



# Sustainability Commission

Economy • Environment • Society

*Think long-term, act now*

"Community Sustainability is the commitment to adopt practices that support and balance the social, economic and environmental aspects of our region, now and into our future."

Groton Sustainability Commission, Winter 2010

## Meeting Notice

**Meeting Notification Date: Tuesday October 20, 2013**

**Meeting Date: Tuesday November 26, 2013**

**Meeting Time: 7:30 PM**

**Meeting Location: Selectman's Meeting Room First Floor Groton Town Hall**

**Meeting Type: Regularly Scheduled Commission Meeting**

### Agenda:

1. Review comprehensive Action Item list
2. Bolton solar farm
3. Progress Report – Pollinator Preservation Project – Lisa Weisner/Carl Flowers/  
Alison Dolbear
4. Progress Report - West Groton Dam/riverbank erosion – Carl Canner
5. Progress Report - the Groton Climate Change Adaptation Recommendations –  
Leo Laverdure
6. Progress Report - Groton Community Well Being Plan – Mike Roberts
7. Fundraising needs and plan.
8. New Business not foreseen at the time of posting.
9. Adjourn

**Next meeting January 28, 2014**

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### Meeting Minutes for November 26, 2013

Commissioners present: Michael Roberts, Chm.; Carl Canner, Carl Flowers, Leo Laverdure, Alison Dolbear Peterson, and Lisa Wiesner. Jane Morriss was also present, serving in the role of communications liaison.

With a quorum present, the meeting officially convened at 7:33 p.m.

**Quote:** “We accept it as normal that people who have never been on the land, who have no history or connection to the country, may legally secure the right to come in and by the very nature of their enterprises leave in their wake a cultural and physical landscape utterly transformed and desecrated. What’s more, in granting such mining concessions, often initially for trivial sums to speculators from distant cities, companies cobbled together with less history than my dog, we place no cultural or market value on the land itself. The cost of destroying a natural asset, or its inherent worth if left intact, has no metric in the economic calculations that support the industrialization of the wild. – Wade Davis, The Wayfinders, Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World, (Toronto, ON, House of Anansi Press, 2009) pgs 118-119.

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### **1. Review comprehensive Action Item list:**

This review took up much of the meeting and the exercise reinforced the importance of our mission, identified the major areas of focus, and created a positive momentum of moving forward. (Details of this review can be found in the Comprehensive Sustainability Commission follow-up that was e-mailed to the members of the commission on January 15.)

The four major areas of the Commission’s focus include:

1. The Pollinator Preservation/ Gardening Initiative led by Lisa W.;
2. The West Groton Dam/riverbank erosion project led by Carl C.
3. A climate action work group headed by Leo L; and
4. The well-being initiative led by Mike.

### **2. Bolton solar farm:**

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of building a solar farm in Groton similar to the solar farm in Bolton and the issue was left open for the moment, with the feeling that this might be something that can be undertaken if Groton decides to become a “Green Community.”

### **3. Progress Report – Pollinator Preservation Project – Lisa Weisner/Carl Flowers/ Alison Dolbear:**

Lisa, Alison, and Carl F. are moving forward with the idea of creating a gardening curriculum that can be presented as a video, or in a classroom. Discussion included the audience we are trying to reach, (children, homeowners, DPW, etc.) as well as the time-frame for roll-out. We thought it would be great to have this in time for this Spring, but that may be an unrealistic goal, as we may need to see if we can get funding, and coordinate with area schools. Alison is taking a video editing class which will finish in December. The objectives of this initiative includes creating a pollinator highway that could sustain endangered pollinators, getting homeowners to include pollinator-friendly flowers and shrubs in their landscaping, and educating homeowners and town departments about the devastation brought about by using chemicals for weed and pest control. Alison and Lisa agreed to continue efforts to

build a rapport with the schools in the area so that they can initiate a gardening program this Spring (2014).

Carl F. attended a meeting of the Groton LAPD (?) and spoke to the members about the virtues of BioChar. No one had ever heard of BioChar and his presentation stimulated a great deal of interest.

Action Items:

Carl F. – write article for newspaper about the importance of protecting pollinators and what homeowners can do to sustain pollinator populations for publication in the spring.

Lisa, Alison and Carl F.: Prepare to discuss development of garden class at January meeting featuring pollinators, sustainable gardening practices, rain gardening, and community outreach.

#### **4. The West Groton Dam/riverbank erosion project led by Carl C**

Work crews have been working to fix the dam in West Groton. However, when Carl C. spoke with the engineer from Fish and Wildlife, he said that they ran out of money so they fixed the dam, but not the low gate. Nor did they ever finish dredging the pond. So now it's like a bathtub with a plug in it, and it will overflow if we have a lot of rain.

Action Item: Carl is to draft a letter of complaint to the BOS and Mike will send it out on our stationery.

#### **5. Progress Report - the Groton Climate Change Adaptation Recommendations – Leo Laverdure:**

The news is: Groton may be eligible to become a designated “Green Community” because Hollingsworth and Vose does not purchase electricity from Groton Electric Light Co., and because of a recent court ruling. Groton now has a Green Community group that meets weekly with the goal of being able to make a recommendation during Spring Town Meeting. Leo will be following this issue closely and will report back at our next meeting.

Leo is also following the status of Boston’s comprehensive inventory of the vulnerability of its buildings to changing climate conditions and following the proceedings of the cabinet-level group convened by Gov. Patrick.

To keep up with developments on the climate change front, Leo suggested two websites:  
[www.cityofboston.gov/climate/adaptation](http://www.cityofboston.gov/climate/adaptation)  
[www.engage.greenovateboston.org](http://www.engage.greenovateboston.org)

Action Steps:

1. Get better understanding of report’s content;
2. Convene a Climate Action Work Group (five members optimum)  
(Volunteers may include Ken Hansen, Heather Aziz and Ann Bohn.)
3. Decide whether we want to go to Spring 2014 or Winter 2015 Town Meeting with Climate Change article based on Lexington’s amendment that was unanimously endorsed by their TM last Spring.

4. Suggested movie regarding climate change and the hazards of trapped methane gas, watch *The Methane Time Bomb* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6pFDu7ILV4>

**6. Progress Report - Groton Community Well Being Plan – Mike Roberts**

We will discuss the Groton Community Well Being Plan in more depth at our February meeting.

**7. Fundraising needs and plan.**

It was decided that we would ask for funding at Spring TM. To support our request, we will want to put together a formal prospectus describing the scope of our mission and activities.

Action item: Each member should draft a statement of purpose describing his/her work and how it benefits the town of Groton.

**8. New Business not foreseen at the time of posting.**

We welcomed Allison Dolbear Peterson as a new member of the Commission following her official swearing in by the BOS at a recent meeting.

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Morriss