

Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2021

I. Call to order

Alison Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:04PM.

Attendees were as follows:

Alison Dolbear Peterson (Chairperson)

Katrina Posner (Clerk)

Marina Khabituyeva (member)

Bruce Easom (member)

Deborah Wakrat Schwartz

Phil Francisco

Ginger Vollmar

Jim Simko

James Allen

II. Open issues

- a) Minutes from the October 19, 2021 meeting were approved.
- b) Alison reported that the Sustainability Committee should be able to accept all the people who have shown an interest in joining the committee.
- c) Alison reported The Regional Climate Change Collaborative would allow one representative (one vote) per municipality. The Groton Select Board is supportive of this project. At some point the Sustainability Committee will need to send a volunteer.
- d) Alison reported The Green Future Act (H.3292) is still being worked on by the state.

III. New business

- a) Alison reported Nicotinoid use in Groton. Nicotine based spray can kill bees and other pollinators. The committee needs to know who is doing the spraying and what kind of impact would it have on the town. Deborah and Phil volunteered to look into the process and get clarification. Alison will contact Becky Pine (Select Board) for clarification of goal.
- b) Alison would like to look into providing a resiliency plan for Groton. Phil found several resiliency plans in other towns (Devens, North-Central Fitchburg, Cambridge). He suggested that we use these as a template for the Groton plan.
- c) Alison brought up solar interest in Groton. Discussion covered options including costs and donations. Phil and Bruce volunteered to hold an information class at Prescott.

Ginger volunteered to help getting it set up. Later in the meeting Jim noted that rather than individuals putting solar panels on their homes, it may be more beneficial to work on group projects such as focusing on shared cost programs such as more solar fields in Groton.

IV. A number of suggested opportunities were brought to our attention.

- a) Ginger has concerns with the DPW using all gas-powered tools. Perhaps in the future they should have a policy to replace gas powered tools with electric.
- b) The next discussion was about the local golf course. They have replaced a portion of their golf carts with electric carts, but not all. Bruce will call and see how it is working out.
- c) Food waste – The Recycle Center has black earth composting. Schools should be composting or donating. Jim mentioned that the easier we make it to conform, the more likely they will do it.
- d) James brought up the suggestion that Groton needs more charging stations. Currently, Groton is putting in six charging stations.
- e) Deborah brought up water conservation. Bruce mentioned that if the Water Dept. had a separate rate for irrigation, it may encourage people to water less. It was noted that grass is not a native plant to this area and that is why it needs to be watered in order to thrive. It would be better to grow native plants.
- f) A Dark Skies program is being looked at by the State. It would take cooperation from businesses and private home owners.
- g) Noise pollution (example – leaf blowers). It was suggested that we should recommend that the town ask that no one use a leaf blower on Sunday. Another suggestion was to use electric leaf blowers which are quieter.
- h) The Complete Streets Committee is already planning more sidewalks. Jim asked that we recommend that they use a permeable material to help with water flow.
- i) Bruce talked about the flood plain. There are some homes which may not be insurable in the future due to flooding. The committee could support the town by providing information on how to approach this problem.
- j) Ginger mentioned Carbon Pricing. Burning of fossil fuels should be discouraged. It is thought that this may have to come from the State.
- k) Bruce talked about the waste created when tearing down old buildings and how we should preserve them as much as possible.

V. Vote on New Members and Adjournment (All non-members were asked to leave so a vote could be taken.)

- a) Bruce recommended the following: I move to recommend the following candidates be approved by the Select Board to be appointed to the Sustainability Committee. Phil Francisco, Ginger Vollmar, Deborah Wakrat Schwartz, Jim Simko, and James Allen. Alison 2nd the motion. Motion was carried by a unanimous vote.
- b) Bruce moved that the meeting be adjourned. Marian 2nd the motion. Motion was carried by a unanimous vote. Alison adjourned the meeting at 8:55PM

Minutes submitted by: Katrina Posner

Minutes approved by: