

## Sustainability Commission Minutes September 8, 2015

Commissioners Present: Michael Roberts, Leo Laverdure, Alison Peterson, Carl Flowers, Carl Canner, Bruce Easom. Also present Helene Canen.

1. Michael Roberts said Minutes should be sent to Town Clerk.

2. Grotonfest – Michael Roberts -- showed banner [60 x 18] Cost \$63.75. He will have Happiness Information Cards to hand out. Leo will furnish a table, chairs and easel. Michael also reported a donation of \$1000 by Steve Webber. Bruce made a motion, seconded by Leo to accept banner and information cards, \$124.87. Motion Passed. Alison will have a Pollinator Exhibit and will have a donation jar. Michael will go to Town Manager about a line item in the town budget. Allison told us about the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge by 2016. She will write an article to inform about this. She and Marion Stoddart will update Web Page pollinator section of Sustainability Commission.

3. Groton Climate Change subcommittee report – Leo-- will draft a short report before town meeting to summarize and use as a basis with other town organizations about what is happening and determine what others are planning and compare Groton with nearby towns. Develop an action plan for Town Meeting. Helene mentioned that water usage is changing and mentioned her use of plastic and ground cover.

4. Pollinator Preservation Project Report – Alison-- Groton School did not help with the Groton Meadow project. She has spent \$195 for seed. 3000 sq ft will be tilled in the meadow for \$300. Alison asked for money from the endowment to seed and till. Groton Sr. Center setback when Highway Dept mowed grass and milkweed. Will have to be redone.

5. Groton Dam/river erosion survey report – Carl Canner –Michael will attend meeting on removal of Dam in Pepperell. There is evidence of recent erosion. Leo said hard thing is to convince people that this will not happen anyway.

6. Pipeline Initiative Status – Carl Canner - Plan is for it to go north into New Hampshire. Bruce suggested a Warrant article to create fund to have a legal action.

7. Happiness/Wellbeing report initiative report – Michael Roberts – He reported on the activity on web site. Would like to pull together small group public meeting to promote more activity at the site. He has cards printed to inform how to take the survey. These will be available to the public.

8. Agricultural Initiative progress - Carl Flowers/Bruce Easom It was discussed how we, on the Sustainability Commission, could assist the town's agricultural community. Carl suggested a real estate tax would help. Michael Roberts suggested creating a business assistance plan for local farmers. Helene mentioned how she, as a small farmer, is struggling and felt we need to educate the public of the value of supporting small local farmers even if it costs a bit more. Bruce says file a RDA with the Conservation Commission if beavers are a problem. Michael

said there needs to be a balance between economics and the environment. We have tried to educate the public in this area.

9. Fundraising needs, plan and progress – Webber gift – Suggests there should be a line item put into Town Budget.

10. Whither? – Where is Sustainability Commission going? What do we want to think about? Carl Canner asked what does the Sustainability Commission mean to Town. What does Master Plan mean to town? What about energy issues? Bruce suggested offering town a long view and in the short view – attend town meetings and pay attention to warrant issues. Michael Roberts suggested we should set aside a meeting prior to each town meeting to evaluate warrant articles for purpose of making recommendations. This became a motion and was seconded and approved.

Leo- long view get better at coming up with publicity for our ideas. As we become clearer about what needs to happen, get our message out to the public. Groton Neighbors just getting going to help people stay independent, Ride Sharing is an idea worth investigating.

Alison – She would like to get information to public by developing a course on Web Site about sustainability gardening.

Michael – Alison to ask Jessica of the Town IT Department to see about creating a Power Point presentation to get people using the Web Site. Would like to see a Dialog. Wondered if any restriction about what Commissioners say on website

Pat - asked if there would be any objection to using a tape recorder to facilitate taking minutes. There was none.

Michael said there needs to be a balance between Economics, Environment and Community. Get the three groups together to have CONSENSSES thru DIALOG which would implement the model.

Carl Flowers – should be a senior tax reduction to keep seniors in town

Meeting Adjourned at 9:08 PM  
Submitted by:Patricia Karohl