



Groton Sustainable Community Study Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date:	Nov. 19, 2007
Time:	7:30 p.m.
Location:	Legion Hall, Hollis St. Groton, MA
Attendees:	Carl Canner, Chris Christie, Michelle Collette, Alvin Collins, Chase Duffy, Carl Flowers, Richard Hewitt, Leo Laverdure, Mike Roberts, Haynes Turkle
Note taker:	Haynes Turkle

GENERAL

Mike Roberts led the meeting. A motion was approved to skip the December meeting and meet again in January to accommodate busy schedules during the holidays. The next meeting will be held on January 14th, 2008.

Mike reviewed the agenda and actions from the last meeting. The following actions were carried over to the January meeting:

- Energy metrics report card – Leo Laverdure
- Burlington Vt, government sustainability initiatives and/or city functions – Chris Christie
- Lexington MA, sustainable Lexington task force – Haynes Turkle

HANDOUTS

The following handouts were distributed:

- Agenda from the October meeting – Mike Roberts
- Impacts of energy (Peak Oil) and climate Issues on sustainability – Leo Laverdure
- Advanced Buildingstm Program – Alvin Collins

DISCUSSION

1) Michelle Collette suggested we talk with Chris Coutu (Groton Water Dept.). He has used EPA Energy Star software for assessing energy usage of public buildings and may be able to help produce a report card for Groton. Leo agreed to talk with Chris and see if he would be interested in joining our Study Group. Leo will also ask Kevin Kelly (GELD) to join.

2) Mike Roberts suggested that we seek approval for a permanent Sustainability Commission at the annual town meeting (ATM). Our goal would be to prepare an article for inclusion on the spring town meeting warrant; the ATM will be held on April 28th, 2008.

The Study Group passed a motion that our recommendations and the subsequent disposition of the vote at town meeting will end the activities of this group. The warrant article should be completed and submitted to the Board of Selectmen in February. Mike Roberts will speak with Bob Goselin to get his advice on the draft article and submission process.

Michelle Collette offered to draft an outline based on the article used by the Agricultural Commission. Michelle agreed to circulate this to the members of the Study Group by email for further content, review and edit.

The purpose of the article is to recommend to the town the creation of a new Sustainability Commission. The article will communicate

- A brief, 2-3 sentence definition of sustainability including our "3-legged stool" (economy, energy, community) perspective
- The operating philosophy of the Commission, noting that the Commission will act in an advisory capacity to town government and to its townspeople on issues related to sustainability. Its purpose is to help preserve and maintain the town in the face of environmental or other external challenges such as oil shortages.
- The recommended number and mix of people and how long they should serve

3) There was discussion about the best way to educate the town about the purpose and benefits of the proposed Sustainability Commission. Carl Canner suggested that charettes may produce unwanted controversy in advance of the ATM. There was agreement that some efforts to build goodwill would be helpful, but since no real funding is required there is unlikely to be much opposition at town meeting.

Michelle Collette said that the Sustainability Commission should be involved in a revision to the 2020 Groton Master Plan. This process would involve many people in town, provide an opportunity to include key sustainability principles and would also help educate.

Leo Laverdure volunteered to develop a public education plan that would include suggestions for communicating with other town boards and committees including the school committee; and ensure appropriate exposure in the local press. Leo will circulate the education plan by email and based on feedback he will draft a Powerpoint presentation. This presentation will be delivered to individual groups and/or at a public hearing and should be about 20 minutes in length

4) The local economy, including local businesses, is a key concern for this Study Group. Some of the problems businesses are experiencing include:

- Roads and parking that are not particularly conducive to shopping
- A mostly commuter population that does most of its shopping in Nashua or other nearby cities
- A prevalent, suspicious attitude about businesses that sometimes makes it more difficult to work with the town

Michelle Collette suggested that we invite Barbara Scafidio, co-owner of [noa gifts](#), to one of our meetings to talk about what it takes to run a business in town.

5) Al Collins presented information about a green building project in Leominster that his company helped build. In cooperation with the regional utility company they developed a new bank site that saves \$30K annually in energy costs with a payback on the energy saving systems of just 3 years. This program which includes rebates from the utility company is called the Advanced Building[™] Program and is available for both commercial and residential building.

6) Leo Laverdure discussed his handout on the impacts of energy (Peak Oil) and climate Issues on sustainability. He linked environmental, economic and societal impacts of peaking fossil fuel production and global warming/climate change. The point of this discussion was that all three of the focus areas of this Study Group are impacted by both Peak Oil and Global Warming.

NEXT MEETING

The primay goals for the next meeting are to review a draft article for the town warrant and to review the education plan and Powerpoint presentation for a public hearing.

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 14, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.