

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

City of Somersworth-City Hall

October 21, 2021 - 6:00 P.M.

Committee members present: Sarah Eckstein, Chair, Lilac Snowden-Hallowell, Wendy Berkley, Michael Bobinsky, Doug Watson

Absent:, City Councilor Paradis

1.APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Minutes were not reviewed and will need to be reviewed at the next meeting which will be on November 18.

2.CONSERVATION COMMISSION & OTHER ACTIVITY UPDATES: Lilac and Wendy updated the Committee on how the local Harvest event went at the Somersworth High School. Doug gave an update on his participation in Portsmouth's Project Drawdown. Anyone can join and they will continue to have weekly meetings till November 18. Doug also mentioned the University of Stockholm has a number of free sustainability courses should anyone be interested in taking them. Sarah mentioned several Climate Action events she posted on the shared Google Sustainability Committee Calendar. She also announced Somersworth had the highest response rate in comparison to their neighboring communities when it came to community members responding to the Path to Resilience Survey. Following the Mayor Forum, Sarah inquired with the Chamber of Commerce (who were the host of this forum) to better understand why Climate Change wasn't a topic that was brought up. She is still waiting for a response.

3. GOAL AND ACTION SETTING - Sarah kicked off a draft of the Sustainability Goals and Actions to discuss as a group. Discussions surrounding actions varied from transportation to buildings and energy to waste and infrastructure. Mike suggested this group consider actions surrounding the Solar RFP that the city put out or at the very least, keep a close eye on it. Some of the members were surprised to learn the City doesn't plan to utilize the energy produced locally. The city plans to lease the space to a solar developer and make money off of it. Wendy mentioned she was glad to see more solar projects in Somersworth so it is better than not having this project. Mike also mentioned the city has plans to expand natural gas to replace buildings that have heating oil. Several members were concerned this would increase greenhouse gas emissions and not help to specifically reduce carbon emissions. The group was in agreement to support actions that promote energy efficiency upgrades in buildings. However, some members wanted to see more ambitious actions such as reducing carbon emissions. Sarah and Doug pointed out they would like to see the City start to quantify their energy use and be more transparent such as publishing this data so the City can work towards a concrete goal in reducing carbon emissions. Doug also inquired if it would be feasible for the city to build in some incentives for homeowners and businesses to implement energy savings measures. Mike reminded the group that any ideas this Committee puts forth would need to be vetted by several parties. He knows the City Councilors would be looking in the interest of taxpayers so they may not be in favor of ideas that may increase taxes to offset these incentives. Mike said we will need to think of proposing ideas we know the City Manager, Mayor and City Councilor will approve of. Sarah put forth a vote to proceed with sharing the current list of goals and actions with the Mayor and City Manager. Mike voted not to share it with them yet and Doug Watson seconded. All others present agreed to hold off on sharing this draft till the

group narrows down the discussion to specific actions this committee plans to take. Even though the group generally supports the Somersworth Framework, the group did not have a chance to review it as a group in more detail since we ran out of time.

5. FOLLOW UP ACTION ITEMS -

- All members will continue to look at the draft Framework and Action List and decide who and what they feel should be prioritized before the next meeting.
- Wendy will look up details regarding the NH Saves program and share it with the group
- Sarah will contact the superintendent on past, current and future EE projects
- Sarah will align the actions taken by the schools, Conservation Commission and Sustainability Committee that could count towards the City's National Wildlife Federation's Community Habitat Certification
- Sarah will integrate the goals of the NH farm to schools program into the existing draft goals and actions document.

Lilac Snowden-Hallowell moved and Mike Bobinsky seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17pm

Submitted and prepared by: Sarah Eckstein