

Developing a Climate Action Plan for Addison County

Feb 22, 2021

Richard Hopkins presentation at CEAC Climate Action Roundtable

Hello. My name is Richard Hopkins. I am a retired public health worker, and I view climate change as the biggest public health threat of our time – yes, even bigger than COVID. I am here to talk to you on behalf of the CEAC Board about our plans for developing a Climate Action Plan for Addison County.

We believe that effective action for climate change will happen as innumerable individuals and organizations take concrete steps to make changes in behaviors and systems.

We believe there is a critical mass of people in our county who want to see such change.

With a community plan we can agree among ourselves on what we each are going to do as our part of a community transformation. No-one is going to tell you what you must do – this is all of us together, dividing up the work to the best of our abilities.

The eventual plan could have quite a large number of actions, each of which has a target completion date, a way to measure progress or completion, and a designated champion who agrees to do everything they can to make that action succeed. We expect that there will be some actions that we generally agree could make a difference, for whom we can't find a champion right now, and those won't be part of our initial Action Plan. We expect that some of the actions in the plan will be visible on the ground locally, and some will require advocacy work at the state or national level before they can be fully implemented.

The total of these actions should make a measurable difference to the total amount of fossil fuel burned, or methane released, in our county, and we intend to measure our progress ultimately by monitoring those amounts. The bigger the difference, the better, of course.

In this COVID era, we are not going to be having community meetings as we might have done in the past – today’s Roundtable is more like what we will be doing -- and these Roundtables will continue.

CEAC will convene a small-ish core group, maybe 10 or 12 people.

- They will develop an outline of a plan
- They will talk one on one to dozens of actors in the community. We are thinking we will include activists like yourselves and also people who might not attend a community meeting about climate change – fuel dealers, sellers of cars and powered equipment, farmers, landlords, HVAC contractors, manufacturing plant managers, healthcare, social service and education leaders, and so on. In those conversations we will solicit ideas about actions that they and we can take in our community towards preventing climate change, and also about barriers to such actions that could be addressed locally or through advocacy.
- They will refine a draft plan
- They will seek broad community input
- They will finalize a plan
- They will monitor progress annually for each of the actions in the Plan, as well as community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

We will be assisted in some of this work by a Minnesota-based consultant company called paleBLUEDot, who have already helped about 50 communities through a process like this.

We hope that at least some of you who presented today or listened to the presentations will want to join CEAC in this year-long effort, though we know that that won’t be true for all of you. There are lots of roles to fill, large and small. We look forward to getting to work. Thanks for coming today.