

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 13th, 2010

Location: Nashua River Watershed Association

Attendees:

Commissioners: Leo Laverdure, Chris Christie, Chase Duffy, Carl Flowers, Steve Webber

Liaisons: Mark Archambault, Terri Ragot

Commissioners absent: Mike Roberts, Carl Canner, Richard Hewitt

Minutes taken by: Stephanie Strickland

Agenda:

1. Sustainability Update Around Masterplan
2. Sustainability Café

Agenda Item #1: Sustainability Update Around Masterplan

Discussion

- Carl: I don't know when Agriculture meets.
- Chris: I think agriculture is under economics.
- Leo: Yes it is under economics.
- Carl: In my meeting last night a question that came up was how much of this is local? I don't see how changes can be made if state and government aren't involved. I don't see this being addressed.
- Leo: Can we put a wall around Groton and say that's what we're focusing on? Transportation is not going to be decided just by Groton. Groton won't make a dent in a lot of issues, but putting in our voices alongside others is important.
- Carl: One of the things I think we over look is cause and effect of sustainability. I'll use myself as an example. I'm retired and many people move to a more affordable place once they retire, but the downside is if they can keep retired people in town their taxes aren't going to the school.
- Steve: Do you have a solution?
- Carl: This is where the state needs to get involved. They could have reduced taxes for people over a certain age.
- Steve: The problem is you spend a lifetime making friends and then you move. My neighbors moved to Ashburnham after living here for forty years.
- Leo: Has anyone heard of tellus.org? It's been around for about thirty years. They work with grants. Two years ago they predicted what is going to happen in the Boston area up until 2050. They went into many different problems with the land and we will still be producing as much carbon dioxide. The second scenario was that something changes and we try to become more sustainable. They said how there is no public support right now though and until there is politicians won't make any changes.

- Carl: We have to wait for a crisis first, that's the only way to get people to change.
- Leo: There were three branches: business, things break down, and wisdom and each were subdivided.
- Carl: The middle class is shrinking. I understand there is a movement for people who grow food that they will have to have a license to produce food.
- Terri: Is this only for people selling the food they grow?
- Carl: Yes.
- Leo: I think the big problem is that this is such a big issue that no one knows what the consequences are.
- Steve: I have a separate question. Does taking the rapid transit save on gas?
- Leo: Most rapid transits carry many people, while cars only travel one.
- Carl: I was surprised when I went on the train last week to Boston that people were standing.
- Leo: If there are between two and three people, it's more efficient to take a car than rapid transit. Rails are better than buses and airplanes are the worst. Mass transportation by plane is going to decrease because people won't be able to afford it. Security of the supply trade is more important than the efficiency. Jeffrey Reuben says we're not going to run out of oil, we're going to run out of affordable oil.
- Leo: I can tell you about the sustainability element.
- Chase: I don't know when there's a meeting.
- Leo: They should be posted. We got them electronically yesterday.
- Steve: We had an economic development meeting which is going to be looked at from a sustainability outlook.
- Carl: How is that going to effect how people look at Groton?
- Steve: The physical look will be a top priority.
- Leo: Are there specific things we can do in Groton or do we have to only look at the state level.
- Steve: There is one thing Groton could do. Tax on taking property out of agriculture.
- Chase: You do what brings in the most money so if selling the farm would do that, then you do it.
- Mark: Sometimes they're forced by the state to sell part of the farm if you don't have money.
- Terri: There should be some way to preserve those retirement funds.

Agenda Item #2: Sustainability Café

Discussion

- Leo: The fifth of May we have the sustainability café.
- Terri: Where will it be?
- Leo: Here.
- Carl: Not the country club?
- Chase: No it didn't fit the requirements.

- Leo: We're going to have one open meeting and there will be other private ones. The planning horizon will be until 2050 and there will be four questions. The masterplans planning horizon is only ten years.
- Chase: Which is really too short.
- Leo: Yes, this is why it's important to have this longer view. I sent his letter to four papers and it will be sent to other places. I'm scheduled to go on T.V on April 22nd with Jonnie Parker. We still have a number of things to do.
- Chase: I think it's important for every member of this committee that can make it to come.