



**Meeting Minutes of the
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 24, 2023
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
2:00PM**

The Topsfield Sustainability Advisory Committee met virtually at 2pm on October 24, 2023.

Present: Jenn Forster (chair), Julie Shannon, Tom Warren, Phil Kennedy, Rafael McDonald, Kevin Harutunian (non-voting member)

Absent: Bradley Bissell

Community Members: Zillie Bhuj

Virtual Public Meeting Announcement

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference (see log-in information provided on agenda). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Jenn Forster made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on May 25, 2023. Rafael McDonald seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation at Library

Ms. Forster reviewed the SAC's recent presentation at the Topsfield Library. There were a few community members in attendance. Jenn provided those residents with an overview of the SAC committee members, current initiatives, and the on-going work groups. There was also waste diversion trivia. The library proved to be a great partner and all agreed that the SAC should continue to work with them in the future. Ms. Forster will meet with the library director regarding past work on research into alternative energy sources.

Select Board Goals

Mr. Harutunian informed the Committee that the Select Board has selected sustainability as one of their six town goals and included it in their vision statement. Included in that goal are a focus on LED streetlight conversion, a Town Hall energy audit, and continued monitoring of PFAS levels and standards. Mr. McDonald noted that it would be helpful for the SAC to present the Select Board with a strategic plan that highlighted its goals and initiatives for the next few years. Ms. Forster stated that the SAC would begin to work on such a plan and present it to the Select Board at a future date.

Mr. Harutunian noted that the town is in the early stages of its FY25 budget planning process. One thing the town is considering is whether the town's new police department cruisers could be EV Chevy Blazers. The town is also looking at electrified robot mowers.

Trash Contract

The town officially ratified a 2 year contract extension with Republic. That contract will begin in FY25 (July 1, 2024) at which point the town will have the option to purchase toters which would automate recycling pick up. This could help ease the community into full automatization (of trash and recycling pick up) with the next contract as this will likely be required by all vendors. There is a need to audit current waste production so that we can assess how many bins/toters/etc the town needs and the frequency of pick up.

The Committee discussed how to best engage and educate the community about the coming changes to waste management. Ms. Forster will investigate leveraging the town's social media account. Perhaps the SAC could send out monthly messages with tips/suggestions for reducing waste. There is also the need to develop a waste management "roadshow" where the SAC can demonstrate what can and can't go into trash and recycling. This would also be an opportunity to push for community curbside composting. Mr. Kennedy volunteered to put together a plan of what such a roadshow would look like. The Committee also agreed to brainstorm ideas about where the roadshow could be featured.

School Energy Update

Mr. Prazar had met with Superintendent Scott Morrison and Facilities Director Steve Clifford to discuss the possibility of the electrification of either Steward or Proctor Schools. Mr. Prazar reported that both Dr. Morrison and Mr. Clifford were open to the idea. Mr. Clifford believes that Steward would be the preferred site for various logistical reasons. It was agreed that a feasibility study should be conducted first to determine the scope of the project and whether adding a renewable energy source (such as ground-source heat pumps) would be a possibility. The Topsfield School Committee has granted permission (although no formal vote) to continue exploring these options.

Both the Topsfield Elementary Schools and Masconomet have submitted their capital plans for FY25. Masconomet's includes significant outlays for energy infrastructure including a like-for-like replacement of their gas-fired boilers (which are well past their expiration date). Ms. Bhuju noted that the Masconomet School Committee is engaging in discussions with their central office to discuss alternatives for a like-for-like replacement. Members of the SAC asked

how they might support such efforts. Ms. Bhuju replied that she will report back to the Committee on the best path forward.

Future Meetings

Ms. Forster noted that workgroup meet ups will continue on Tuesdays at Zumi's at 2pm.

Adjourn

Rafael McDonald made a motion to adjourn. Phil Kennedy seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Prazar

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18-25,;Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18-25, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.