

Draft Minutes
Somersworth Sustainability Meeting
October 20, 2016
6:00 PM

Executive Conference Room, City Call, One Government Way

Attendees: Scott Orzechowski (Chair), Doug Watson (Member at large), City Councilor Jennifer Soldati, Mike Bobinsky (Director of Public Works), Sarah McGraw (Member at Large) Sydney Bernier (guest), AJ Dupere (Urban Forester, Urban Forestry Center Portsmouth NH), Bob Milanese (guest)

1. Bob Milanese, a concerned member of the Community Garden, wanted to know how to acquire more plots and if the Sustainability Committee knew what the status was for the garden. Jennifer Soldati referenced the meeting of September 15 where Community Garden Members met to discuss the organization of the garden and how to put responsibilities in the hands of the garden members. Mike Bobinsky said he has received more information on community garden guidelines. Sarah McGraw will follow up with one of the community garden members who had expressed interest in organizing a separate meeting.

AJ Dupere with the Urban Forestry Center in Portsmouth stated that there is a community garden on their grounds, where they had experienced similar problems with start up. There were initially disagreements on plot size but now the garden virtually runs itself with fee based garden beds, and a garden manager. AJ said he will forward their guidelines to the committee.

2. AJ Dupere had taken Sustainability Committee members on a tour of the trees planted throughout town before the official meeting. AJ explained the general rules for maintaining status as a Tree City USA. There needs to be a committee to run the program and there are city dedicated funds for tree maintenance, \$2.00/ capita. The urban forestry center will remain a resource for the City. For example, the City of Portsmouth's Tree City committee meets monthly for community members to ask for permission for tree removal, and work out any disputes. Jennifer Soldati mentioned that a past community survey resulted in city trees as being one of the number one issues in Somersworth. AJ said that some cities like Manchester have a dedicated staff just for tree maintenance. AJ said that during the driving tour of Somersworth, he noted some trees that will be a problem as they mature, such as Red Maples planted under utility lines. When asked how the City can prevent these issues, AJ said that the Division of

Forest and Lands holds workshops. AJ said that an inventory of the City's trees is also due, as the data can result in useful decision making on dead tree removal, and provide for future planning. AJ said it is important to talk with residents and business owners before planting as it was recently discovered that someone had been pouring oil into one of the planted trees as a potentially unwanted tree.

The next steps are to determine if the Tree City Committee will be stand alone or under the umbrella of a current committee. Councilor Soldati suggested that Sustainability or the Conservation Commission would be good candidates. AJ spoke about the Natural Resource Stewards volunteers that could help with an inventory. Jennifer Soldati suggested using the next meeting to discuss the Tree City Committee establishment. Sydney Bernier asked if there were any signs throughout the city marking it as a Tree City USA. AJ said he had recently dropped off signage. More research is needed about who had signed previous year's paperwork and where the signs are, as well as think about adopting state guidelines or create new ones on tree planting policies.

The Committee decided to hold a Tree City USA workshop meeting on November 17 before the official Sustainability Committee meeting from 5:30 to 6:30. AJ added that another requirement for the program is to hold an Arbor Day celebration yearly.

3. Sarah McGraw and Sydney Bernier expressed interest in becoming Sustainability Committee representatives as board members on the Seacoast Farmers Market Committee. Sydney also was interested in becoming a member of the sustainability committee. She will inquire with Mayor Dana Hilliard for recommendation.
4. Other agenda items, City clean-up day, rain barrels, and composting were tabled to the next meeting.
5. Doug Watson motioned to adjourn the meeting, second by Jennifer Soldati. VOTE: Unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40.