

Sustainability Commission

Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2022

I. Call to order

Alison called the meeting to order at 7:15PM.

Attendees were as follows:

Alison Dolbear Peterson (Chairperson)

Phil Francisco (Vice Chair)

Katrina Posner (Clerk)

Bruce Easom

Ginger Vollmar

Jim Simko

Andrew Scott

David Southwick

II. Open issues

- a) Minutes from the July 19, 2022 meeting were reviewed, amended and approved.
- b) Andrew Scott gave out a preliminary outline of subjects that could be used for informational purposes concerning energy usage in the home. When asked if he would be willing to put together a curriculum together for classes, he stated that he is looking into putting something together for public education. Phil Francisco stated that a seminar could be held at the Prescott facility for a nominal fee and that they were planning on having solar classes as well. Other suggestions included monthly or bi-monthly information in the Groton Herald. This led to a discussion concerning how it would be possible to get the word out to the citizens of Groton. Andrew suggested that we needed a PR department.
- c) NC4 (North Central Climate Change Coalition) is having a meeting tomorrow, so, at present, there is no update. It was noted that the Green Future Act was passed and signed by Governor Baker. There is still a lot of work being done by a Green Future Team which is a consortium of people which have been working as one group to pass the Green Future Bill.
- d) Alison Dolbear brought up the idea of solar green houses which are sourced out of Maine. These are kits that can be put together easily and come in a number of sizes. She will be getting more information.
- e) This led back to a discussion on curriculum for informational classes. It was suggested that we create a sub-committee that will put together a class skeleton. Then, using this information, create the content that can be used for future classes. Phil and Andrew volunteered for the sub-committee. Motion was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- f) Bruce asked Lynn Spadone about what needs to be done to propose a class to be held at Prescott. This process includes filling out a form and sending it to Prescott and they will consider it.

Bruce was willing to talk about the solar energy system he installed back in 2012. He wouldn't charge for his services, so any fee would go directly to Friends of Prescott. A question was asked if anyone has a 2nd session or 3rd session, that they would like to offer. Phil stated that he would like to talk about the energy solar system he installed in 2013 and the geo thermal system they installed. Phil suggested that we should start getting information to the town media (Groton Herald, etc.). We should present the courses so that they are lined up by Earth Day to have a theme, from the beginning of April to May. In order to make it successful, more information will have to be offered as to who the Sustainability Commission is and what we are offering. Build it up and then launch the informational classes. Ginger volunteered to be the point person for handling media and spreading the word. A nomination was made for her to be the point person for public relations. Motion was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- g) David Southwick volunteered to be on the PR Sub-committee. Motion was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- h) Alison Dolbear gave an update on the pollinator habitat. Jim Simko and his wife are donating plants and helping with the planting as well. Thank you, Jim. Alison has been keeping up on the watering and caring of the pollinator habitat. We have a sign that says Pollinator Habitat. It was noted that this should go into the Groton Herald. Alison will send out emails. Put an article in the Herald and make sure they ask for funds to be donated to the Sustainability Commission Pollinator Habitat.
- i) Bruce gave an update on the Tire Recycling/Mosquito Abatement Update project. Bruce connected with Tom DeLaney and he was generally supportive. Bruce will set up a Gift Fund for \$3,000 so it can run for one year. One weekend a month, Bruce would be at the transfer station to oversee the operation. Next step, is that the select board has to accept the donated money as a gift. The plan is to have an article in the Groton Herald and advertising on the bulletin board on the town's web-site. After the first tire collection, Bruce will meet with Tom to review the outcome. Collections will be held on one day each month (note - that this is an experiment). The first collection will be held the last week in September or the first week of October. Bruce or another volunteer will make sure no garage brings in all their tires.
- j) State Mosquito Spraying Program Options – Phil talked to Becky Pine (from the Select Board). She had a brochure that Pepperell had sent out as information on why it is important to opt out of the State Mosquito Spraying. She sent it to Phil and the Board of Health. Phil explained that this does not include people who choose to have their property sprayed by outside companies. The state would usually spray wherever we have stagnant water. It is highly doubtful that the state will do anything this year as it has been very, very dry. Phil will collect the information that Pepperell put together and give us an update at the next meeting. If the decision is to opt out of the State Mosquito Spraying Program, we will need to apply by middle of May. This will be for next year.
- k) Jim Simko found a report called The Hazard Mitigation Plan and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (HMP-MVP Plan) for the Town of Groton (2020). He stated that it may be helpful in the things that we want to do. The committee that wrote this plan got a grant, but it's not clear if the grant money was for creating the report. It looks like they started the work and then dropped the report. More discussion will be held at our next meeting.

- l) Phil asked for information and thoughts on the mission statement which Jim Allen gave us last week. Comments included were:
 - a) It says a lot about education, but should also include influencing things and driving things.
 - b) It talks about sustainability in a vacuum. There is a need for sustainability in a growing place.
 - c) It is also important to grow in a sustainable way, but not to the detriment of growth of the town. Perhaps, dovetail into what Destination Groton is doing. We should build a liaison with Destination Groton.
 - d) Making smart sustainable decisions for within the community as well as supporting the community in an equitable way.

Phil will do a rewrite with the edits that people have suggested. He will email it to all of us. Since we are not allowed to converse outside of the meeting, all comments should be sent directly to Phil and no one else on the commission.

Please keep in mind that all Subcommittees have to keep their own minutes. Phil's goal is to have a one sentence goal statement and then one or two paragraphs expanding that goal.

- m) There was a suggestion that all meetings be recorded. Minutes are good, but recordings pick up all the details. There was some agreement and some disagreement. Tabled until our next meeting.

Move was made to adjourn and seconded. The motion was passed unanimously. Alison adjourned the meeting at 9:00PM.

The next meeting will be held on September 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM at the Groton Center.

Minutes submitted by: Katrina Posner, Clerk

Minutes approved by: Sustainability Commission