



## CHAIR'S REPORT – Annual General Meeting – Nov. 2019

*By Cheryl Lyon*

Dear Transitioners:

A Chair's job at an Annual General Meeting is to **reflect on our past year together** and to **look at key changes that may affect us as an organization** - insofar as anyone in these unpredictable times can see into the future!

Reflecting on our past year, I invite us, for just a moment now, to note that Transition Town Peterborough (TTP) is entering a 2<sup>nd</sup> decade (!) of its unique offering to climate adaptation responses, namely, Economic Localization.

These responses include the Greenzine magazine, our two Solstice Festivals (Purple Onion and Dandelion Day), the Kawartha Loon local currency and our new Transition Neighbourhoods program for household energy descent. All of them ambitious, unique and comprehensive initiatives in the Peterborough scene.

This small, grassroots group is – truly – doing its part to cultivate the soil of the future survival of our community here in the Peterborough area, and in so doing, contributes to the whole human community of life on earth! Transition work shows, in tangible ways, **our love for this Planet and each other**.

The Transition model leads the curve of adaptation by addressing the fundamental, interrelated drivers of the Climate Emergency: Energy, Environment, Economy and Equity. Action in all four of these areas together will be needed to harness and support local abundance in the process of energy descent and building resilient community. This is the **Resilience Imperative** unpinning all TTP's efforts and thinking.

Moreover, we are part of something really BIG! - something that is gaining momentum. Think: Greta Thunberg, big banks divesting from fossil fuels, the election of Green candidates, the City of Peterborough deciding *officially* to embed the climate crisis in all day-to-day decision-making (we'll have to hold them to that!)

And we must now, in 2020, also look fearlessly at the **key challenges** facing us as a small, grassroots, volunteer, non-profit organization.

The story around us is changing. The urgency is accelerating. Political leadership at all levels is not stepping up quickly enough in support of local adaptation and mitigation work. Growing social and economic divisions threaten the Equity necessary to leave no one behind in climate responses. Energy and the Economy are rushing toward a mutual crisis. Are these realities calling TTP to re-examine its mission and purpose now, entering the first crucial decades of the 10 years scientists say we have left to adapt?

How do we make TTP's Resilience message understandable and compelling to decision-makers and the ordinary person?

With whom should we converse - outside of TTP - so that we don't become an echo chamber?  
Who are TTP's natural and new partners?

What should TTP's priorities be now?

How can TTP become an 'attractor', a 'convenor', as well as the 'pollinator' it has always been of the important conversations that catalyze change?

When answering these questions, I suggest we

- let go of any impatience with people trying to 'catch up'
- lead with compassion and understanding of the challenges of community-building. Something bigger than TTP is at work around us. Where does Transition Town 'fit'?
- foster TTP's own Heart and Soul by being mutually supportive, well connected to each other, feeling seen, giving room for individual skills to shine, meeting and governing ourselves in ways that model what we want for the community
- consciously keep the Transition vision of a resilient community in mind to guide organizational life, avoiding the model of our dominant culture where a few people with a lot of power & influence make key decisions
- take time out to think and plan together in order not to make decisions in a constant state of scarcity, stress and pressure, under the demands of the immediate moment and the lack of tangible resources and valuable input from outside.

TTP is a **change-maker, a mind-shifter**. We are challenging the very entrenched global capitalist Economic model! With our small but mighty volunteer base, we may have been "punching above our weight." But any boxer (excuse the violent metaphor) will tell you that there's a time to recoup, refresh and find new energies.

So, as I see it, 2020 is a time to aim for "2020 vision" by facing the key challenges – and making decisions with an eye always on the changing story of our context and our role in a building a resilient future for this community and the Earth.