



Meeting of the Sustainability Committee and the Conservation Committee conducted via Zoom.

January 24, 2022

Members of ConComm present:

- Gregory Wands
- Bill Moulton
- Gene Crouch
- Preston Crow
- Carl Hakansson
- Owen Ackerman

Sustainability: Ash Ratanchandani, Matt Marshquist, Margy Gassel, Cara Hulme

Also present:

- Terry Campbell
- KG Narayana

Ash presented a summary of the net zero plan draft to the commission, which was followed by discussion.

Gene asked a question about electricity as a goal. Is it cleaner? Question on oil heat, not part of electric mix, shows up in heating.

Can we require developers to build to net zero? The goal needs to be attainable.

Tree bylaw:

Gene worked on a project in Arlington, 5,000 sq ft lot, 30 inch tree, not enough space to plant trees at 2:1 replacement ratio. There was another issue with a park project being required to plant so many trees that it didn't have enough open space to be useable as a park. Having prescriptive guidelines may be limiting. Carl suggested using a waiver in those cases.

Economic incentives are key. Margy noted that the rules would apply mostly to developers, not individual homeowners to avoid some of those issues.

Some recommendations may not be popular, for instances, density bonuses and reduced parking are not generally favored by residents.

It was recommended that we will need buy-in from town management to succeed. It would also be helpful if these items are included in a comprehensive plan.

The commission is in favor of tree bylaw and net zero generally but recommended being careful about unintended consequences. The goal would be to achieve net zero without changing the character of the town. What are unintended consequences that would make this unappealing to supporters?

Although there are limitations on their availability, the commission was appreciative of being made aware of the plan and offered to discuss relevant portions in the future. There are some jurisdictional limitations but they are willing to collaborate. Gene has some experience working with tree bylaws and can help understanding potential pitfalls.

Recommendation to incorporate real time examples of how it can benefit people. Developer who put in near net zero homes, where the owners are paying \$500 a year on heating and cooling. What is the value to them personally of net zero.

Bill recommended looking into the DCR urban tree planting program and incorporating elements into the tree protection bylaw. Also being considerate of diverse habitat. This may not always dictate planting trees. (Could be grasslands.)

Other potential areas to look into, reducing the width of roads in subdivisions. This creates more open space, more impervious surface, better stormwater-wise. This could be part of planning regulations.