

CAP Cohort
Cohort-wide meeting 5.1.23

Notetaker: Julia

Key Takeaways:

- **Roses**- Community engagement activities including Kittery's community conversations, Biddeford's photo voice contest, and Kennebunkport and Kennebunk's community surveys.
- **Buds** - Getting a better understanding of the public's thoughts about climate change and potential strategies. Taking advantage of upcoming funding opportunities to take some action.
- **Thorns** - Varied across the communities, but a common theme was that this process takes a lot of work and it's been difficult to keep all task force members engaged.
- Taking advantage of funding opportunities emerged as a bud and thorn theme.
- Tips for managing a task force:
 - Good relationships with municipal staff are instrumental
 - Have varied skill sets and ages
 - Check in with task force members from time to time to see how they are doing. Are they overwhelmed, burned out, disengaged? Adjust approach if necessary.
- It would be helpful for task forces to have potential strategies sooner rather than later
 - Some task forces are ready to start evaluating strategies for their plan
 - Some task forces want examples strategies for communicating with the public
- Identifying regional strategies upfront could help the task forces evaluate strategies

Action Items:

- Karina will share Kittery's community conversations development document with other communities
- Karina will share the strategy development graphic with the task forces

Cohort Attendees:

- Cam Wake (K)
- Judy Spiller (K)
- Kendra Amaral (K)
- Marggie Bartenhagen (KB)
- Michelle Radley (KP)
- Pam Morgan (KP)
- Steve Reiter (B)
- Meaghan Daly (B)
- Brad Favreau (B)

Rose, Bud, Thorn Activity

- Kittery
 - **Rose**
 - Engaging the community and listening to their climate change concerns.

- Task force developed questions to talk to folks in the community: businesses, KLT, faith community, committees, town staff, etc.
 - great learning experience
 - Good way to get the word out about the process.
 - Community needs that emerged - transportation issues, affordable housing, nature and nature based solutions
 - Lots of connections with other town work: tansits system, housing
 - Community members were grateful the task force came to them rather than expecting them to show up at some event
 - **Bud**
 - Analyze info from the community conversations. Zoe and Carol will help with the analysis.
 - Dynamics with housing and transportation
 - 2-3 really good ideas have already come out of this work, and exploring funding opportunities
 - Port authority looking elevation of structures with SLR considerations
 - Technical assistance for weatherization and renewable energy projects in the community
 - **Thorn**
 - Challenges with original public engagement consultants
 - How to get IRA money for actions if the proposals are happening now?
 - People have brought up narrow bandwidth of concerns (i.e. not a lot of concern about grid resilience)
 - How to help low and middle income folks take actions to get EVs, weatherization, electrification? Where is the technical assistance to get the people the resources and information?
 - Lots of work, hard to keep up with everything
 - Biddeford
 - **Rose**
 - Exhibition at Engine for photo voice contest. Great public engagement on this project.
 - Combining art and climate change seems to bring people out and fosters public participation (noted previous event with Jill Pelto).
 - **Joined race to zero with ICLEI.** Only municipality in Maine that has done so
 - **Bud**
 - Working on energy efficiency block grant. Haven't decided on a project yet but looking forward to coming up with something.
 - Active outreach subcommittee
 - Worked with other orgs during earth day including the Biddeford Land Trust
 - **Thorn**


- Could do a better job reaching out to people beyond the “usual suspects” i.e. lower income folks, people who don’t usually participate
 - Agreement that the original engagement consultants were a challenge
- Kennebunk
 - **Rose**
 - Getting more people on board who are engaged and attending meetings and willing to do the grunt work.
 - **Bud**
 - Next steps for public engagement after the community survey.
 - Looking forward to doing community engagement like what Kittery and Biddeford have done.
 - Hopping survey results will help motivate the task force.
 - **Thorn**
 - Behind other task forces.
 - Lack of organization, trouble with attendance.
 - Anticipating challenges with motivating task force members with further public outreach and review of the vulnerability assessment, etc.
- Kennebunkport
 - **Rose**
 - Community survey asked people if they would like to be part of community sounding board, and heard from ~80 interested people!
 - Getting Carol onboard
 - Pam as the chair
 - Getting tangible work completed
 - **Bud**
 - Figuring out how to reach out to the community and hear what they have to say.
 - Interest at the community level is exciting
 - **Thorn**
 - Behind the other task forces.
 - Small group, trouble with attendance, overwhelmed with work. Looking at recruiting new members.
 - Lots of work and not a lot of people
 - Having enough time to meet to get the work done

What have task forces done right?

- Kittery
 - Community has been working on this since 2019 when the Kittery Climate Adaptation Committee (KCAC) got going.
 - KCAC has good working relationships with the town staff and already has town buy-in. Lucky to have a great group of volunteers.
 - Effective meetings, get things done. Folks in Kittery are really interested and willing to participate right now.

- The community conversations have been enjoyable for the task force, and given them a burst of motivation
- Can share information about process for developing the community conversations
 - Karina will share with other task forces
- Coming up with the list of who they wanted to talk to and how they could prioritize those groups took them the most time
- ~21 conversations so far, were shooting for 50, but may end up doing about 30
- Biddeford
 - Some turnover on the task force, but have had a pretty committed group of folks who are participating
 - Task force formed in 2020
 - Important to put together the right team with broad range of ages
 - Important to have people with various skill sets
 - Lesson learned - periodically check in with members to see how people are doing.
 - Biddeford is looking at changing their meeting schedule to help with burnout.
 - Discussions about bringing on new members to make up for folks who haven't been participating.
 - 3-4 people are doing the vast majority of the work and it's a lot for just them to take on themselves
 - Maybe it's time for them to bring on new members like some of the other task forces have been doing

Strategy Development Discussion

- Strategy development graphic:  Strategy development graphic
- Will the list of potential strategies include any and all even if it's not possible at the town level? Will there be considerations for feasibility?
 - The potential strategy list will include strategies that are applicable to your community, if there is the will and the way.
 - We will tailor the list for each community but it may include some that you decided are not so feasible for your community.
 - Most likely, you won't include all of the potential strategies. It is meant to get you started.
- Who will cull the list?
 - That's what we are talking about today.
 - We are trying to figure out how much capacity and interested the task forces have for culling the list
- What are regional issues that SMPDC will be addressing? 1) regional transportation, 2) working waterfront, 3) summer tourism economy, 4) resilience of the grid
 - We've been thinking about regional strategies and when to introduce those, so sounds like sooner would be better.

- Figuring out the feasibility of strategies and weighing different considerations like political feasibility will be a challenge for task forces.
 - Important to have a task force meeting to figure out how they will select certain actions before they actually try to cull the list.
- To what extent will there be support to facilitate the task force through this process?
 - SMPDC, Carol and Zoe can provide whatever level of support task forces need, but we want our support to fit what the community wants (different communities may want different levels of support)
- Karina will share the the strategy development document (and put in Kittery's dropbox)

What does your task force need to work through strategies?

- How will all of this come together?
 - The Kennebunk task force was under the impression that the strategies would be vetted by the municipality in terms of feasibility and what they are already doing
 - Vetting strategies through public input
- Kennebunkport task force sees their role as coming up with the plan, but that is just the starting point, they will keep working to implement the plan.
 - Some strategies are going to be easy sells and some will be more controversial (tide gates mentioned as potentially controversial?)
 - Having the long list of strategies will be helpful
 - Knowing what some of the strategies could be would be helpful when talking to the community because that's what people keep asking about
 - Giving task force drafts of the list early on will be helpful
- Is SMPDC going to rate strategies on how they will move the needle? For these types of processes it can be helpful to have criteria? Can we look at criteria that have been used in other communities?
 - We are developing a potential strategy memo with a list of strategies and summary of what your community has already done
 - Also developing a detailed strategy matrix which includes a lot of information such as examples of implementation, impact, equity considerations, relative cost
 - Can add more considerations as we refine list and task force starts to figure out what is most important to consider
- Cost of regional strategies is huge, but these are critically important. Cost for community level actions is important at the community level. People are asking about what they can do individually. Need strategies for individuals as well as regionally and for the municipality.
 - Residential properties, individual behaviors, businesses, etc.
- NH Climate Action Plan - used life cycle cost and GHG emission criteria.
- Can't do a simple cost benefit analysis, need to think about equity consideration.
- Electrical grid - Kittery wants to make recommendation in plan to work with CMP to build grid resilience, so this isn't a cost for the town but town needs to be involved
- Break out what Town needs to do, what individuals need to do
- York hospital is doing their own climate action plan, other large entities should be writing their own climate action plans

- Regional piece - Wouldn't it be possible with these 4 communities to leverage this process to get businesses and other large entities involved? This is a regional effort that could leverage action and funding to move these actions along. Collective power of cohort.
- These conversations are useful. Are more planned?
 - Planned 2 more cohort meetings so we will do those and can schedule more if folks are interested