



Sustainability Commission

Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, December 12, 2022
Meeting Time: 7:00 PM
Meeting Location: Groton Town Hall, Main Street, Groton, MA

Attendees: Alison Dolbear Peterson, Bruce Easom, Charlotte Weigel, Phil Francisco, Andrew Scott, David Southwick

Minutes:

This was a special session of the Commission, presenting an overview of 2022 activities and plans for 2023 at the Select Board meeting.

Called to Order– 7:15 pm

- **Select Board Presentation:** Alison, Bruce, Charlotte, and Phil provided a presentation to the Groton Select Board and Town Manager that was a review of the Commission's activities in CY2022 and our plans and needs for CY2023. Select Board members John Reilly (Chair) and Peter Cunningham were not able to attend.

The topics covered were as follows:

- Alison provided an overview of the importance of pollinator habitat along with specific details of the work conducted in 2022 on the Pollinator Habitat garden at the Groton Center.
 - Bruce provided an overview of the importance of removing unwanted tires from the environment because of their role as a haven for breeding mosquitoes, and covered the initial successes of the Tire Collection and Recycling initiative in October and November as well as plans to restart the initiative in the Spring of 2023.
 - Charlotte covered the importance and need to benchmark Groton's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly as they pertain to meeting the Commonwealth's goals of net GHG reductions – 33% net reduction by 2025, 50% by 2035, and "Net Zero" by 2050. The benchmark and ongoing measures will help clarify how Groton is progressing on those objectives and will inform decisions to be made to achieve them.
 - Phil covered the ongoing planning for a series of informational/educations seminars for Groton residents about what we each can meaningfully be doing to make the town both more sustainable and to combat climate change generally.
 - Phil also covered the topic of needs that the Commission has from the Select Board in terms of working together to ensure our 2023 activities are aligned with the Board's priorities for sustainability, to have a stronger liaison role with various town departments and commissions, and to provide funding for the Commission's work in 2023.
 - David added additional, strong words of support and encouragement for the funding of the Commission which the Board and Town Manager supported.
- **Select Board Feedback and Reaction:** All of those present from the Select Board and the Town Manager were extremely positive about our work to date and were effusive about the forward-looking work plans.

- With respect to the educational program, Select Board Member Alison Manugian highlighted the fact that children in town are already well aware of many of these topics and could be very helpful as resources in helping to inform and educate the adults.
- Select Board Member Becky Pine, Ms. Manugian and Town Manager Mark Haddad were all very engaged and supportive of the plans to benchmark the town's GHG emissions as well as the education program.
- Mr. Haddad and Ms. Pine and Select Board Member Matthew Pisani were very positive about the pollinator habitat work
- All the Board members and the Town Manager were extremely supportive and appreciative to Bruce for the Tire Recycling initiative.
- The Board, through Ms. Pine and Mr. Haddad underscored that the Commission already has the support and the authority it needs to act as liaisons to other Town departments and commissions, to provide insight and guidance on matters of sustainability, as and when appropriate.
- Ms. Manugian and Mr. Haddad agreed that a subset of the Select Board and Town Manager would be willing to work with the Commission to help identify and priorities particular areas of sustainability project work, grant funding applications and other activities in early 2023. We agreed to work toward that in early 2023.
- Mr. Haddad also offered that the best method of funding the Commission would be via a Town Meeting warrant article to be voted at Spring Town Meeting. He also offered that his office would work with the Commission on any specific short-term funding needs – for the pollinator garden, for printing brochures, etc. – ahead of the Town Meeting. We agreed that we would pursue that path in early 2023 to be on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant.

Adjourned – 8:55 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 20th, 2022, 7:00pm, via ZOOM

Respectfully submitted,

- *Phil Francisco*

Approved by Groton Sustainability Commission, January 17, 2023.