

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 10, 2012

Location: Nashua River Watershed Association

Time: 7:30 PM

Attendees:

Commissioners: Mike Roberts, Lisa Wieser, Carl Canner, Leo Laverdure

Guest: Carol Canner

Minutes taken by: Stephanie Strickland

Agenda:

1. Discussion of 2011 Accomplishments
2. Discussion of Seattle's Happiness Initiative
3. Discussion of Groton's Sustainability Plan and Relationship to Café's
4. Open Discussion of all things Sustainable

Agenda Item #1: Discussion of 2011 Accomplishments

Discussion

- Mike: What I'm hoping we can do is develop a plan for this new year to keep us busy and we won't be distracted by the Master Plan. There is a planning board meeting to present phase 1 of the Master Plan on the 19th of this month. One other brief announcement is through the historic committee we hired a consultant to write a history of Groton agriculture, which includes a research book for framers. They will be put on CD's for all farmers in Groton and there will be hard copies available. Now I would like to talk briefly about what we have accomplished this year.
- Leo: We have worked with the planning board on the Master Plan and we organized the sustainability café's.
- Lisa: If we're going to talk about our accomplishments we should talk about our failures as well. We should say what we would have liked to see accomplished.
- Carl: We also worked on sustainability themes and were successful in saving the West Groton Dam.
- Mike: Lisa, you would like to discuss our failures as well?
- Lisa: Just to be realistic, we should look at what we talked about doing, but didn't do.
- Mike: Give me an idea.
- Lisa: Where could we have gone further? It would be nice if we could divide up actions and take more proactive actions. Personally, I think it's important to assess what needs to be accomplished and how to keep the town from blissful ignorance. How can we take more action? If we can come up with a plan for the year what should it include?
- Carl: I think it's important to include GELD because the commission would be more successful if it were backed by GELD.
- Mike: Many things were put on the back burner, such as our discussion of indicators. We were beginning to identify indicators that came from the café's but then we were working on the Master Plan and put that aside. We need to develop a plan of action to figure out

our priorities. Another thing we were going to look at further was Sue Lotz's presentation on happiness initiative.

- Lisa: I think if we could have a study aspect and an action aspect we would make more progress. If we have an ability to respond immediately to something that affects us it will be more beneficial to us. We need to be in a position where we are not afraid to say things as they actually are, even if some people aren't happy about it.
- Leo: Goal of sustainability commission is making it possible to be less dependable on nature resources. There are a lot of ways to deal with this but we first need to discuss our options. Skipping around our agenda to the happiness initiative, in this article it says happiness was not related to income. What we have is a political situation and we can include other people, but we can't push the public. Most people are not going to pay attention until the system is broken. I think it is a question of what people are ready to hear.
- Lisa: All I'm saying is we can't intelligently discuss these issues, unless we're looking at other paradigms.
- Leo: We are using what is called an iceberg model because while part of it is above the surface, most of it is below. Starting from the top the levels are events, patterns, trends (causes and how they relate), mental models (how we perceive things), and the lowest level which is way below the surface is the world view, which most people don't even want to talk about.
- Mike: I see where Lisa is going and understand her concerns. We defined sustainability into the three legs and balance between them is crucial.
- Lisa: One article in our paper is saying there is not crisis in our town.
- Mike: We should write a position paper on what we're about and use it to work on indicators and it can rebut things like that article. It will establish the moral ground we stand on. Not everyone is going to listen but we can still put out what we believe and why.
- Leo: We can start with the one's people will be behind, such as anything that helps them save money. In terms of social mobility we have less of it than any other democracy.
- Carl: A link in one of Leo's emails says that commodities have been going up drastically because we're running out of resources. If that's true than in the distant future what we're discussing here is going to be reflected in the economy.
- Leo: Going along with your point is that people are going to be forced to listen to us. What we should put in place is alternatives for when this occurs.

- Mike: It seems to me that we should make our commission policy so everyone knows where we are coming from.
- Leo: My belief was we're looking at sustainability as a happy things and how to protect us against things in preparation, but no one was listening to that.
- Mike: I would like to take some of those ideas from the Master Plan and put together an idea of what we're trying to do.
- Leo: People who are pro-growth are not willing to listen.
- Lisa: Why can't we do a film series?
- Mike: We could do that, no problem. We just want to make sure we are starting something that is going to last.
- Lisa: Let's begin a yearlong pursuit to ban plastic bags.
- Leo: One step less is to put a price on plastic bags, which they did in Europe and it cut down plastic bag use significantly overnight.
- Carol: I bring paper bags with me shopping all the time and I always thought it would be a good idea to bring your own containers places.
- Leo: We could sign up Groton locals to help and pick one item, could be eliminating plastic bags, and start there.
- Lisa: We could look at what other communities are doing and then make up our own rules.
- Leo: We could review things and see what has worked and what hasn't.
- Mike: We're going to have to double our meetings to really get things done. I would like to recommend that we review the master plan and then meet again on the 24th.
- Leo: This is a busy month for me, but we can still meet. I just won't have a lot done by then.
- Mike: I think we should go ahead and meet on January 24th.

Motion:

- **Leo: I move that we as a commission formally review the comprehensive Master Plan's sustainability elements and issue a report with our findings and recommendations.**