

## **CEAC Strategic Planning Interview Process**

March and April, 2009 – Steve Cochran, Sustainability Strategies LLC

### **Overview**

As a component of the CEAC strategic planning process personal interviews were held with all 24 CEAC members and with Michael Hopping, for his unique perspective as CEAC “reporter.” All individuals were asked the same 5 questions:

1. What (if anything) is Working and Effective with CEAC?
2. What’s Not?
3. What is the Critical Future Direction for CEAC?
4. How can I (Steve) Better Support the Effort?
5. What Other Input Would You Like to Offer?

Individual responses to each question (with attribution, where appropriate, by initials) are shown in the attachment. As may be expected, they encompass a broad range. The gamut ranges from majority enthusiasm and high praise for the effort and its leadership so far to a small minority’s frustration with the pace of implementing regional energy efficiency and conservation programs, tackling the large social issues – and in some cases with the narrow viewpoint of some fellow members.

In general, however, there is a decidedly positive opinion of the effort so far and a similarly strong desire for CEAC to continue, expand its scope and structure and become the driver for implementing a regional energy strategy. Without exception, the cross-sector connections, regional partnerships, and energy sector educational opportunities CEAC has fostered are seen as groundbreaking, critical and needed. The openness of PGN and the access to its leadership by CEAC members is viewed as a landmark effort, and one that must continue. The increased understanding of the complexity and inter-connected regulatory nature of the energy business is regarded as a revelation by many.

Similarly, but with several notable exceptions, the large majority of CEAC members see their role as focused on regional energy efficiency and conservation imperatives and implementation – not as a forum for debate of overarching societal issues and energy policy.

Members see themselves as front line “we need to make it happen” leaders helping their constituencies get into action for specific results, with a need for a “moon shot” collective goal that all can support, and measure. The need for many diverse efforts like the recent Business Forum, and the need for PGN to support such efforts, via the sector teams is clear.

An expanded and action-oriented CEAC that includes and is supported by, but is not solely driven by PGN is seen as a community imperative – there is virtually no dissent on that point.

Finally, there is a keen desire for continuous updating and understanding of the implementation and progress of the 23 regional programs and projects. In some cases, members were not aware of their existence or thought they had been tabled.

CEAC members in general see this period as a necessary evolution of the effort and this time of transition in PGN leadership as an opportunity for greater personal ownership and action, in partnership and with the support of PGN, but not mandated by PGN.

## **Question # 1 -- What's working and effective?**

- **Excellent dialogue – with PGN and each other.**
- **Very useful and productive.**
- **Government taskforce has been a good thing and potential for effectiveness. It needs follow through among the committee members, with PGN help.**
- **Open and frank discussion very good.**
- **It's exciting and important work – we are really attempting to change the model.**
- **Getting input from different constituencies – electricity is not just a “commodity being sold.”**
- **We are going beyond the capitalist model, really a change in energy ideology.**
- **Making connections among leaders and forging new partnerships.**
- **Excellent learning and education both ways – we need more of it!**
- **Great dialogue among very different points of view.**
- **The give and take with PGN is huge!**
- **Helping each other pursue our own goals.**
- **Great value in the diversity of voices and the complexity of issues – the education competent is most valuable.**
- **Having PGN so activity engaged in the community is a real plus for all.**
- **This is a truly serious commitment by PGN, both of time and resources – not just PR as I initially thought.**
- **The two-way information flow is substantive and important.**
- **Very effective information exchange. Unprecedented on PGN's part of internal workings and issues.**
- **PGN truly listening and reacting to CEAC.**
- **CEAC has helped shape and affect PGN efforts to the PUC.**
- **A very positive PR effort on PGN's part, enabling CEAC to take the message back to their constituents.**
- **Diversity and connections around the table.**

- I have used CEAC connections to investigate both corporate and personal energy alternatives.
- Great value in bringing diverse parties together.
- CEAC contributes an important way to PGN innovation.
- I'm very frustrated with the lack of effectiveness, notwithstanding the excellent dialogue.
- PGN has assembled some of the brightest minds in the field.
- The dialogue, diversity and talent in the room is awesome.
- The communication among participants and PGN is a great platform for community concerns.
- The two-way communication with PGN helps all understand resource issues and realities.
- PGN has a heightened awareness of regional priorities and issues and the real need for renewables as a region priority.
- We better understand PGN's future planning for renewables.
- This is helping us actually model the future.
- There has been a real progression of many positives over the life of CEAC.
- Valuable networking among the participants causing cross-fertilization of regional efforts.
- Mutual education – among the participants and PGN.
- Creating strong relationships and an increase in understanding among all parties – moving from information exchange to understanding and on to real knowledge.
- Bringing together disparate voices and helping us to move into action.
- Very robust conversations that don't happen elsewhere.
- These are just not points of view but drivers for action.
- The company actually listens and puts our suggestions into motion.
- Excellent cross-section of divergent views working together effectively.
- Great networking, has been invaluable for the State Energy Office.
- The transparency and exposure to what is happening in PGN is tremendous.

- **The access to all levels of the corporation and the ability to gain more information.**
- **Has greatly enhanced my own growth as a leader.**
- **Great strides have been made in creating a community conversation regarding energy.**
- **We have created a great framework that can be expanded upon.**
- **The absence of one group just ignoring the other.**
- **Understanding the obstacles: technology, policy, and people.**
- **This has definitely taken the renewables conversation up a notch.**
- **Communication has been tremendous – PGN is really listening and open to dialogue.**
- **The real beauty has been the cross-cultural coming together of perspectives and paradigms among the members – not always the case with PGN though.**
- **Nothing much is working with CEAC from my perspective. It is effective only as a public relations exercise, biased in their corporate interests. In my nearly two years of engagement with PE beginning with the Woodfin proposal, they have continued to put corporate short-term profitability ahead of corporate responsibility and visioning of a sustainable energy economy. They have proven that they are not leaders, but hold to an out-of-date business model, one that is incompatible with the sustainability ideals to which many of us adhere.**
- **Impressed with the free discussion and the level of PGN commitment and support. This is an open and engaged process.**
- **Sharing objective data about energy issues in WNC with a cross-sector group is very helpful. We all understand more and have a common base of information which binds us as a more effective advisory group.**

## Question # 2..... What's Not?

- Don't see a lot happening at the community level yet.
- Need to have a clear idea of PGN support for sector teams.
- We seem to be straying from the purpose – ensuring the power stays on – and getting into social issues.
- Facts are facts – we need to meet service needs.
- A bit of frustration about taking pragmatic and real steps for real results.
- This is not forum for an exchange of ideologies.
- Sometimes we get dragged down into politics. Yes, we have differing views, but this is not forum to defend them; that wastes our time, which is more effectively spent in education and networking.
- We must assess the local capacity.
- PGN has a difficult job. We need to understand that and what they are up against. Sometimes community aims won't align with reality and that needs to be understood.
- For some the social issues are paramount, but this is not the forum for that.
- We need measureable action plans and progress in implementing them ...HJ (NOTE: Holly was not aware of, and was most pleased to learn about the 23 initiatives).
- We need to make it real and urgent for the community – really get them engaged. That's hard – how do we do that?
- We seem to have hit a plateau and need to move forward into action.
- Certain members seem to dominate and the beat the same drum.
- It can't be just about alternatives, which sometimes becomes too much of the substance of the meetings.
- We don't want CEAC to become “old hat.”
- We sometimes stray from the focus on WNC issues and realities. We need to focus on what we can do here, and not try and solve the huge social issues.
- I'm frustrated when I hear comments again and again about the “lack of urgency.”
- Some voices may be louder and heard more often than others, but that doesn't mean others feelings are not as strong. Some just have a need to dominate.

- **There is clearly an additional need for wider education and community engagement.**
- **CEAC should stick to what is effective – its role as a community leaders educational forum.**
- **The new peak statistics have clearly defined the urgency; we need to act on it now.**
- **Nobody knows the future. How can we help PGN actually make it happen?**
- **How can we really address the enormity of the problem?**
- **We need to place the next generation in a better position to deal with it than we have.**
- **Sometimes we don't have the most efficient use of our time together and start hearing the same things over and over from the same people.**
- **This is not the forum for random focus. We need to narrow the focus and set clear goals.**
- **We must address the baseload problem and be sensitive to supply issues.**
- **In the current structure PGN assumes ownership of both supply and demand, but demand is owned by the community.**
- **CEAC members are not dealing as a group with this community's role as "owners" of demand.**
- **The community at large is not engaged yet and CEAC is the most effective way to make that happen.**
- **We must address the "short fall." This is an excellent forum but now we need to move forward with PGN and make it happen.**
- **I really can't think of anything accept maybe a few top-heavy voices.**
- **We're almost at the level of really making things happen and creating a community plan.**
- **The "sector concept" seems strained – it is hard to realize goals that way. This does not seem an appropriate group to do "homework."**
- **We have had 18 months of "listening to them." How about us?**
- **It's been like dad talking to us. PGN wanted us at the table now we want PGN at the table this is a great framework and can go a long way.**
- **We need less on the agenda and more time to digest and respond.**

- We need a “moon mission” goal.
- PGN needs to be open about their policy agenda.
- We need to understand how fast the landscape is changing and align with state and federal priorities.
- Need to understand PGN’s fundamental drivers and policies. What are their motives?
- The mission as configured by PGN is biased towards their greenwashing campaign of a "balanced solution." This language has no integrity, as they will continue to proceed with a business plan that includes 2 new nuclear reactors that will increase ratepayers’ costs by 50-100%. CEAC itself has no role in examining and configuring the mission. The agenda is set by PGN. The meetings are not productive. Those who are and will be affected by rising electric rates the most (the poor, ethnic, cultural, and racial minorities) have basically absented themselves from the discussion, as they intuit that the process itself has no integrity. The offerings that they have made for EE are meager to say the least. They have opposed rate restructuring and net metering at the NC Utilities Commission.
- Some members are getting too entrenched in “alternatives only” and don’t understand PGN’s legal mandates to provide power.
- You have many leaders in the room. Problem solvers. We are all incredibly busy people, and we like to solve things. Clearly we have a need for some changes in WNC re: forming a sustainable strategy to deal with the energy needs of a population that is to grow by 30% in the next 22 years or so. Many of us are acutely aware of the need for a shift in thinking and action. We now understand far better the challenges our utility company faces. What, however, is this group to do? It’s time to form some objectives for the group as the period of inculcation/education has now been effectively accomplished and by virtue of our nature, we are anxious to see significant change.

### **Question # 3 -- What's the critical future direction for CEAC?**

- **Morphing of CEAC to be a true CEAC/PGN partnership.**
- **Engage the wider community to focus on these issues over the longer term – get moving.**
- **Address the glaring gap: How do we meet the demand!?**
- **CEAC needs continued strong leadership – hoping the new VP will take it seriously.**
- **The 23 ideas and projects need to be followed up on and all work to implement them.**
- **We must assess local capacity. Here is the gap. What do we do about it?**
- **New VP and all PGN need to be really engaged – not just individual agendas.**
- **Really get our arms around the substantive community initiatives.**
- **Continue to expand CEAC and engage directly with the community with PGN support.**
- **We need to move to the next level.**
- **We need to do some math: “What will it actually take,” especially with the new peak realities?**
- **PGN and Duke should work together – a Southeast “energy alliance.”**
- **More sector team actions with PGN support. Work directly with committees, Steve.**
- **Absolutely – meeting demand.**
- **PGN supporting CEAC as a body and sector actions. The “business forum” is a good model. PGN supporting sector actions and initiative via contractor support.**
- **Focus on motivators for our area. We can't move on our passion; we must change behavior.**
- **It would be a very bad message if CEAC faded away. It needs to be more visible and effective than ever.**
- **CEAC is very valuable. PGN should not go “back into its silo” but have a strong role as a partner and supporter of an expanded community CEAC, with an expanded focus on education.**
- **We need to address demand and have a reality check.**

- We need to give PGN the leeway to meet the demand – hypotheticals don't work.
- We need to get down to business.
- We need to empower a new generation to take over – new guys doing it the new way, not old guys trying to do it a new way.
- Analyze renewable research and devise a plan for community implementation.
- Leverage the RTP/North Carolina and the full global market for renewables research.
- Expanding and re-imagining what CEAC is.
- If it is only a PGN effort it can't really break out and accept leadership.
- Need to change the model to CEAC as a nexus, another member – but the member that can support and implement the effort.
- Need to deal with the real issues in addition to the “stories.”
- We need to be continually updated on what's happening with the 23 programs for the region all the way up to the Obama Administration: What is the lay of the land?
- This is “crunch time “to go to the next level.
- The sector approach asks too much of individuals. PGN need to support the sectors as we move forward.
- The necessary evolution for CEAC should involve policy transparency to enable demand reduction.
- Coalesce behind a real direction and set of programs. (NOTE: Larry unaware of the 23 programs.)
- CEAC is not the right forum for debating major policy issues.
- More up-to-date and involved implementing the 23 projects.
- CEAC not forum for large social issues – CEAC is not the Sierra Club.
- We need a “participation requirement” (9 of 12 meetings for example), or an expanded tag-team approach.
- CEAC as an expanded communitywide body supported by PGN.
- We need to re-establish ground rules: no name calling, wider engagement.

- **PGN as the convener is an important message especially with landscape changing so fast.**
- **Sector approach is hard but key to success.**
- **CEAC should continue – help PGN move away from coal and nuclear and more toward alternatives, conservation and efficiency.**
- **PGN needs a process and structure to address the new realities – CEAC should help this happen, as a forum that can help PGN change from the inside out. The elephant in the room is the necessary transformation of PGN.**
- **Disband or get serious!**
- **Unless PE is willing to re-examine its business model, be transparent as a corporation to CEAC about its legislative and corporate agenda, and be willing to really listen I see no good outcome for CEAC.**
- **Look at the blend of power options – I have become much more amenable in my business to solar and wind as a result of CEAC.**
- **I would suggest a few tracks to sustain the interest and the input of the leadership group and move to respond to increasing regional energy needs with care to minimize GHGs: 1)Progress needs to identify internally what it foresees as the growth plan to meet the region’s needs and see where there is room for new thinking – e.g., extensive renewable installations in WNC, innovative billing strategies, incentivized conservation, etc., coming up with conservation education strategies for K-12 is effective in the long run; 2) we need to accomplish such things on a parallel track with energy strategies that are immediately effective on a large scale. Time is short and we’ve got to multi-task. The wisdom and the power of the group will not otherwise be used wisely; 3) If you consider the salaries of the people in the room, and the investment of time in CEAC, you begin to get a sense of the importance of this group to effect a serious conservation/alternative energy strategy in WNC. It’s a “can do” attitude that reflects their reverence for the region and for its quality of life. I think it’s time to construct a truly innovative and comprehensive plan that merits the unique sustainability commitments of our regional leadership and sets the pace of the utility industry.**

#### **Question #4 – How can I (Steve) better support the Effort ?**

- **Serve as a “conduit of information” for the sector teams, serving and supporting their efforts – like with the business forum.**
- **Fantastic job as a facilitator.**
- **Help integrate the actions the sector teams – your participation with the government team helped really move us forward.**
- **Excellent facilitator, helping propel the direction for CEAC. Personal interaction and support for CEAC members makes all the difference.**
- **Stick to what you are doing, helping us focus on what we can do, not on debates and rhetoric – excellent job.**
- **You do a great job. This is a hard group to facilitate. Keep it up.**
- **Help the government sector team be more in touch and move forward the meeting you attended took us much further. Help us connect with all levels of government for unified action.**
- **You are in a unique position to help the regional players fit together.**
- **Help the sector teams devise and implement concrete action plans.**
- **Work with the committees for cross-sector “call to action” on a massive scale – excellent job.**
- **Serve as the PGN-contracted coordinator, neutral driver to make many efforts like the business forum happen on a large scale. Your professionalism and experience make a big difference in moving CEAC talk into action.**
- **An excellent job and very tough circumstances. You remain neutral and inclusive although working for PGN.**
- **It is hard to control, but perhaps making sure everyone is heard – even drawing out those who often don’t speak.**
- **Great job in creating space for open dialogue.**
- **You can play an educational role helping more specific actions like the business forum happen. We should all ask ourselves what other things can Steve help us make happen.**
- **Help effect the agenda and keep us focused on what we need to do.**
- **Help us each determine the appropriate time we serve. Help support diversity and active participation.**

- You are a real pro and I've seen a lot (of non-effective facilitation).
- Work closely with the new VP to help him really understand our mission, vision, goals, etc.
- Keep your passion and caring intact.
- Advocate for more transparency of internal PGN workings that leverage CEAC efforts.
- Be an advocate and go-between among media and officials on behalf of CEAC.
- It has gone well; your work is true and sincere.
- Work with and help the new VP relate to CEAC as individuals.
- Encourage Robert to come back and continue to support CEAC.
- Help Bill Johnson become engaged and supportive of CEAC.
- Keep up the excellent work.
- Great job so far, most professional facilitation I've seen.
- Help the groups move forward and connect.
- Keep us on target and out of the social soup.
- Your mantra has been that you function as a neutral third party. I observe that you mostly cheer lead the feeble attempts by PGN to bring progressive changes to their business. I know that you are a paid consultant to PGN, but I have little confidence that you represent a voice for sustainable energy policy that many members of CEAC are advocating.
- Help everyone to speak, not just those who choose to.
- Remain neutral, help us keep morality out of it.
- Done a good job, hard at times. Keep us on track and help understand that ALL alternatives are important.
- Get on the council's side (vs. neutral).
- It's been difficult for you since your time and energy are controlled by PGN. Try to be more open and neutral to all positions. You are in a unique position to do this and take us much farther.
- If you also help to craft the agenda, work to move us toward this plan. Your facilitation has been great.

## **Question #5 – What other Input Would You Like to Offer?**

- **At some point we need to rotate, not be on board for 10 years...maybe rotate on and off.**
- **Give help to the sector teams and committees to implement efforts in members own organizations, stories for newsletter, and contractor support, to help us “worm our way into peoples’ lives.”**
- **Don’t let this important forum dissipate.**
- **Keep this important forum candid and open.**
- **Implement the plans! Now is the time.**
- **Help us keep those who have not been so engaged to get more engaged.**
- **Keep it going!**
- **Just to reiterate that continued PGN support is critical.**
- **My past absences are no indication of my lack of commitment. I will be more engaged and connected; this is important and needed work.**
- **Continued PGN leadership is key – perhaps this transition is an opportunity for “new life.”**
- **I’m impressed with PGN’s commitment thus far, encourage the corporation to move faster and more aggressively.**
- **Focus on demand!**
- **I need to justify the time I spend on this.**
- **Keep CEAC as diverse as possible.**
- **Keep us task-oriented and focused.**
- **Announce a power plant – now that’s a story. Unless demand drops, supply must increase. The community can only react to reality. Keep trying to aggressively engage the mainstream media.**
- **Keep the information coming; help us know what’s happening with the hard recommendations (the 23 points).**
- **No more anti-nuke domination.**
- **Keep it going.**
- **Can we get Lloyd on a Southwings flight?**

- **Communicate the bigger picture of integrating sustainability into the business process.**
- **Continued PGN support is key.**
- **I will need to wait and see what April 24th brings.**
- **Volunteer Milkco as a guinea pig and available demo site as we pursue solar and other alternatives.**
- **Keep it going!**
- **Need to know how the proposals (23 points) are going.**
- **The transformation of PGN will come about – whether planned or by crisis management. PGN needs to get in that uncomfortable space where they have not yet been willing to go.**
- **I'm deeply sorry Robert is leaving, but perhaps, in his departure, there is even more reason to regroup. There is opportunity now to take a hard look at the functionality of this group going forward, and if there are not actionable objectives of the magnitude at which they are truly needed, perhaps then this group could become an advisory group to meet as needed to react to new plans set forth by Progress.**