



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
Economy • Environment • Society
Think long-term, act now

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 23, 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, Chris Christie, Leo Laverdure,
Richard Hewitt, Mike Roberts

Liaisons: Ted Roselund for David Gordon (Historical Society)

Other: Anna Eliot, Michelle Collette, Tim Hess, Steve Webber, other?

Commissioners absent: Al Collins(?), Michael McCarthy

Minutes taken by: Leo Laverdure

GENERAL

- This report is augmented by the Commission's Action Item Status spreadsheet.

HANDOUTS

The following handouts were distributed:

1. Agenda (Mike)
2. Sustainability Commission pamphlet (Leo)

DISCUSSION

Agenda Item #1: GrotonFest Debrief

- Leo gave an oral report on the Commission's participation in the "Green" section of the fest, organized by Groton Local. Several others added their perspectives, including Mike, Chase, Richard, and Ted Roselund. Everyone liked the pamphlet prepared by the Communications committee and distributed during the day. The consensus was that participating was worthwhile and that we should expand our presence next year.

Agenda Item #2: Fundraising

- Mike explained that the Commission needed a small budget for general administration (printing, copying, mailing, etc.) and the preparation of proposals for projects and grants (e.g., for a project to measure the town's baseline sustainability metrics). A number of alternatives were discussed. Steve Webber suggested that the Webber family foundation would respond favorably to a request for funds.
- **Vote (unanimous): The commission will request a grant of \$4,000 from the Webber family foundation.**
- **Action (#2008-923-1, Mike?): Apply for Webber family foundation grant.**
- An impromptu collection was held to reimburse Leo for the pamphlet printing costs.

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Agenda Item #3: Logo Contest

- Mike proposed that the Commission sponsor a competition among the 3 high schools in town to design a logo for the Commission. After some discussion we agreed that rather than a logo, the contest should be to design a T-shirt (which Michael McCarthy had offered to print).
- ***Vote (unanimous): The commission will sponsor a contest for the high schools to design a T-shirt which captures the essence of what it means for Groton to be sustainable. Each school can submit as many designs as they like. The winning design will be printed on shirts to be distributed on Earth Day 2009.***
- ***Action (#2008-923-2, Richard): Draft a letter to be sent to the schools announcing the competition.***

Agenda Item #4: Liaison Status

- Mike announced two new liaisons:
 1. David Gordon for the Historical Society
 2. Craig Ausman (csausman@verizon.net) for the Conservation Commission
- ***Action (#2008-923-3, Steve): Prepare a list of businesses for Mike to contact for interest in having a liaison to the Commission.***
- ***Action (#2008-923-4, Mike): Prepare a list of non-profits to contact.***
- ***Action (pre-existing, all): Follow through on contacting organizations for potential liaisons.***

Agenda Item #5: Planning Work Group Report

- Mike reported on the initial (22-Sep) meeting of the Planning work group. (See separate report prepared by Mark Archambault.)
- Discussion clarified that the Planning Board would remain responsible for the update to the town Master Plan, and that we would not simply merge the Sustainability Plan and Master Plan efforts into a single effort. Tim want to make sure that the Sustainability Plan didn't have to compromise, in other words, that it could offer a vision of true sustainability and how to get there that would go beyond any compromises the Master Plan would eventually have to make to balance competing interests. On the other hand, creating two largely independent plans was agreed by all to be a bad idea. Michelle stated that the creation of the plans should be a cooperative venture. Leo stated that the ideal would be a set of consistent plans that represented a balance among the interests of all stakeholders and agreed to by all as the best way forward for Groton.
- The discussion shifted to how permitting could be used to move us in the direction of more-dense, more-sustainable neighborhoods (not just sub-divisions). A scoring worksheet could be developed that would measure the key parameters. Conforming developers would be rewarded with flexible development permits.
- ***Action (#2008-923-5, Mike): Add to the agenda a discussion of a sustainable development worksheet.***

Agenda Item #6: Current Threats Discussion

- Leo prepared but unfortunately failed to bring a handout on threats to the meeting. He outlined his thoughts on threats in 4 major categories: energy/resource issues, global warming/climate change issues, demographic changes, economic issues. Each threat has potential impacts on all three of the "sustainability stool" legs. Others brought up additional threats. All agreed that these issues can also be seen as opportunities. These will be used as inputs to the Sustainability Plan and the metrics.
- ***Action (#2008-923-6, Leo): Send draft of threats matrix.***

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FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the offices of the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA).

Tuesday, **October 28**, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. NRWA.

The meeting normally scheduled for 11-Nov will occur instead on **Thursday, 13-Nov**, in the Town Hall upstairs meeting room, and will be a joint meeting with the Planning Board.

Action (#2008-923-7, Chase): Apply for a grant to invite someone from Northampton's sustainability planning effort to present at a future meeting.

Meetings are usually held the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at the NRWA. WG meeting schedules are still TBD.

RELATED EVENTS

Thursday, 16-Oct, the Planning Board will hear a presentation on a proposed wind article.