



Sustainability Commission

Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 20 February 2024
Meeting Time: 7:00 PM
Meeting Location: Groton Center

Attendees: Alison Dolbear Peterson, Bruce H. Easom, Phil Francisco (Chairman), Sue Fitterman, Ken Horton, Linda Loren, Pat Parker-Roach, Jim Simko, David Southwick and Ginger Vollmar

Guest: Rick Muehlke

Minutes:

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm.

- **Budget:** Phil led the discussion about the FY2024 budget. There is currently \$2,865 left unspent with \$1,800 budgeted for two more tire recycling events and \$826 for the pollinator garden. The previously approved Mass Energize website invoice in the amount of \$3,000 has been submitted to the town accountant for payment. The existing 3 ft by 10 ft banner used at Grotonfest is in poor shape and needs to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$300. We are running out of the 3-fold flyers. We need to have more advocate certificates printed and we need more stickers and labels. We will need some additional money for expected advertising in the Groton Herald. We will have about \$285 left at the end of FY2024 after the expenditures listed above. The commission agreed that the budget, as presented, was acceptable.

The commission discussed the value of printing more tri-fold flyers. There was a general consensus that the flyers were useful. It was noted that the Sustainability Commission's website address needs to be added to the flyer.

Bruce moved to authorize David to get quotes for additional flags, poles and certificates. Ginger seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Bruce moved to authorize Phil to get quotes on the new banner and more tri-fold flyers. Ginger seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

- **Education Program:** There was some discussion about the term "EV Petting Zoo" for the event where Groton electric vehicle owners will have a chance to meet the public and talk about their experience owning, operating and maintaining their electric vehicles. Most liked the "EV Petting Zoo" name for the event. So far there are 11 volunteers to bring their cars to the event and another 7 maybes. The date is Sunday 19 May 2024 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Prescott School and at the Forge and Vine parking lot.

The next seminar will be on 13 March 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Groton Center. The topic will be stormwater management and snow removal. On 3 April 2024 the topic will be "Sustainable Food Choices" with Ed McNierney, Springdell Farm, Tully Dairy, Autumn Hill Orchard, Gibbet Hill Grill, Blood Farm and Little Leaf.

The Net Zero Committee reported that Charlotte is traveling and will report at the next meeting.

Ken reported that Energy Coaching's next training session has not yet been scheduled. Two people have signed up already. Ken will schedule follow ups with the people who have signed up.

- **Pollinator Corridor:** Alison reported on her progress submitting a CPA application for funding. Alison will be incorporating the latest comments received on the draft application into the final application due on Thursday 22 February 2024. The funding request is for \$3,600. Phil noted that the application must specifically request FY2024 funding if the work is expected to begin before 1 July 2024. The area proposed to be planted is approximately 80 feet by 3 feet.
- **Communications and Social Media:** Pat provided an overview of new social media technology. His PowerPoint presentation showed how the different aspect of social media, HubSpot and websites can work together with MassEnergize and its associated features. While there is huge potential, the Commission needs to determine what is doable given its limited manpower. Pat agreed to put together a step-by-step progression map showing how the Commission would implement this by the next meeting.
- **Grants and Fiscal Developments:** Phil described a pdf he sent showing suggested prioritization of grant opportunities. Phil reported that Charlotte has been researching additional grant opportunities.
- **Fiscal Year 2025 Funding Request:** Phil showed the proposed FY2025 funding request and asked for comments. Phil showed the town meeting warrant article summary language and asked for comments. No one had any comments.
- **New Business:** Copies of previously approved invoices were circulated for signatures. Ginger reported on plans to increase hangar space at Hanscom Field to accommodate private jets. Some in the local area are opposed to the plan as it may lead to an increase in the region's carbon emissions. Ginger asked if the Commission wanted to sign a petition opposing the plan. The Commission wanted to see a copy of the petition before considering whether to sign on or not. Ginger agreed to bring a copy of the petition to the next meeting for the Commission's consideration.

Phil reported that he has been invited to the Economic Growth Committee's business forum to provide a sustainability perspective to the group. Bruce moved to authorize Phil to represent and speak for the Groton Sustainability Commission at the business forum. The motion was seconded by Ken and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Bruce reported on his efforts to determine if there are any grant opportunities offered by the Commissioners of Trust Funds that the Sustainability Commission could apply for. Bruce said that there is a vocational school follow on grant and the Bertozzi fund that looked promising. Bruce agreed to talk to the Williams Barn Committee to get their insight as they submit grant applications every year. The idea would be to get a grant to pay a student or other person to help plan and implement Groton's pollinator corridor. Last year grant applications were due on 10 April 2023.

- **Meeting Minutes of 5 February 2024:** Ginger moved to approve the meeting minutes of 5 February 2024 as amended. Bruce seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

- **Adjournment:** Ginger moved to adjourn the meeting. Bruce seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Minutes recorded by Bruce H. Easom.

These minutes were approved by unanimous vote of the Sustainability Commission at their regular meeting on 21 March 2024.