



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

ASHLAND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, January 5, 2022

Time: 7:00pm ET

Location: Zoom Video Call

Present:

- Ashwin Ratanchandani – Chair
- Chuck Lidz – Vice Chair (newly elected during 2/5 meeting)
- Kevin Mullins – Clerk
- Margy Gassel – Member
- Matt Marshquist – Member
- Cara Camerato Hulme – Member
- Rob Moolenbeek – Resident
- Florence Seidell – Resident
- Terry Campbell – Resident

Opening Items

- Ash began with a quick update on the Town Grant, that has been approved for the Sustainability Committee. Ash kept the usage intent general in the application, to cover Committee expenses, including promotion of marketing of net zero plan and associated educational opportunities. Funds are roughly \$1,000

Sustainability Manager – Town of Ashland

- Ash and Matt involved in interview process with 3 potential candidates
- Open role was mentioned during Rocky Mountain Institute call
- Reports to Director of Planning
- Committee discussed attributes that would be ideal for this role, including:
 - Willing and eager to build new relationships
 - Eagerness and ability to build new connections with other towns and at state level
 - Unafraid to try new things – one suggestion as part of interview process was to give them example of project (and ask how they would approach it)
 - Ability to sell – marketing sustainability efforts to the town is a big part of the success of our collective efforts
 - Keep up with trends in the industry
 - Networking, eagerness to learn, growth mindset

- Comfort in speaking to those people in power and to be able to influence their thought process and work

Vice Chair

- Ash brought up vacancy of Committee Vice Chair and inquired about who might be interested in filling in
- Ash had one person reach out – Chuck Lidz – who would be willing to fill this seat
- Chuck nominated and approved by Committee as newest Vice Chair of Ashland Sustainability Vice Chair

Moving Buildings to Heat Pumps

- Chuck brought this up as an agenda item – from RMI BEA meeting on 12/16
- Discussion of heat pumps for new buildings and approach to require them to report greenhouse gases
- Need to discuss with Planning Board
- Cara brought up idea of reaching out to people when they first move into town (there used to be a packet sent to new residents to Ashland; this does not appear to have continued)
- Margy suggested reaching out to realtors
- Cara suggested also reaching out to HVAC companies
- Discussion continued to business directory in town – Matt has a list of businesses from 2016 (when the plastic bag ban effort occurred)
- Terry suggested a conversion package to send to building owners – showing solution paths (i.e. this is how you can do). Making a solution real.

Spring Town Meeting and Committee Next Steps

- Still need to determine path to Spring Town Meeting
- Cara rescheduled two meetings for Committee net zero presentation:
 - February 9th – Forest Committee
 - January 24th – Conservation Committee
- Discussion continued about what Committee would present at Town Meeting:
 - Rob recommends presenting things we want to accomplish in next 5 years to see if we can get that passed
 - Committee agreed a good approach is to show that as a town these are “5 to 10 things” we can accomplish as a plan
 - Terry inquired about what are the Ashland measures for Sustainability (6 sigma model) – improvement methodology
 - Be clear about what our objective is – with clear measures
 - Set up broader objective and start marketing it
 - Set up the framework and invite questions

Collaboration with Ashland Public Library

- Margy, Florence, and Ash – attended library book session

- Margy shared that the book was depressing (given topic) but good start to get the conversation going
- Committee agreed there was more opportunities to connect with the APL
- Series of dates for Book Club for upcoming books
- Need to make it more strategic where we can do to aid our efforts – and add in a communications campaign
- Opportunity to lead into Earth Day, a time when many people will want to learn more about environmental efforts

Other Items

- It was brought up that Rob Scherer is supposed to be liaison to the Ashland Sustainability Committee; Ash to push Rob to attend sustainability meetings more regularly (be on meeting invite)
- Discussion around two members that have not been attending meetings – Ash to follow up and inquire whether they want to remain (may open up new spots on Committee)
- Margy to update Committee on Massachusetts update law on general state trees within Massachusetts
- Margy to be Committee liaison with library and continue discussions
- Chuck to have further conversation with Ash on Vice Chair
- Chuck pursuing opportunities around how to get EV stations in areas where people don't have access – brought up Town of Melrose putting them on utility poles; Can Town work with Eversource on an opportunity like this; Going to continue exploration
 - Terry brought up Cirrus apartments (\$1.50 an hour)

Minutes approved from recent meetings

Meeting adjourned at roughly 8:50pm