

## MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

City of Somersworth-City Hall

August 19, 2021 - 6:00 P.M.

Committee members present: Sarah Eckstein, Chair, City Councilor Crystal Paradis, Doug Watson, Lilac Snowden-Hallowell (pending appointment)

Absent: Wendy Berkley, and Michael Bobinsky

Guest: Joshua Singer, Program Coordinator for Clean Energy NH

**1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:** Sarah Eckstein motioned to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2021 meeting under the condition both Public Works documents be added: Weed Control program and the Fertilizer Weed & Abatement. Sarah will continue to work with the City Clerk to get these documents into the June 8 minutes. Doug Watson moved to accept the addition of these minutes; Crystal Paradis seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

**2. PESTICIDE REDUCTION:** Just before Michael Bobinsky took off from medical leave, he gave Sarah Eckstein an update on the City of Somersworth's School Land Management practices for the district. This information was provided by Carl (the School's Facility Manager at the time). The school district uses herbicide for the baseball field behind CTC building and the football field on memorial drive. They use an outside contractor Hillside Landscaping to do this work. Along with using pre/post emergent for crab grass (weeding) and some amount of nitrogen for grub control. These treatments are done at the Idlehurst elementary on Stockpole Rd. There was general consensus from present sustainability members that the amount of nitrogen currently being used should be reduced. Especially since the City of Somersworth has made a commitment through the Great Bay Estuary to reduce their nitrogen. More follow up is needed with Michael Bobinsky to understand how the city plans to partner with the School District on this effort. In the meantime, Sarah Eckstein made a motion to partner with the Conservation Committee in sending out outreach materials to educate the City's residents on reducing pesticide and herbicide practices on their lawns and gardens. Crystal Paradis moved to accept partnering with the Conservation Committee and rolling out an outreach campaign to residents; Doug Watson seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

**3. NEW BUSINESS:** Sarah Eckstein shared other sustainability news she recently heard of such as the City collecting Compost. Similar to cardboard recycling, the City now allows residents to drop off their compost. In a recent conversation she had with Councilor Gerding, he has partnered with the Mayor rolling out a pollinator garden pilot and is currently helping with the Monarch Butterfly pledge. Sarah Eckstein mentioned she will be advocating for the Sustainability Committee to provide input in the Vision 2030 Plan. She looks to reach out to Councilor Cameron who is starting to kickoff the 2030 Plan this year. Sarah also highlighted the importance of hearing from the community and hopes this process will help give this committee a better understanding of what sustainability priorities the community would like to see.

Sarah thanked Lilac Snowden-Hallowell for providing her input on the current Sustainability Committee website. Sarah encouraged the other members to look at the site and give her feedback. Doug Watson volunteered to come up with a Sustainability definition that could be included on the site. Doug thought this would help the group frame the Sustainability Committee's mission since the "Sustainability" definition has evolved over the years. Doug also suggested for the next meeting we take another look at the Sustainability goals that were set in the 2020 Plan and review the existing framework.

**4. REVIEW DRAFT SOLAR ORDINANCE** - There is a rough draft of the solar ordinance but it is internal at this point. Michelle Mears has not shared it with other City staff and Departments yet. She is in the process of adding solar language regarding community solar, residential and roof mounted solar. In the meantime, this Committee has supported Michelle by conducting solar ordinance research. Sarah thanked Doug for his recent efforts in conducting more research on this topic for Michelle. In absence of the Solar Ordinance draft, Sarah invited and introduced Joshua Singer, Program Coordinator for Clean Energy NH to tonight's meeting.

**5. CLEAN ENERGY** - Joshua talked about Clean Energy NH's mission and goals. Clean Energy NH is extending their assistance to local municipalities by being a resource in helping communities implement energy projects that reduce operating costs & improve sustainability. Joshua educated present Sustainability Committee members on the importance and process of setting up an energy commission (38-D). Clean Energy NH is also assisting their members through the Community Coalition Process. Clean Energy NH is hosting their Local Energy Solutions Conference on October 8th at the Grappone Center in Concord, NH.

**6. FOLLOW UP ACTION ITEMS -**

- All Sustainability Committee members will give Sarah feedback on the Sustainability Committee website page.
- All Sustainability Committee members to follow up with Mike to understand how the city plans to partner with the School District on reducing nitrogen effort.
- Doug will draft up a Sustainability Definition and present it to the next meeting
- Crystal will share details of the Bee USA Program at the next meeting
- Sarah will prepare the Sustainability Committee Framework in prep for next meeting
- Sarah will send around a doodle poll on some Oct/Nov dates to schedule the hydro tour with Green Mountain Power
- Sarah will follow up with Bob Belmore and Mike Bobinsky on their meeting with Community Power Coalition team (Mid-September)
- Sarah will get an update from Wendy on the Farm to School program & newsletter ideas
- Sarah will work on the outreach draft to households on reducing pesticide & herbicides