

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 22, 2009

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Nashua River Watershed Association

Attendees:

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

Liaisons: Anna Elliot

Commissioners absent: Steve Webber

Minutes taken by: Stephanie Strickland

Agenda:

Agenda Item #1: Continue discussion on definition of sustainability.

Discussion

- Mike: The real question is what a sustainable community, not what sustainability is.
- Leo's definition: Sustainability is a commitment to a healthy social, economic, and natural environment in which all can thrive now and for the foreseeable future.
- Chase: Some places are sustainable, but not healthy.
- Mike: It's important to know what our limits are, and we haven't found our boundaries yet.
- Chris: In the U.S. we won't see when we pass our limits. We shouldn't depend on seeing them to make a change; we should just know that they're there.
- Lisa: We would see how we've reached limits if we looked through different lenses.
- Chris: Many limits have been reached but people are still negligent; something needs to be done.
- Mike: How do we know when we reach a limit?
- Chase: Are we sustaining Groton or the world?
- Leo: We can't sustain Groton without sustaining the rest.
- Carl C: How can we get this town to recognize and want change?
- Mike: Discussion comes out of ideas for the master plan. Someone will want to know what we mean by sustainability.
- Mike: We want to be able to give them a definition.
- Carl F: Why do people go elsewhere for shopping?
- Anna: Groton doesn't have the necessary accommodations.
- Anna: Where can we buy clothes in Groton?
- Leo: Can buy them online.
- Chase: Need public transportation in Groton.

- Mike: We're looking at public transportation. Need to look at something that will ripple outwards to surrounding towns.
- Richard: For me it's about changing individual lifestyles.
- Richard: My biggest concern is the environmental component because it's the most vulnerable at this point.
- Mike: Recent economic crisis could have been a bigger issue than environmental issues.
- Mike: Technology and attitudes can bring us forward.
- Mike: Humans stop growing physically but continue growing mentally. It's important to realize it's the same with other things; need to stop growing bigger in size but continue growing smarter.
- Anna: Need to know how sustainability fits in with the other categories in the master plan.
- Mike: Matrix will be a tool for the master plan.
- Chris: People are mostly self-sufficient in Groton and don't depend on each other; they go to other places to meet their needs.
- Chase: Our society isn't going to stay the same; we will become much more global.
- Chase: Social structure will shift and we can't go back to farming.
- Carl F: Wildlife is an issue. How much crop is thrown away because of wildlife?
- Mike: Everyone has different ideas and cares more about one side of the three legged stool.
- Lisa: Allow each leg to have an equal standing.
- Mike: The key is balance.
- Mike: We need to look at situations from each of the three legs. An issue might be more important coming from one versus another.
- Lisa: We need to decide what is most important; we can't reach all needs with the time allotted.
- Chase: We can't put deadlines on everything because we won't know what will be important in 15 years.
- Leo: We can't say what the world will look like in the future; we can only identify possible outcomes.
- Mike: Things change quickly and we don't always have time to plan them.

Action

- **Action Item: Mike to draft matrix and send it out before January 12th.**

Agenda Item #2: Our spring "event"

Discussion

- Mike: We would like to see a sustainability conference/workshop on the weekend closest to April 22nd.
- Leo: I like the idea but it entails a lot of planning. If we have time to plan it, then it would be a great idea.

- Chase: What are you working towards?
- Mike: To get a vision statement about sustainability. Have a series of stations, books on sustainability, companies there to discuss sustainability, and ways to learn about sustainability.
- Chris: Participation is important.
- Mike: We want to reach out to all people in the community. We could have one every four months; one for each leg of the stool.
- Leo: It's a good idea to have them on a cyclical basis but we should do it quarterly though.
- Carl F.: I like the idea. Should the first one be an introduction, touching on all three and then the next three be one of each of the environment, the economy, and the community.
- Richard: I like the idea but we should make sure it's not too abstract. It should get people involved on a regular basis.
- Chase: I think it sounds wonderful, but I don't know if there's enough energy to keep it going.
- Chris: I fully support it; we should use it to get feedback from the community.
- Mike: Everyone thinks it's a good idea so I have authorization to proceed with the conference?

Action

- **Action Item: Mike to proceed with event planning.**

Agenda Item #3: Leo's drafted information about becoming a sustainable business.

Discussion

- Leo: Framework has society, economy, and environment. Then it has resources which include: energy, materials, technology, and governance.
- Leo: The next section is trends and disruptions. Some trends are easy to see and some are hard to discover.
- Leo: High-impact trends and disruptions should be considered first.
- Leo: Next part is the impact analysis of trends and potential disruptions. There are seven factors in regards to society, economy, and resources that could potentially happen.
- Chris: They use the money the U.S. should have for Medicare for other things.
- Leo: How could it get resolved? What might the possible future entail?
- Leo: A sustainable business can exist only within a sustainable economy, society, and natural environment.
- Leo: Most people don't recognize or want to discuss limits.
- Leo: Have a one page description of sustainability principles.
- Mike: What does a business get if they use this model?
- Leo: Depends on their attitude toward the future; most companies won't be ready.
- Chase: You haven't done anything for the people yet.
- Leo: Of course we have. That you can do something different, is the key point.

- Mike: People have to be brave enough and strong enough to think outside the box.
- Chris: Can this be applied to small business?
- Leo: The theories can be used by anyone. They are directly applicable to the work of the commission: impact analysis of trends and potential disruptions can be related to our discussions.

Action

- **Action Item: Mike initiated motion to accept minutes presented. Motion was seconded and passed by all present.**

Next Meeting: January 12th @ 7:00 p.m.