



Sustainability Commission

Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 21, 2023
Meeting Time: 7:00 PM
Meeting Location: Recorded ZOOM Meeting

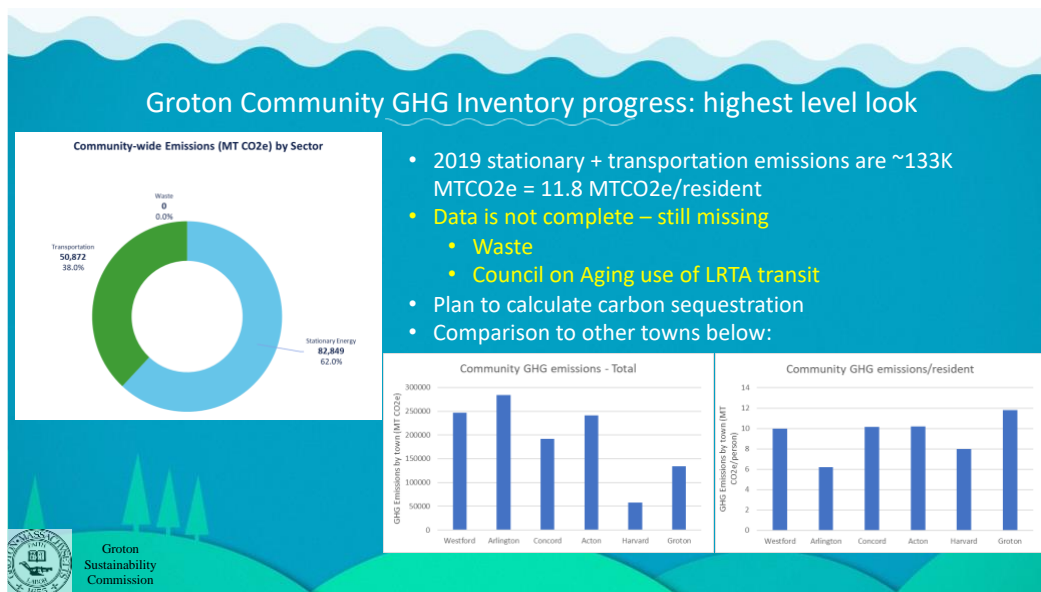
Attendees: Alison Dolbear Peterson, Andrew Scott, Bruce Easom, Charlotte Weigel, David Southwick, Deborah Wakrat Schwartz, Ginger Vollmar, Phil Francisco

Minutes:

Called to Order– 7:05 pm

- The minutes from the January 17th 2023 Commission meeting were **approved unanimously**.
- **Spring Town Meeting Article #8 Review:** The Commission discussed the draft Spring Town Meeting Warrant article #8 which requests \$15,000 in funds to support the Commission's activities. The broad consensus from the members was that we should not lower the amount being requested in the warrant article.
 - The Commission **voted unanimously to approve** the draft article for the Warrant for Spring Town Meeting as drafted by Town Manager Haddad with Alison and Phil. [Now numbered as article #9 on the most current working draft of Spring Town Meeting Warrant]
- **Spring Town Meeting Article #9 Review:** The Commission discussed the draft Spring Town Meeting Warrant article #9 which requests a change in the Commission Charter to provide the ability to expand the size of the Commission with Select Board approval rather than requiring Town Meeting approval.
 - The Commission **voted unanimously to approve** the draft article for the Warrant for Spring Town Meeting as drafted by Town Manager Haddad with Alison and Phil. [Now numbered as article #10 on the most current working draft of Spring Town Meeting Warrant]
- **Planning Board Letter Discussion:** Charlotte reviewed the issues she had found in the RFP solicitation the Planning Board/Town Manager had sent out to find a Consultant for the Town Master Plan work and the need to ensure that sustainability/resilience is being adequately addressed in the RFP response evaluation process. The Commission reviewed the draft letter to the Planning Board prepared by Charlotte regarding items of emphasis the Commission is seeking in the evaluation of Master Plan Consultant RFP respondents. Various members suggested a few edits which Charlotte accepted and made in the draft document.
 - The Commission **voted unanimously to approve** the amended draft to be sent by Charlotte to the Planning Board, with copies to Takashi Tada and to the Town Manager.
- **Education Subcommittee Update:** The Commission reviewed the draft letter to all Town residents prepared by Phil and Charlotte regarding the planned Sustainability Education Seminar series. Various members suggested a handful of edits which Phil accepted and made in the draft document.

- The Commission **voted unanimously to approve** the amended draft to be sent out by Ginger for publication in the Groton Herald, “Talk About Groton”, and various Town-oriented social media feeds.
- The Commission then reviewed the draft letter to all Town Boards/Committees/Departments prepared by Phil regarding the planned Sustainability Education Seminar series. Various members suggested edits for consistency with the public letter (above) Phil accepted and made in the draft document.
 - The Commission **voted unanimously to approve** the amended draft to be sent by Phil to all Town Boards, Departments, and Committees via the Town Clerk.
- **NC4 Coalition Update:** Phil reported that the Groton Select Board had voted to sign the NC4 MoU on Feb 6th. But there has been an issue with getting the Town of Pepperell (where NC4 Chair is a member of the Select Board) to sign on to the MoU – most notably due to concerns one SB has with the quorum requirements. Phil described an interesting program that Harvard is undertaking to encourage more participation in household sustainability actions – providing sustainability-branded flags for residents to place in their yards when they have employed at least one action in their home/property. Phil suggested that the Commission should consider doing something like this associated with actions residents take in response to the Education Seminar program.
- **NetZero 2050 Planning Subcommittee:** Charlotte provided an overview of the GHG audit work completed thus far. While there are still a few more items (e.g., GHG emissions ascribed to Waste) to be included in the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) model for Groton, she doesn't expect much change in the overall numbers and percentages.



Charlotte said that once she has compiled the full model, she would like someone to go through and review the work to ensure they independently come up with the same results. [Phil subsequently volunteered to run through the calculations to double-check Charlotte's work.]

- **Clerk Position Opening:** Alison informed the Commission that Katrina has resigned from the Commission due to personal matters. She plans to initiate a search for someone to take over as Clerk for the Commission. Phil has been handling meeting minutes over the last several meetings, but the Commission mutually agreed to rotate the task of keeping the minutes through all the members until a Clerk has been named.

Bruce volunteered to take the minutes at the March 21st meeting.

- **Climate Reality Project Training Event:** Alison reminded the Commission members about the upcoming Climate Reality Project training, entitled “**From Acts to Action: Let’s Leverage the IRA and Infrastructure LAW for Climate Action Now**” (spanning April 6th through April 20th, delivered virtually and much of it on demand). Alison has signed up for the training; Phil took an earlier version of Climate Reality training in Spring 2020.

More information is available here: <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/training/power-up-from-acts-action>.

- **Committee/Board Liaisons:** A reminder – the following is a list of the Commission members who have volunteered to act as liaisons to various town committees/boards/departments. 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?* –

Adjourned – 9:18 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 21, 2023, 7:00pm, at the Groton Center

Respectfully submitted,

– *Phil Francisco*

Approved by Groton Sustainability Commission, March 21, 2023.