

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

City of Somersworth-City Hall

May 27, 2021 - 6:00 P.M.

Committee members present: Sarah Eckstein, Chair, City Councilor Crystal Paradis, Wendy Berkley, Lilac Snowden-Hallowell (pending appointment) and Michael Bobinsky. Absent: Doug Watson.

1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES. Minutes of the March 18, 2021 and April 27, 2021 meeting minutes was considered. Mike Bobinsky moved and Crystal Paradis seconded the motion to accept the March 18 Committee minutes. Motion was unanimously approved. Crystal Paradis moved and Wendy Berkley seconded the motion to approve the April 27, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion was unanimously approved.

2. Correspondence/Public Comments

Sarah read an email from a Somersworth Resident, Ashley Hale, encouraging the City of Somersworth to become a "Bee City USA community". Ashley was encouraging the City to promote and create pollinator gardens and create more opportunities for Bee hive development in the City. This would compliment the City Council's recent zoning amendment approval allowing bee hives in certain residential zones of the City.

Committee member Doug Watson who was unable to attend the meeting, sent an email to Sarah prior to the meeting, encouraging the Committee to continue with focusing on 1, 2 key topics and develop them thoroughly rather than try to tackle several different topics, projects at same time. He gave the example of past efforts with focusing on developing a series of presentations, panel discussions on sustainable topics of interest to the public.

3. Discussion on next steps to consider use of chemical free pesticides/herbicides

Committee members heard a presentation from City of Dover officials, Councilor Dennis Shanahan, and Director of Community Services, John Storer on the Dover chemical free fertilizer and pesticides program at the April 27 Committee meeting. The Dover officials shared their experiences with the development and evolution of their program to reduce the use of chemicals for fertilizer, weed control and pesticide treatments on City parks, trails and sidewalks.

Sarah provided background and context for considering next steps, how this may or may not relate to the City of Somersworth. Sarah also discussed Osborn Organics as a resource from Dover that might be helpful in the future should the City wish to pursue broader efforts toward use of non-chemical treatments. Committee members discussed what they learned from the Dover experience and requested information from City staff on what chemicals the Department of Public Works is using now to address weed abatement, and fertilizer in parks, open spaces. Mike Bobinsky offered to provide the

Committee with background information on where fertilizer is being used in City parks and open spaces for the next meeting; Committee members were also interested in learning background on the weed abatement application as well. There is also interest in information on how the School Department treats their grounds and athletic fields. There was discussion about placing future articles in the City Managers newsletter encouraging Somersworth residents to use of chemical free /reduced nitrogen in fertilizer. Reducing chemical fertilizers will also aid in helping the City meet its EPA nitrogen reduction goals to be in compliance with the new Great Bay Discharge Permit.

4. Committee meeting planning schedule. Sarah presented the Committee schedule for the balance of the 2021 calendar year., Due to work and personal schedule challenges, the Committee agreed to meet virtually on June 8 via a zoom platform, but all future meetings are envisioned to occur in person-to-person format at City Hall Council Chambers if available.

Follow-ups for future meetings:

-Sarah to communicate with Michelle Mears, Development Director, to obtain a working draft of proposed amendments to the City's zoning ordinance as it relates to solar panels.

-Crystal Paradis to bring background information about the Bee City USA program.

-Wendy Berkeley to prepare a short article on alternative fertilizers for the July City Manager Newsletter edition.

-Mike Bobinsky to provide details on fertilizer use on City facilities.

-Sarah to provide more information about low flow showerheads that has been a push and promotion from the City's Conservation Commission.

Wendy to speak with one of the Renee Dodge/Caitlyn Carrington in the high school to incorporate the Sustainability Committee logo design as part of their curriculum.

Next meeting will be held as a zoom meeting on Tuesday June 8 at 6pm.

Wendy Berkeley moved and Crystal Paradis seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm.

Submitted and prepared by: Michael Bobinsky

