

Maine Clean Communities = MC²



***A Clean Cities Program Promoting Clean Fuel Vehicles, Energy Independence and Clean Air
Administered by the Greater Portland Council of Governments***

**Maine Clean Communities
Stakeholders/Steering Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

**Greater Portland Council of Governments
68 Marginal Way, Portland, ME 04103**

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Welcome and Introductions
- III. Announcements
- IV. Legislative Update
- V. Funding Opportunities
- VI. Project Updates – Local and Statewide
- VII. The latest from U.S. DOE
- VIII. Other Business
- IX. Set Next Meeting Date
- X. Adjourn

Maine Clean Communities (MC²)
Stakeholders/Steering Committee Breakfast Meeting Minutes
Wednesday – December 3, 2008 --- 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
GPCOG Conference Room, 68 Marginal Way, Portland, Maine

Present: Ann Adams (Sierra Club); Andy Burt (Maine Council of Churches); Lynne Cayting (DEP Mobile Sources); Ted Corbett (Town of Scarborough); Kevin Fowler (Unitil); Ken Gardner (City of Westbrook); Brian Hallowell (Cummins Northeast); Steve Klein (Mermaid Transportation Co.); Steve Linnell (GPCOG); Sue McIntyre (GPCOG); Kevin Mallory (Portland Public Schools); Andy Meyer (Safe Handling Inc.); Jay Nason (Town of Scarborough); Anna Price (FHWA); Richard Rudolph (Rail Users' Network); Joan Saxe (Sierra Club); Casey Stoutenburg (Unitil); Paul Weiss (Cumberland resident).

1. Call to Order:

Steve Linnell called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions:

Steve welcomed those present and introductions were made.

3. Announcements:

- Steve congratulated Kevin Mallory from Portland Public Schools for being recognized by the School Bus Fleet Magazine for using clean fuels, green technologies and methods, in all of their school buses.
- EnviroGard, a division of Onyx Environmental Solutions and dedicated to environmentally friendly lawn care, floor care and carpet care solutions, is a patent holder of low polluting lawnmowers that are powered by propane. They are currently running a promotion where they will donate \$100.00 to the local Clean Cities Coalition for every EnviroGard Propane Lawn Mower that Clean Cities assists in selling. There is also another propane powered lawnmower company that has a similar product. It's called the "Big Boy" and there is a distributor located in Turner, Maine. Most of these lawnmowers are for commercial use and not really residential.
- Clean Cities is officially 15 years old. Events are planned for the first week in March. Some of these events will be held in Washington, D.C. Plans are being made to celebrate this anniversary at the same time as Energy Independence Days. Steve will provide details as more information becomes available.
- Plans are in the works for a Clean Cities Regional meeting. This time it would be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania sometime in mid-June. It will affect all coalitions east of the Mississippi.
- A handout listing vehicle policies proposed by President-elect Obama was distributed among the group. It describes the President-elect's positions on vehicle technology as well as transportation technology.
- A CNG powered Honda GX demo is parked outside the building for anyone who'd like to take a look at it and/or give a test drive. Steve has heard that production is being stepped up for the Honda 2000 GX. They will have the capability of producing 2,000 a year up from 1,000. Steve is not sure if that means all types of vehicles or not. This vehicle, which is fueled by compressed natural gas, is fueled at METRO's fueling station. It was noted that these cars are set up for rapid fuel and normally only take about 3 or 4 minutes to fuel up. This particular vehicle can get about 35 to 40 miles per gallon.
- Comparison was made with electric hybrid vehicle technology. Lynne pointed out that electric plug-in hybrids are way out in the future. The battery technology is very expensive. For a plug-in hybrid to be feasible, it has to go for a longer range before being re-charged. It's difficult to build a battery that has that long range capability. But, if they can develop the lithium battery, hybrids like the Prius will begin to come down in price. A discussion followed about vehicle warranties, EV1s, and long range electric vehicles. Steve said that there is a lot of "hype" about electric vehicles but not much is happening quickly. It was pointed out that if everyone had a plug-in hybrid that we would be in big trouble. The utility companies would have to use more coal-fired energy to supply the demand. On the other hand, we need to get more people out of cars. In reference to the proposed stimulus package to re-start the economy, it would be great if we could get many projects out there that could be started within the next six months to a year that would help us become less dependent on autos and oil industries. Steve commented that he had heard there might be as much as \$3 billion allocated for public transportation.

- In reference to retrofits, Baker Equipment has signed on with Bay Tech for both natural gas powered vehicles and propane-powered vehicles. They have expanded their locations throughout the country. However, there is nothing in the northeast. The closest location is in Pennsylvania.
- GPCOG became a member of ICLEI, a group of local governments for sustainability. It provides us a regional membership for all our member towns. Some COG towns are also individual town members. Steve recently attended an ICLEI Conference. The group is offering a Climate Action Blueprint for the new administration. One item in particular that is mentioned in the Blueprint provides a \$400 million annual allocation to the Clean Cities Program. (A copy was distributed among the group.)
- Steve referenced the Natural Gas Fuel Vehicle workshop that took place on November 18th. It was sponsored by Maine Clean Communities along with UNH and the Granite State Clean Communities Coalition. Twenty-six people from Maine attended the event. Steve was pleased with the turn-out. There was a good retention rate and people wanted to learn as much as they could. They received lots of good feedback. There was a fair amount of interest in pursuing natural gas as well as other alternative fuels. Paul Weiss commented that it was a great conference and that he found it very interesting. The expertise was there. There were people who had built natural gas stations and more interestingly there were actual cities and/or towns that had done conversions of their own municipal fleets. It gave real numbers and examples on the “payback”. It also was not overly technical but yet gave lots of information. It was a good learning experience offering good tools and options for specific fleets that have that capability. He felt that anyone from Portland should take advantage of it!

This topic generated discussion on how to get the natural gas pipeline that runs through Maine to cross into Cumberland and Falmouth. Kelly Fowler from Unitil (the company that just recently took over Northern Utilities), noted that Unitil would be looking at those kinds of things and see if there is a way to make things happen. Paul pointed out that extending the natural gas pipeline to areas that allow for fleet fueling might make more sense. Discussion continued on this topic. Steve noted that, as a result of attending the Natural Gas Fuel Vehicle workshop, Bob Dawes had contacted the gas company in Bangor and he is strongly considering natural gas. Steve said that Maine Clean Communities is considering offering the workshop again in a couple of years. He was pleased to see many municipal officials/representatives attend the workshop but would have wanted to also get commercial fleets representatives to attend. There is more information available on the Maine Clean Communities webpage. Andy felt it would be a good way for commercial fleets to learn about natural gas fueled vehicles. Kelly added that Northeast Gas Association also has good information on their website for commercial fleets as well.

4. Legislative Update

There is a tax credit bill in the Legislature for building infrastructure that will lapse at the end of the month. This is the second time the bill has been re-instated. But the fiscal note on it nearly “killed” the bill both times. Steve spoke with Representative Larry Bliss who sponsored the bill and was able to get it passed in the Legislature two years ago, about introducing new legislation. But it may not be a good time to propose anything that costs the State any monies considering the current economic situation. However, Representative Bliss said he would still put something in next week in the Legislature just as a “placeholder”.

A short discussion took place about the permitting process in Portland for bringing in natural gas to your residence. If a residence is located on a state-owned road, the cost for installation is more expensive vs. a city-owned road. It is believed that this is because the State requires a more costly road restoration than the City. When it is a city-owned street, the city ordinance applies. When it is a State-owned road, both city ordinance and State requirements apply.

5. Funding Opportunities

The Clean Cities solicitation will be announced soon.

6. Project Updates – Local and Statewide

Kevin Mallory provided an update on the Portland school bus fleet. He explained how he had started back in 2001 having read an article from the Union of Concerned Scientists that had put together a study on school buses in California in conjunction with children’s health issues. He noted that 15% of students in Portland have asthma. The question was do school bus emissions aggravate that? He began to have discussions on anti-idling in Maine. We now see anti-idling signs at most schools in Maine. That money comes from the Maine DEP. Kevin then

moved on to retro-fit old school buses with federal monies and has retrofitted the bulk of the fleet. He then moved on into purchasing CNG buses with the help of federal funds and plans to buy four more buses. They continue to work on the capability of their buses. He would like to see more kids on buses and fewer vehicles on the road. The original intent was to reduce emissions but he now feels they are reaping the benefit from both. They have received the Governor's Excellence Award and more recently were just named a "Green Fleet" by the school bus magazine. They have since moved on to work with parents to stop parents from idling and have tried to get more kids to ride the bus. He is now concerned that with the current economic situation and budget cuts, that school buses and bus routes may be eliminated. He feels that the benefits are clear when taking cars off the road.

Kelly Fowler provided an overview of the Unitil Company that recently acquired Northern Utilities. Unitil is a combined electric and gas utility company whose headquarters are located in Hampton, N.H. They have about 15,000 electric customers and about 15,000 natural gas customers in Massachusetts. Unitil has recently purchased both the Maine and New Hampshire divisions of Northern Utilities. This acquirement adds about 70,000 new customers between the two states. The split in the company between electricity and gas is going to be pretty even.

Unitil is a very progressive company. They are very serious in working with relationships and building relationships. They will be concentrating on growth and have added between 70 and 80 new employees to their organization. Northern Utilities has not had any growth in Maine for the last eight to ten years. Casey Stoutenberg from Unitil added that his job is focusing on the "resident". Kelly said she would be working with small commercial companies and Mike Smith would be covering key accounts for Maine and New Hampshire and will be located in Portland. They are very excited in moving forward and want to be customer-focused. Ideas, suggestions and comments are welcomed.

Andy Burt provided an update on the "Bio-fuels for Maine Newsletter" that is scheduled to come out soon. She has been working on this project in conjunction with the Maine Energy Investment Corporation. Articles of interest include:

- Maine Biofuels in Portland is getting ready to open a close-loop biodiesel production facility.
- A bio-renewable brown grease in Fairfield
- Bio-mass wood pellets
- A market watch article that tracks suppliers and prices

Anyone that is interested in getting this newsletter should send his/her email address to Andy Burt at: adburt@zwi.net

Andy said that she had spoken with Richard Dyer from the Mic-Macs. They are currently in negotiations for installing large tanks acquired from Loring Air Force Base for a biofuels' production facility in the Presque Isle area.

Ted Corbett from Scarborough provided an update on their propane vehicle and propane fueling station that Jay Nason had spearheaded. Some vehicles are using propane while others are staying on biodiesel. Even with the lower temperatures, the vehicles have been doing fine. They have installed thermal units on the police cars so they don't have to idle the vehicles to keep the components warm. TOMAR Applications have been installed in two plow trucks. This unit has the capability of turning the light green and is also on their police cars and fire trucks. They have a 60 square foot building now using waste oil to heat the building. It can also revert to heating with natural gas. One of the benefits is not hauling off any of the waste oil. The building has also been insulated and they have cut back on electricity. Everything is automated. When you step into a building the lights go on and when you leave, the lights turn off. It is estimated that they have cut their electric bill by about \$25,000.

Ted also praised the work of the town's mechanics. He pointed out that this is not a "cure-all", but that they continue to research different kinds of things and try to encourage change in ideas and policies.

Ken Gardner said that Westbrook is doing an anti-idling policy. They are always discussing what others are doing in their towns. They have tried to consolidate crews to save on energy and have re-lighted their maintenance facility with energy credits and assistance from Energy Maine.

Andy Meyer of Safe Handling pointed out that the entire state of Maine is now using E10 at the gasoline pumps. The gas is now 10% ethanol, renewable energy.

Safe Handling has been monitoring their trucks with regards to idle time. They have reduced idle time by 60% simply by training and educating their drivers. They also monitor RPMS and give monthly feedback reports to their drivers. Each driver is given a bonus for improving the fuel economy of their fleet.

7. The latest from U.S. DOE

A brief update on the 2009 Clean Cities solicitation was provided. The solicitation will be coming out in a couple of weeks. Categories include incremental costs for alternative fuel vehicles and fueling infrastructure, and education workshops with the focus being on renewables and a pilot project for universities making biofuel. If anyone is interested in doing a project, please get in touch with Steve.

8. Other Business

- The annual survey is coming up. Steve or Ann Holland will be making phone calls to folks.

9. Set Next Meeting Date

The next Maine Clean Communities meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4th, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.