



Groton Sustainability Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: July 14, 2008

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Nashua River Watershed Association, River Resource Center
592 Main Street, Groton, MA

Attendees:

Commissioners: Carl Canner, Carl Flowers, Chase Duffy, Leo Laverdure, Mike Roberts, Richard Hewitt

Liaisons: Mark Archambault (NRWA)

Other: Steve Webber

Commissioners absent: Al Collins, Chris Christie, Michael McCarthy

Minutes taken by: Leo Laverdure

GENERAL

- This was the first meeting of the newly appointed Sustainability Commission.
- We will continue to use the SustainableGroton Google group used by the study committee. We will use it for distributing materials and coordination but not for deliberation.
- We followed the agenda that Mike Roberts provided, though not completely in order.

HANDOUTS

The following handout was distributed:

- Agenda (Mike Roberts) (also sent via email on 12-Jul-08 entitled "Reminder")

DISCUSSION

Agenda item #1: Introductions

All present introduced themselves and presented what they hoped the commission would accomplish this year.

- Chase:
 - Would like to accomplish a key objective this year. What might it be?

- Need to adopt rules, guidelines, measures
- Would like to show a film about the MacCallum (sp?) building
- Leo:
 - Seconded the need for a project that delivers results this year.
 - Need to transition from the Study Committee's objective of understanding to an action bias for the Commission. We have the attention of the public (with the cost of fuel crisis); let's use it.
- Carl F.:
 - Will a project suffer from NIMBY attitudes?
 - Would like to focus on farming.
- Richard:
 - Encouraged by the sudden public attention and trends on sustainability
 - There are so many options of what to pay attention to it can be overwhelming. What resources will an action take? What education will be needed? Projects we select should be able to show a measurable difference. Need to go after low-hanging fruit, e.g., car pooling, energy audits, building codes, etc.
- Mark:
 - How do we recommend liaisons contribute?
- Steve
 - Need to worry about the economy
 - Recommend aggressive, concrete goals, e.g., get 50% of citizens to do something concrete
 - Considering siting a wind farm at Brooks Orchard
 - Would like to change NIMBY to Do something in our yard (entire neighborhoods)
 - Need to cover all legs of the stool, but suggests we start with economy
- Carl C.:
 - Lots of change since we started the study committee; sustainability concerns are part of everyday news now.
 - A clear benefit to the town to have a Sustainability Commission
 - Country is still headed in the wrong direction
 - Possible project: a hydro plant in West Groton
 - Pay attention to branding the commission
 - Need articles in the paper, local TV.
- Mike:
 - The Commission means a lot to him personally. There is a Native American ethic of not wasting anything, which needs to be restored in this country.
 - We do need a visible product/action. Also need to continue learning. Balance is important: all 3 legs. Liaisons need to be included.

Agenda item #2: Election of Officers

- ***Elections were voted unanimously:***
 - Chair: Mike
 - Vice-chair and secretary: Leo
 - Carl F. agreed to take minutes if Leo needs to chair a meeting in Mike's absence
- The only legal requirement of the secretary is to record votes, but we really want the secretary to help get the word out about what the commission is doing.

Agenda item #3: Review of Work Plan

- The work plan was included in Mike's final report to the selectmen on the findings and recommendations of the Study Committee, including the establishment of the Commission and its charge (16-May-08).

- **Steve will set up the Commission home web page on the town site and post additional content (Unanimous Vote)**
- While we clearly want to complete an action project by the end of the year, it's OK for us to start others. (There is a 2-page list of possible projects prepared in April and attached to the Town Meeting handout.)
 - **Action: Leo to repost.**
- Energy (along with other issues) crosses the 3 legs of the stool (environment, economy, society).
 - Open question: How much attention do we pay to threats to sustainability?
 - Richard: We can harvest a lot of low-hanging fruit without creating a divisive political agenda.

Agenda item #4: Working Groups

We identified the following working groups:

1. Environment
2. Economy
3. Society/Community
4. Communications (including web info)
5. Actions/
6. Sustainability Plan

Attendees signed up for these as follows:

- Mark: 1, 3, 6
- Chase: 3, 4
- Leo: 1, 4, 6
- Carl F: 1, 2
- Richard: 1, 5
- Steve: 2, 4
- Carl C: 2, 5
- Mike: 3, 5, 1, 6 (ex officio on all)

Agenda item #5: Liaisons

- Steve noted that there was “too much gray hair” on the commission. Mike said the way to address that was through the liaisons.
- **Action (Communications workgroup): Invite the press to cover Commission meetings**
- **Action (all): Contact candidate liaisons**
- **Action (Richard): Draft a letter for sending to other town departments to invite them to designate a liaison to the Commission**

Agenda item #6: Schedule for this year

- Every 2 weeks (2nd and 4th)
- Tuesdays? Wait until all commissioners can be asked.

Agenda item #7: Sustainable Community Primer

- We need to publish a primer on “What is a sustainable community?”
 - **Action (Leo): Publish a draft statement for use on web site.**

- ***Vote: Communications Working Group authorized to publish materials on town web site as they deem fit (unanimous).***

Other

- [Nothing]

Actions

- [See ***bold, italic*** text throughout these minutes.]

FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the offices of the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA).

Future meetings will be held at the NRWA.

The schedule for future meetings is still to be determined.