

## **April Meeting Summary: *Climate & Energy & Policy: Oh My! With Dan Terpstra***

4-28-2025 at the Clinton Community Center

Climate change, energy use, and policy are inextricably entwined and rapidly evolving. Even how we and our neighbors think about climate change has evolved over history. Are there still climate deniers – oh YES! but they are more subtle. Some don't grasp that what doesn't seem like a big deal (as in 1.5 degrees warming) is actually a really big deal. And others are overwhelmed with the magnitude of the change and expense needed to fix the problem. What they fail to understand is that not addressing the problem will lead to a much more expensive emergency situation in the future.

Dan referenced "The Six Americas," a joint project of George Washington University and Yale University.

Dan will explore where we've come from in the recent past, where we are now, and what we can do both locally and nationally as we move forward on these issues. Per their research, there are six global warning archetypes: the alarmed, the concerned, the cautious, the disengaged, the doubtful, and the dismissive. Those with the alarmed and the concerned viewpoints about climate change make up just over half of America, and when added with those with the cautious viewpoint comprise over 70%. However, the disengaged, the doubtful, and the dismissive have the ear of those in power.

Dan also shared the work of The 89 Percent Project. Through research, they found that between 80 and 89% of the world's people want their governments to be doing more to address climate change. However, that fact is not reflected in news coverage. The research found that those who wanted their governments to do more often believed they hold the minority opinion – not that they are the global majority.

Katharine Hayhoe, a Canadian climate scientist, presented a TED Talk encouraging the audience to talk about climate change – and that it is the single most important thing individuals can do. Other things we can do are found in The Green New Deal legislation from 2019. There are solar tax credits, new and used EV credits, funding for EV charging stations, heat pump credits, and green jobs and manufacturing work. Other things we can do are investigate the TVA's EnergyRight program, the Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit, and the Rewiring America online tools. There are also solar "balcony panels" that plug in to a standard outlet that have



promise. Dan also suggested joining the Citizens' SitIn on Fridays (11:30 to 1:30) outside Fleshman's office at the DOE Building (200 Admin Rd.), and joining 3<sup>rd</sup> Act. 3<sup>rd</sup> Act is an action network for people over 60 years old who are interested in putting their time and energy into making a difference.

Dan described some of the politics that are in play regarding energy and climate change. During Trump's first day in office he took the U.S. out of the Paris Accord – making us the only country in the world to have pulled out once in the accord. Most countries in the world have actually signed onto the agreement. He also gutted the TVA board, to a point they are now below quorum and cannot make decisions. Trump has signaled that he wants favors from the oil and gas industry – and he is prepared to give them favors in return. Blackburn and Hagerty want modular nuclear; however, those projects cannot be approved without TVA approval, which requires a quorum. TVA serves power to 7 states, and the local power companies in those states can produce up to 5% of their own power through solar, wind, etc. if they have a special contract with TVA. Oak Ridge does not have that contract.

Bio: Dan Terpstra is a retired computer scientist who spent the last dozen years of his career working with supercomputers in the Innovative Computing Lab at the University of Tennessee. He has long been concerned about climate change and its impact on society. He taught several ORICL courses on climate and energy and related issues, and has been facilitating an adult Sunday School class on climate and related justice issues for the past five years. He is a founding member of Third Act Tennessee, part of a national organization defending democracy and climate action. Dan and Peggy have raised their three children in Oak Ridge, living at the same address for 40 years.