



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

ASHLAND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, May 10, 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
- Margaret Musoke - Associate Member
- Frank Nakashian (S. Coordinator)
- Cara Camerato Hulme – Resident
- Florence Seidell – Resident

❖ **NetZero Plan Progress Updates**

The meeting kicked off first with Ash showing example of Net Zero plan (Natick's) to begin to start thinking about how we format/categorize priority areas/roadmap and how it could be tied into MAPC focus areas, following by a brief discussion of wording.

Then the meeting moved into reviewing the following updates from the group:

❖ **Building Energy Use Disclosure Policy - Matt lead supported by Ash and Rob**

Updates and discussion:

- Showed Residential data from Rich/Assessor's office (he has not sent business data yet) – covers townhomes, single family - data included both Ashland building data and census common data
 - Disparity around heat source between two sets of data
 - Believe it's the "primary" heat source that is the one listed for each home
 - Frank to look into data consistency for long term

- Matt to take sample of home on Ashland to help determine whether data is “clean”;
- Chuck to ask Rich/Assessor’s office where data came from (and whether it’s the most up to date available)
- Showed residential building construction data over time
 - Matt to run use type against square footage data
 - 1/3 condos, 2/3 single family (roughly)

❖ Marketing update – Kevin

- Kevin went through overview of Facebook pages vs. groups (and challenges with reaching followers/fans organically given Facebook’s algorithm)
- Recommendations (agreed to by Committee)
 - Create a new group focused on Sustainability in Ashland (ongoing updates related to net zero and more!)
 - Keep current Facebook page – does not need to be “either/or”
- Rationale
 - Expand reach and education to help drive our efforts
 - Create a true movement behind sustainability – get more people aware and involved
 - Build community of helpers – people who are looking at how they can help
 - Make everyone part of the solution
 - Create more transparency behind our efforts
 - New way to collect and generate ideas (not only about our aims but ongoing tips for living a more sustainable life)
- During discussion, group learned:
 - There is \$1,650 of funds for Sustainability Committee as an “operating budget” (from unused grant money and other)
 - Ashley Place (per Frank) doesn’t need/want ownership of our logo
 - Ash showed good list of resources/content that can be used as part of our external sharing/communications efforts, including <https://goclean.masscec.com/>; Introduction to a clean energy home; Technologies; Weatherization Checklist
 - Opportunity to share incentive work that has been done (Margy to connect with Kevin)

❖ Sustainability Coordinator updates

- Solar + Clean Heat Challenge

- Deadline: 5/15/2021
- Final questions/negotiating on proposals
- Natick and Framingham are finalizing internal approval on language in the contract to be signed with vendors
- Once these are done, we can formally bring vendors on
- Website creation of the program

- Items discussed/actions:
 - Discussion around next steps who connection point with MassSave (huge opportunity for energy audits/assessment) - Ash to look into MassSave connection points (Kevin to help if needed)
 - Discussion around outreach plan (selected vendor will have their own plan)
 - It was noted that the Town needs volunteers to answer questions (and help spread word)
 - Agreement nearing finish line - Frank hopes to send more information out by end of this week – to send google form/update to Margy and Kevin about outreach/campaign

- Additional items discussed/actions:
 - As part of this discussion, Matt mentioned the email newsletter with 400 names – to connect with Kevin on account hand off
 - Rob to reach out to Julie Nardone about creating a logo in the future
 - Chuck and Margy willing to provide heat pump testimonials
 - Comments shared on chat: “Adam Schuster and KG were both looking into heat pump systems; Preston Crow might be a good solar coach.”
 - Mass CEC Resources
 - Whole Home Heat Pump Pilot
 - <https://www.masscec.com/air-source-heat-pumps-1> primarily for natural gas - Ends June
 - <https://www.masssave.com/saving/residential-rebates/electric-heating-and-cooling> - Rebates for those not using natural gas

- Eversource GSHP Pilot
 - Meeting with Eversource and Ashland leaders 5/13/21 to discuss potential for Eversource pilot for GSHP installations
 - Program would site and install 100 GSHPs by Eversource in a neighborhood in Eastern Mass
 - Note: Florence to give heads up to contacts at Planning Board

- Mass Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Submission – Climate Equity
 - Ashland joined Natick (lead applicant) and Framingham on an MVP grant application for a regional climate equity assessment.
 - Program scope to:

- Work with a third-party consultant, local equity organizations, and community liaisons to survey residents in environmental justice (EJ) communities on climate change topics of open space, droughts/floods, heating events, and more.
- Provide climate equity training for municipal staff and volunteer board/commission members
- Facilitate connections and support engagement in a culturally competent, sensitive, and meaningful way via community liaisons who live in Environmental Justice communities
- Host climate community picnics, in collaboration with the community liaisons and local partners, to discuss climate and equity issues and co-develop solutions
- Will know in August 2021 whether funded or not
- Project to run to FY23
- AREA/Maggie <https://www.ashlandequity.org/> to invite Frank to meeting

❖ **Approve Meeting Minutes:** Minutes from April 26th, 2021 approved by Committee members.

❖ **Other business**

- High school student still interested in building gardens at the high school – Rob offered to help with connection to people involved with community garden
- Environmental Club (Ashland HS) – donated 50 seedlings planting around town (4 of them at the high school per Florence) – Mrs. Duffy teacher involved. There remains trees to plant
- Matt suggested this podcast as good listening: <https://gimletmedia.com/shows/howtosaveaplanet>
- Ash provided heads up that he may not be able to attend meeting on June 7th – will need Rob’s assistance with preparation and potentially running that meeting

Meeting adjourned a few minutes before 9pm ET