 100% renewable energy
  - Integrating energy into local POCDs
- Towns actively looking at energy savings performance contracting (Branford and Hamden)
  - Challenge is up-front money is at-risk
  - Typically long-term contracts – length of time to recoup investment through savings
- Public Health & Safety
  - Concern for extended periods of power disruption. Many community emergency response teams have accounted for 1 or 2 days of power loss but do not consider months of power loss.
  - Economic development tie-in, lost business time
  - Cyber-attacks are a growing concern for utilities
    - Eversource is investing heavily on planning for and preventing cyber-attacks.
  - Utilities are coordinating with DEMHS, DPH, communities and other utility providers to establish and maintain lists of critical facilities to prioritize the restoration of energy during emergencies
  - The Department of Public Health is dedicated to identifying and updating critical operations, including utilities.
- CIRCA – The mission of the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation Increase the resilience and sustainability of vulnerable communities along Connecticut’s coast and inland waterways to the growing impacts of climate change on the natural, built, and human environment.
- Sea Level Rise – Most rising tides reports show sea level rise using the “bath tub” model.
  - Sea level rise will not only create stronger storm surges and other effects to extreme weather but will ultimately change the landscape of coastal communities.
    - POCD’s in the region plan for either disaster mitigation or land use changes, but none look at both
  - No one-size-fits-all solution to adapting to sea level rise – will vary neighborhood by neighborhood due to topography of the Region’s coastline.
  - Multi-benefit solutions are best way to garner implementation funding (economic development, transportation improvements, adaptation, etc.) – Meriden Green great example (riverine flooding)

- CIRCA will be updating sea level rise projections this fall
- SCRCOG has played a critical role in coastal resilience within the region, and should do the same for coordinating efforts on sea level rise
  - Transportation projects are an angle into sea level rise, as COG has jurisdiction over transportation projects, and critical infrastructure (I-95, Route 1, rail lines) are located in close proximity to coastal waters.
  - NEC rail project planning needs to be cognizant of sea level rise planning
- Inland areas also impacted by sea level rise
  - Tidally influenced rivers
  - Impacts of changed coastal landscape on inland development
  - Meriden Green – great flooding,
- Planning Law - CT is at the forefront of the disaster mitigation planning law policy.
  - Project underway to review state statutes that address sea level rise.
- Citizen science – Should be taken into consideration when conducting research and data collection for the region.
  - Citizen science works to an extent, but is limited in the capacity of volunteers. Success rates of this style of research is dependent on the simplicity of the task.
    - Good Example: Early blooming of trees.
    - Not as Ideal: River depth measurements.
- Anaerobic Digester – Good way to reduce waste, move towards trash diversion goal. There are very few drawbacks. Southington plant up and running. Should be more in CT – potential for more in region? North Haven currently working on a project.
- Communities should look into shared solar - for folks who are not able to buy into their own solar array but still want to support and contribute to the green energy movement.
- NY, CT and MA will be collaborating for an “energy conference” in order to share ideas for green and renewable energy.
- Beauty must be integrated into planning efforts – sustainable planning means planning not just for “doom and gloom,” but also for quality of life.