

**GROTON SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION –
SUSTAINABILITY PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE**

Attending: Mike Roberts, Michelle Collette, Leo Laverdure, Steve Webber, Tim Hess, Mark Archambault

Meeting on September 22, 2008

Note: I'm sure I missed some discussion points. Please feel free to add, delete or amend my account of the meeting below. – Mark

- Mike opened the meeting at 10:10 am.
- Mike stated that the overall goal is to have Groton's forthcoming Master Plan be a 'Sustainability Plan' – a document that meets all the state requirements for a Master Plan while being informed by sustainability principles and working towards a sustainable Groton.
- Mike said he has been researching models across the country, and he believes Northampton's Sustainability Plan is a good model. Mike handed out several key sections from their plan.
- The committee discussed the need to define just what would constitute a 'sustainable Groton'.
- Mike and Michelle talked about holding a workshop or charrette as a good first step in the process of obtaining public feedback towards developing a vision of a sustainable Groton.
- Michelle noted that Groton prefers "bottoms up" / grassroots-based planning. She mentioned that Phil Herr was a prior consultant for Groton. She stated that we need a good facilitator for any public workshop(s) or charrette to kick off the planning process. John Mullin was mentioned. Mike noted that Groton has a lot of local talent in this regard, we might not need to hire an expensive outside consultant.
- Mike directed the committee to look at Northampton's guiding principles on page 6.
- Steve noted that we need economic incentives for sustainable planning initiatives. For example, could CPA funds be used to help fund the development of low-mod income housing? Mike replied that this is one of the charges of the CPA.
- Mike then suggested that one of the first products we develop should be a checklist on sustainable practices to guide the Planning Board in their decision-making in the period leading up to the plan being developed and adopted.
- Leo wondered what are the threats that are facing Groton specifically that the committee should make sure are covered in the plan.
- Steve mentioned that we need tangible, measureable criteria for a 'developer's scorecard' so the development community knows what it needs to do to meet Planning Board criteria.
- Michelle mentioned that the Flexible Development Ordinance is a model for an ordinance that could be strengthened with sustainability principles.
- Mike stated that this committee should develop a sustainability baseline for the town as one of its first actions.

- Mike then stated that this committee can provide mutual support to decision-makers at a variety of levels to help the town weather the storm that is coming. Emphasis should be placed on social networks and interdependency.
- Leo believes that the plan needs to put a great deal of emphasis on peak oil and the enormous challenge that poses to not only Groton, but all of society.
- Michelle mentioned that Wayne _____ from Northampton could come out to meet with us in the near future to discuss their sustainability efforts.
- Mike states that ultimately there should be an Implementation Plan with a schedule of milestones identifying who is responsible for each action item. Michelle said that the current Groton Master Plan has just such a section.
- Michelle said there could be annual updates to the plan on progress made towards sustainability.
- Steve suggested something like “Master Plan credits” that would translate into tangible benefits for developers.
- Leo offered to draft a list of threats facing Groton, as discussed earlier.
- Leo mentioned that San Francisco offers incentives for installing residential solar power systems. Could Groton consider something similar?
- The meeting adjourned about 11:45 am.
- No date was set for the next meeting of the Sustainability Plan subcommittee.