



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

ASHLAND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, February 1, 2021

Time: 7:00pm ET

Location: Zoom Video Call

Present:

- Ash Ratanchandani – Chair
- Rob Moolenbeek – Vice Chair
- Kevin Mullins – Clerk
- Margy Gassel – Member
- Chuck Lidz - Member
- Matt Marshquist – Member
- Mark Moniz- Member
- Frank Nakashian - Sustainability Coordinator
- Mark Dassoni - Resident
- Florence Seidell – Resident

Citizen Participation

- Florence Seidell brought forth an idea and correspondence with Nancy Duffy relating to Ashland High School Environmental Action Club potentially participating in a program called [Tree-Planting.org](https://www.tree-planting.org/), a youth-led 501.c.3 program out of Mansfield HS.
 - All present agreed that it was a good idea given the impact that planting trees can have. Will be added to larger initiative list.
 - **Action:** Florence to keep the group updated.

Core Committee Update

- Ash introduced a new committee governance proposal specifically around group communications, meeting structure, and how to tackle larger goals/strategies.
 - Aim is to make group more action-oriented and accountable so the Sustainability Committee can accelerate progress toward Net Zero goals and other associated environmental opportunities.
 - Ash gave high-level overview of Google folders and how to use.
 - After proper discussion, committee was comfortable with proceeding with this proposal.

- Mark M. showed a timeline of deadlines and priorities for 2021 as well as the years ahead.
 - Committee discussion centered around the whether the priorities should be re-visited given the many changes over the past year.
 - The group shared several sources/changes over the past year that should be considered for future discussion around Committee priorities: Massachusetts Climate Bill, MAPC updates, as well the two new Ashland building projects approved.
 - Committee members agreed on two paths:
 - The entire committee will spend the next meeting (and potential future ones as well) discussing the priorities. The list will be divided by key categories (Energy, Building, and Transportation) with columns for each line item, “what we do now” and “longer term” (signifying it is important but more challenging to achieve).
 - **Action:** Ash volunteered to compile the list of priorities for the next meeting.
 - **Action:** Rob to send Ash his list of ideas for priorities to add to file.
 - **Action:** Frank to take priority list and match up against Green Communities guidelines.
 - Once group has agreed upon list of priorities for 2021 and beyond, then there will be a discussion and agreement upon visualization of it. (Note: at the conclusion of this discussion, Mark had to drop off the call, at approx. 7:45pm)
 - Note: As part of group discussion, there were two ideas shared that are worth re-visiting to determine future viability:
 - Ash shared an idea around having an ongoing tracker – to visually show Town residents progress against Net Zero targets and provide an engaging way to connect them to the work of the Sustainability Committee.
 - Frank shared an idea around having drones go above buildings to determine which buildings emit the largest emissions.

Sustainability Coordinator Updates

- **LED lighting project at Town Hall** - complete
- **Electric charging station at Community Center** – complete
- **Future projects**
 - Frank shared a desire to hear ideas on projects that can be tackled in town – noting that the deadline to get approval/funding for Spring projects is April and Fall projects is September.
- **Solarized Heat Smart Program** (group buy program)

- Frank awaiting approvals from Natick and Framingham (held up in legal); RFP release target date is two weeks away. Committee members were comfortable with proceeding ahead if commitments cannot be attained from those towns.
- **MassCEC**
 - Frank met with cohort and representatives from MassCEC on 1/28 to cover Ashland's program and seek advice and recommendations for current and future states.
- **RMI Building Electrification Program**
 - Activities include Sustainability Committee members drafting Resolution this winter calling for Swift, Just Building Decarbonization in the Commonwealth
 - Calls for Massachusetts to allow municipalities the autonomy to set their own laws limiting gas hook-ups; MA Board of Building Regulations and Standards to help focus on meeting the State's climate goals; Net zero stretch goals; Future zoning incentives to encourage solar, heat pumps
- **Additional items:**
 - Mailers can be included for utility bills + Ashland paper for program visibility for May (potential programs to promote: solarized program, compost, Class 1 Rec) – **Action:** Frank to work on draft to bring back to future Committee meeting
 - Frank still awaiting the Department of Public Utilities to approve Class 1 Rec

MEETING ACTIONS RECAP

- Florence to keep Committee updated on Tree-Plenish idea with Ashland High School Environmental Action Club.
- Ash to compile the list of Committee priorities for the next meeting.
- Rob to send Ash his list of ideas for priorities to add to file.
- Frank to take priority list and match up against Green Communities guidelines.
- Frank to work on Mailer draft to bring back to future Committee meeting.

Items Discussion for 2/15 meeting:

- Priorities for Sustainability Committee for 2021 and beyond
- MAPC Net Zero playbook

Approve Meeting Minutes: Minutes from January 11, 2021 approved by Committee members.

Meeting adjourned at shortly at 8:58pm ET