

CHUN Climate Crisis Committee (CCCC)
First Open Meeting, July 25, 2019 – submitted by Jim Slotta and Stephen Polk

On a warm, Thursday night in late July, 32 people gathered in the CHUN Community Hall to register their concerns about the Climate and pledge their support for CHUN's neighborhood climate work. The meeting was led by CCCC co-chairs and CHUN Board Delegates Stephen Polk and Jim Slotta. Stephen is a professor in the Environmental Studies department at Naropa University. Jim is a Charter Member of *Accelerate* Neighborhood Climate Action (ANCA); CHUN has been a partner of the ANCA program since 2014, leading the way in addressing neighborhood climate action. Strawberries and iced teas were a welcome hot summer fare.

The climate crisis context for this meeting was articulated by Stephen, who reminded the group that we have long surpassed the science understanding of a maximum 350 parts per million carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The recent UN report states that we are now at 410 ppm and +1 degree Celsius, projecting +1.5 degrees in 11 years. Action is needed at all levels of society. We need to. "...turn the world economy away from fossil fuels on a dime." Stephen stated our initial take on CCCC's Vision and Mission Statements:

VISION:

Ten exemplary, socially and ecologically resilient neighborhoods with environmentally concerned leaders working together.

MISSION:

To educate, interact and mobilize neighborhood stakeholders (residents, businesses and other environmentally concerned agencies) toward zero emissions by 2040.

Jim mentioned the work of many of the organizations currently available to us, and the need for CCCC to 'find its niche' among the many local efforts combating the climate crisis.

Presentations by two well positioned Denver leaders set the stage for this committee's future work.

The first speaker, Jolon Clark, president of Denver City Council, has an impressive personal history of planet care and is an environmental educator by training. He recommends a separate climate crisis department in city government, stating, "The Planet is on fire! Our leaders need to say this is an emergency now!" We need a dedicated funding source and a dedicated work force to convert buildings and homes from natural gas to electric energy. We must change behavior while generating the money to enable this conversion. A Carbon Tax is one idea to get underway. The reality is that the issue must be solved locally.

Next, Barbara Donahey, representing the organizations 350 Colorado and also Physicians for Social Responsibility, has as her agencies' missions to build a grassroots climate network for urgent change. They currently address fracking, personal and PERA divesting, and moving beyond coal.

The UN Report also states that we have 18 months to fix this, before the dangerous trends are irreversible. To follow up these insights, the CCCC will meet next on Thursday, August 22nd, 6:30 to 8:00 PM, at the Queen City Cooperative: 901 N. Clarkson Street.