

## Groton Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes of 19 September 2023

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:01 PM at the Groton Senior Center.

Members present: James Allen, Bruce H. Easom, Phil Francisco (chairman), Patrick Parker-Roach, Alison Dolbear Peterson, David Southwick, Ginger Vollmar and Charlotte Weigel (vice chair)

Members absent: Andrew Scott and Jim Simko

### Green House Gas Presentation

Charlotte reviewed the presentation on Groton's greenhouse gas inventory that she had prepared for the Select Board. The group provided some minor suggestions on how to improve the data presentation.

Bruce H. Easom moved that Charlotte's presentation be presented to the Select Board. James seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote. The Commission thanked Charlotte for all the work put in by Charlotte and the data verification team to create this important benchmark presentation.

Charlotte agreed to set up a date with Select Board for the presentation and report back to the Commission on the agreed upon date.

### Grotonfest Planning

David described the planning activities for Grotonfest. In the booth we will have 4' x 3' poster. Andrew has built a "sustainability wheel" something like what you see on Wheel of Fortune. Here the wheel provides possible answers to the question, "What does sustainability mean to you?"

Booth attendants will give out stickers for Sustainability Wheel participants. Participants will get their name placed in a drawing for a rain barrel. Attendants will also give out certificates for those who agree to advocate for sustainability. David showed the schedule for manning the booth. David agreed to bring chairs, but we still need a tent.

### Expense Reimbursements

Bruce moved that the following expenses be reimbursed by the Commission.

Andrew	\$159.95
Phil	\$416.84
Charlotte	\$241.28

For a total of \$818.07.

Ginger seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **Education Subcommittee**

Next topic for the education series will be about per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

On November first there will be a session where Groton residents will speak about their experience installing residential solar photovoltaic systems in Groton.

On 6 December the topic will be Waste Stream Issues

On 7 February the topic will be a Water/Snow Runoff & Waste Discussion

The education subcommittee reported that an article on sustainability will be coming out in the Groton Herald on Friday.

### **Green Communities**

The town's Green Communities group met today with Takashi Tada, Groton's Town Planner. Grant applications for Green Communities projects are due on October 20<sup>th</sup>. The town's top priority is the weatherization of the middle school north buildings. The town will also be applying for a grant to replace the boiler in the Town Hall. The town would also like to replace the boiler in the middle school north building but, to get a grant for that, the town is required to complete the weatherization project there.

Also being considered is an effort to re-commission the middle school north's heating system. It was not clear the last time that that was done. Takashi requested that the Commission prepare for him a list of questions about improved green gas solutions. The Commission agreed that we should be providing input to the Green Community Committee.

Bruce moved that it is the position of the Sustainability Commission that the Green Communities meetings should be posted as public meetings, and each meeting should include one or more representatives of the Sustainability Commission as so inform the Select Board.

Ginger seconded the motion the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Charlotte moved that the above position be reported to the select board via email. Ginger seconded the motion. In discussion, Phil said that the members of the Sustainability Commission should be invited to participate in all Green Communities meetings. Phil added that the Sustainability Commission should request that Green Communities meetings be held as open meetings subject to the open meeting law. Bruce agreed to send that email.

The motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **Pollinator Garden**

The commission discussed using rain barrels to collect rainwater for watering the pollinator garden instead of municipal water. The proposed drip irrigation system needs a supply of water at a steady pressure which would require the rain barrels to be elevated above the ground. Bruce said the barrels would have to be elevated 33 feet to provide 15 psi of water pressure and that a 55 gallon drum of water weights 450 pounds so a gravity fed system would have be me tall and strong. A ground-based system with a small pump is more practical.

Alison provided an estimate of \$1,600.00 for drip irrigation system installation connected to municipal water. This would avoid the need for rain barrels. Pat moved that the Commission move forward with the installers proposal and continue research on the rain barrel option.

Charlotte seconded the motion. All voted in favor except Bruce who voted against. The motion carried by majority vote.

### **Legislative Events**

Charlotte moved to approve sending a letter to our state representatives supporting House Resolution 843 and Senate bill 520. Ginger seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote. Senate bill 520 and House Resolution 843 are entitled "An Act to Protect Pollinator Habitat". Groton state representatives are Senator Cronin and State Representatives Scarsdale & Cena. Copies of the letter will also be sent to the Groton Town Manager, the Select Board and the NC4 organization.

The letter from the Sustainability Commission to the ZBA Regarding the Heritage Landing (Cow Pond Brook Road) Comprehensive Permit Application was received by the ZBA.

### **Pollinator Corridor**

The Commission agreed that any pollinator corridor will need ongoing invasives control and weed removal. This could take a significant effort to keep the corridor maintained. The Commission said that this project needs more thought and that a working group needs to be set up to work with the garden club. Further discussion of the pollinator corridor was tabled.

### **Heritage Landing 40B**

The Commission discussed sending a draft letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) regarding the Heritage Landing comprehensive permit application. Comments were provided. Pat moved to approve the letter to the ZBA as amended. Alison seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

The Commission agreed that the October meeting will be dedicated to strategic planning for the coming year.

### **Meeting Minutes from 15 August 2023**

The Commission reviewed the draft meeting minutes from 15 August 2023.

Bruce moved to approve the meeting minutes as drafted. James seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **Meeting Minutes from 30 August 2023**

The Commission reviewed the draft meeting minutes from 30 August 2023.

Bruce moved to approve the meeting minutes as amended. Pat seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting. Pat seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 pm.

Bruce H. Easom

These minutes were approved on 17 October 2023.