 

**Sustainability Commission**

**Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM

Meeting Location: The Groton Center

Attendees: Bruce Easom, Sue Fitterman, Phil Francisco, Ken Horton, Linda Loren,

Pat Parker-Roach, Alison Dolbear Peterson, Ginger Vollmar, Charlotte Weigel

Absent: Jim Simko, David Southwick

Other Attendees: Veronica O’Donnell, Kathryn Ellis Moore

**Minutes:** Called to order at 7:04 pm

**1. Commission re-organization:** Phil Francisco attended the meeting briefly to announce his resignation from the Commission effective February 18, 2025. Members expressed their appreciation of his contributions and leadership. A motion was made and seconded to nominate Charlotte to be Chairperson until June 30, 2025 and the motion passed unanimously. A motion was made and seconded to nominate Ken to be Vice Chairperson through June 30, 2025 and the motion passed unanimously. Veronica O’Donnell attended the meeting as a guest and expressed interest in joining the Commission. Her background includes decades of working in the environmental industry as a consultant, in the power generation field as Director of Environmental Affairs, and at MADEP. A motion was made and seconded to authorize Charlotte to send a letter to the Select Board recommending they appoint Veronica O’Donnell as a member of the Sustainability Commission. The motion passed unanimously. Kathryn Ellis Moore attended the meeting as a guest and would like to join the Pollinator Habitat workgroup.

**2. Discuss and vote on FY2026 budget:** Members reviewed the expenses to date for the FY2025 budget and discussed the FY2026 budget. A motion was made and seconded to approve the following budget for FY2026: Pollinator Habitat Garden $500; Tire Recycling $1800;

Education Seminars $2090; and Outreach Subcommittee $1067 for a total FY2026 budget of $5457. A motion was made and seconded that Charlotte notify the Town Manager that the Sustainability Commission will be requesting $5457 for FY2026. The motion passed unanimously. Bruce volunteered to track expenses vs. budget for FY2025 and FY2026.

**3. Climate Action Subcommittee update:** Charlotte and Ken are continuing outreach to several more groups in town. The presentation at Town Meeting in April will include slides listing the groups who have endorsed the Climate Resolution. Those slides will be reviewed by the Commission sometime before Town Meeting. The Groton Herald is planning to interview Charlotte and Ken for an article about the Climate Resolution.

**4. Energy Coaching Subcommittee update:** Jim Moisson is continuing his energy coaching training. Outreach is needed to get more clients. Ginger will write a letter to the Groton Herald before the May 22nd Energy Coaching seminar to let residents know about the free energy coaching being offered.

**5. Grants Subcommittee update:** The Commission learned that its application for a $15,000 Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) grant requires more work and analysis which the group won’t be able to provide in time for the application deadline. The Commission is still waiting to hear back about the shared Energy Manager grant application that it submitted along with Ayer, Shirley and Harvard. Regarding the grant from the state to create a Municipal Decarbonization Plan, applications can be submitted every three months. The group discussed waiting until June 2025 to apply for this grant since its application will be stronger if the Climate Resolution Plan is passed at April’s Town Meeting.

**6. Pollinator Habitat Subcommittee update:** Sue ordered 28 plant nametags and stakes for the Pollinator Habitat Garden for $313.14. Alison would like to spend the FY2025 remaining balance of $187 to buy native plants to replace any that may have died due to last fall’s drought.

**7. Pollinator Pathway Interns:** Bruce said the two interns Tegan Gagne and Danielle Delaney began research work last month and submitted a short report stating they researched pollinator species in decline in Groton, their necessary food and habitat, and steps that would help. Their next task is to identify existing pollinator gardens in Groton. Bruce will invite them to attend the Commission’s April meeting for an update.

**8. Outreach Subcommittee update:** The group discussed having two spaces at Spring GrotonFest on May 18th. One space will be for a tent with a coaching booth and Commission members will be there to provide information and answer questions. The second space will be to display an electric vehicle. Pat, Bruce, Charlotte and Ginger volunteered to help. A motion was made and seconded to spend $200 for 2 spaces at Spring GrotonFest. The motion passed unanimously. Ken provided feedback on the Commission’s website to include announcements about upcoming events (Pivoting From Plastics seminar on April 3rd; GrotonFest on May 18th; and the heat pump coaching seminar on May 22nd). Ginger will write a letter to the Groton Herald about the Pivoting From Plastics seminar on April 3rd. A motion was made and seconded authorizing Pat to spend $750 to pay for the MassEnergize subscription for the Commission’s website. The motion passed unanimously. The group then had a discussion about the Conservation Commission’s request for $200,000 in CPA funds at the Town Meeting in April. A motion was made and seconded that the Sustainability Commission would support the Conservation Commission’s request for $200,000 in CPA funds at the Town Meeting in April. The motion passed unanimously.

**9. Sustainable Groton Advocate Subcommittee update:** No update given since David was not present at the meeting.

**10. New Business:** Pat suggested looking at FY2026 goals and mapping them against the various subcommittees.

**11. Review meeting minutes from February Commission meeting**: A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 18, 2025 meeting minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

**Adjourn:** The motion toadjourn at 9:20 pm was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 7:00 pm at the Groton Center**

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Fitterman