



Sustainability Commission

Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 17, 2023
Meeting Time: 7:00 PM
Meeting Location: Groton Center, 163 West Main Street, Groton, MA

Attendees: Alison Dolbear Peterson, Andrew Scott, Charlotte Weigel, Deborah Wakrat Schwartz (7:29p), Ginger Vollmar, Jim Allen, Phil Francisco

Minutes:

Called to Order– 7:09 pm

- The minutes from the November 15th, 2022, and December 12th, 2022 Commission meetings were **approved unanimously**.
- **Sustainability Commission Annual Report:** Phil presented a draft 2-page “annual report” on the Commission’s achievements for CY2022. Charlotte, Alison, and others suggested wording changes which were incorporated in the draft. The Commission **voted unanimously to approve** the document to be sent to the Town Clerk.
- **Select Board Presentation:** Phil, Alison, and Charlotte provided their synopsis of the December 12th presentation and discussion with the Select Board to the Commission (the highlights of which were captured in the 12/12/2022 Minutes).
- **Pollinator Garden Near-term Costs:** Alison stated that she was going to need to secure funding before Spring Town Meeting to purchase plant-plugs for the Pollinator Garden, particularly with the right choice assortment and at advantaged prices.
- **Draft Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles:** Phil presented preliminary draft Spring Town Meeting warrant articles, requesting an increase in the size of the Commission, and requesting \$15K in funding for our FY2024 work. Several Commission members provided comments on the draft. Phil also said he had no experience in properly crafting such warrant articles and would need help to get it to a final state that was appropriate for Town Meeting.
 - Alison thought it would be best to reach out to Town Manager Mark Haddad for help with both the short-term funding issue for the Pollinator Garden and the need to properly craft the warrant articles, and the Commission agreed. She will try to set up a meeting with Mark as soon as possible.
- **Liaison Members to Other Commissions:** The following are the various Town commissions, departments, and boards to which we would like to have Sustainability Commission liaisons attend as frequently as possible to share the Commission’s perspectives and to ensure that sustainability/resilience is part of the discussions and directions of these various groups as much as practical. We would like to have at least two Commission volunteers for each of these to help “share the load”, so more volunteers from our Commission are ***most welcome***.
 - *GELD* – Charlotte, Andrew, Jim Simko
 - *Planning Board* – Phil, Ginger
 - *Master Plan* – Alison, Phil
 - *School Committee* – Andrew
 - *Green Communities* – Jim Allen, Charlotte
 - *Destination Groton* – Phil, Alison

- *NC4* – Phil, Ginger, Charlotte
 - *School Building Committee* –
 - *other committees tbd?* –
- **Town-Wide Emissions Audit Update:** Charlotte provided a preliminary look at her work on the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions audit. She presented a comparison of GHG inventories done by neighboring towns, showing that the GHG inventory tool from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the standard method that has generally been adopted by most municipalities in the region. There is some concern about the age of some datasets used in the tool, as well as estimation methods for some activity data, but a consistent method at this point is more important than Groton trying to fashion its own model out of whole cloth and then not measuring consistently with other cities and towns around us. The group discussed the need to account for the carbon sequestration that the many acres of forested land in Groton provide on an annual basis.
 - Charlotte requested help in double-checking work and presentation materials. As a result, **a new “Net Zero 2050 Planning Subcommittee” was approved unanimously.** The subcommittee’s name was chosen to be consistent with the same in other nearby towns. Initial members of this subcommittee are Charlotte and Phil – others are welcome!
 - **New Business #1:** Phil reported that the Select Board and Town Manager planned to take up reviewing, and possibly voting to sign, the North Central Climate Change Coalition (NC4) Memorandum of Understanding document to officially join NC4 at an upcoming Select Board meeting.
 - **New Business #2:** Ginger reported the Planning Board seemed to be awaiting the final draft of the RFP document that will be used to select the consultant to help drive the crafting of the new Groton Master Plan. As/when this moves to the next step with the Planning Board, we will need to be diligent in monitoring Planning Board activities here to ensure that sustainability/resilience issues are being properly addressed by the consultant in the process.

Adjourned – 9:08 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 7:00pm, via ZOOM

Respectfully submitted,

– *Phil Francisco*

Approved by Groton Sustainability Commission, February 21, 2023.