



Sustainability Commission

Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, January 4, 2024
Meeting Time: 7:00 PM
Meeting Location: Virtual ZOOM Meeting

Attendees: Phil Francisco, David Southwick, Linda Loren, Ken Horton, Alison Dolbear Peterson, Pat Parker-Roach, Charlotte Weigel, Ginger Vollmar, Andrew Scott, Bruce Easom, Sue Fitterman

Absent: Jim Allen, Jim Simko

Minutes:

Called to Order– 7:02 pm

1) Review/authorize our CPC grant request for pollinator corridor work (due Jan 11th) — Alison

Alison presented a one-page write-up describing the project – approximately an 80' x 3' strip garden connecting from the Ice Line Trail to the back of the Pollinator Habitat Garden at the Groton Center. There was discussion about the scope of the grant funding request, which Alison said was \$2,400 to pay for approximately 160 to 180 1-gallon potted plants from The Native Plant Trust, based on an estimated 20% price increase from 2023 prices. Several members suggested options to be more economical, including potentially using plugs, but what those choices are will not be known until early Spring. Alison agreed that she would look to find the most economical choices available if/when the funds are authorized by Town Meeting.

During the discussion, David raised the question about our current level of funding on when those funds will expire, since we may want to rearrange how we spend the funds to further our strategic initiatives. Phil clarified that our \$15,000 funding authorized at the 2023 Spring Town Meeting will expire on June 30th and any unused funds will be returned to the Town. We agreed to take time at the January 16th Commission meeting to explicitly address the issue of reallocating funds especially, but not only, to further our digital media presence/website development.

Bruce suggested that the CPC Grant Application should stipulate that the request is for FY2024 funds, not FY2025, so that the funds could be made immediately available pending Town Meeting approval. Alison agreed to adjust the grant request form.

Andrew made a motion to authorize Alison to complete the CPC Grant Application for \$2400 in FY24 funds, and with the above understanding regarding economy. David seconded. **The motion carried with 9 Yea votes and 2 Abstentions.**

2) Consider/authorize letters of support from the Commission in support of CPC Grant applications by (a) the Conservation Commission and (b) the Affordable Housing Trust (due Jan 11th)— Phil

Phil reviewed two draft letters of support to be sent to the CPC – one supporting the Affordable Housing Trust’s grant request (\$400,000) for the FY25 Housing Fund, and the Conservation Commission’s grant request (\$400,000) for the FY25 Conservation Fund.

Bruce made a motion to authorize Phil to send the AHT letter and Andrew seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.** Bruce made a motion to authorize Phil to send the ConComm letter and Andrew seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3) Discuss possible changes in approach regarding Greenhouse Gas & Climate Action Plan next steps – Charlotte & Phil

Phil and Charlotte reviewed the result of the joint meeting with the Select Board and GELD Commission in December and our agreement with the Select Board to return to discuss “next steps” following on from the Greenhouse Gas Inventory findings since that was not included in the joint meeting. We will be returning to brief the Select Board on January 29th with an updated version of the presentation that brings in topics that GELD is also interested in pursuing related to Special Stretch Code and a Preference for EVs in municipal vehicles. Phil and Charlotte will present an updated draft version of the deck at our January 16th Commission meeting for review and approval.

4) Establish chairs to the various subcommittees/workgroups for 2024 – Phil, ALL

We reviewed the 8 subcommittees/workgroups (and the one group of smaller “walk-on” items) and membership in each with a view toward establishing Chairs for each.

Pat made a motion that Charlotte chair the Climate Action Plan/NetZero by 2050 subcommittee, Phil chair the Education Seminar subcommittee, Phil chair the Grant and Fiscal Development subcommittee, Alison chair the Pollinator Corridor & Habitat workgroup, Pat chair the Communications & Social Media subcommittee, Bruce chair the Tire Recycling workgroup, Charlotte chair the Electrification Advocacy/Energy Coaching workgroup, David chair the Sustainable Groton Advocate Program subcommittee, and Ginger chair the “Walk-on” workgroups.

David seconded. **The motion carried unanimously.** The current subcommittees and workgroups, and respective Chairs [can be found here](#).

5) Review and authorize expense payments related to the November 18th tire recycling day – Bruce, Phil, ALL

Bruce and Phil reviewed the two outstanding expenses from the most recent tire recycling day – 78 tires were collected on November 18th. Charlotte moved that we approve payment to Bruce of \$96.18 to cover Staples poster printing expenses and Linda seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.** Pat moved that we approve payment of \$500.00 to FBS Tire Recycling to cover the tire recycling costs and Charlotte seconded. **The motion carried unanimously.**

6) Review and authorize a letter to the Select Board & Town Manager related to a proposed Massachusetts Municipal Association resolution (meetings on January 19th & 20th) — Charlotte

Charlotte presented a draft letter to the Select Board and Town Manager bringing their attention to a [proposed resolution](#) that will be addressed at the upcoming MMA annual meeting. Ken recommended that Charlotte amend the letter to urge the Select Board members and Town Manager to attend the MMA meetings, which Charlotte agreed to do. Bruce moved that we authorize Charlotte to send the amended letter to the Select Board and Town Manager and Pat seconded. **The motion carried unanimously.**

7) Review and Approve Meeting Minutes from 11/28/23 (Ginger) — ALL

We reviewed the minutes for the 11/28/2023 meeting. Andrew made a motion to approve them, and Ginger seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

8) New Business

- Phil let the Commission know that we have received request from the Town Manager to provide our Annual Report for CY2023, due on February 5th. Phil and Charlotte are working on a draft to be reviewed and authorized at our January 16th Commission meeting.
- Pat provided introductory information about the MassEnergize organization and the potential to [use their resources](#) to help jump start a web presence for Sustainable Groton. This will be a specific agenda item at our January 16th Commission meeting.

9) Adjourn Motion to adjourn at 8:45pm passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 16th 2024, 7pm at the Groton Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Francisco

Minutes approved by the Sustainability Commission, January 16th, 2024.