

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
City of Somersworth-City Hall
November 18, 2021 - 6:00 P.M.

Committee members present: City Councilor Crystal Paradis, Lilac Snowden-Hallowell, Wendy Berkeley, Michael Bobinsky, Doug Watson
Excused Absence: Sarah Eckstein

The meeting was chaired by Crystal Paradis due to the excused absence of Sarah Eckstein. Crystal opened the meeting at 6pm. Crystal alerted the Committee that past meeting minutes had not been approved yet and needed to be acted upon at this meeting. We discussed the procedures and requirement for timely submission and acting on meeting minutes.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Minutes of the August 19, September 16, October 21, and October 25 Committee meeting were reviewed. The following actions were taken on the past Committee meeting minutes:

- August 19 minutes: Crystal Paradis moved and Wendy Berkeley seconded the motion to accept the August 19 minutes. All were in favor.
- September 16 minutes: Crystal Paradis moved to accept the minutes; Mike Bobinsky seconded the motion to accept the September 16 minutes. All were in favor.
- October 21 minutes. (Site tour of the Somersworth Hydro Plant). Mike Bobinsky moved and Wendy Berkeley seconded the motion to accept the minutes. Wendy advised that the minutes did not spell her last name correctly and want the record to show the correct spelling as “Berkeley”. The minutes were passed unanimously with amended for the correct name spelling.
- October 25 minutes: Mike Bobinsky moved acceptance of the minutes and Wendy Berkeley seconded the motion to accept the October 25 meeting minutes. All were in favor.

Public Utility Commission’s Order 20-092:

Crystal Paradis introduced this topic and explained that this PUC proposal would cut NH Saves Energy Efficiency Program by more than 2/3rds. This program recently compensated the City of Somersworth \$123,000 (verify number from Nov monthly report/Jamie for specific energy efficient pumps, blowers and aeration equipment during the ongoing WWTF Plant upgrade. The Committee discussed the background of the PUC order and the reasons why the program should not be cut as evidenced by the recognition of the City’s WWTF Facility Upgrade equipment incentive. Crystal recommends the City Council prepare a letter to the NHPUC encouraging them to not adopt this proposal. It is anticipated this topic will be further discussed at the December 13, City Council meeting. Crystal made a motion and Doug seconded the motion to recommend to the City Council that they send a letter to the NHPUC opposing PUC 20-092 the measure to reduce the NH Saves

Energy Efficiency Program. Crystal offered to initiate a draft of the letter for the Mayor/Council to consider.

General Updates:

Crystal reported from Sarah that the Conservation Commission is preparing recommendations and tips for property owners that want to participate in the “Somersworth Helping Wildlife Program”, which would lead properties to be on a National Wildlife Federation Property Certification. A copy of a background summary from Scott Orzechowski, Chair of the Conservation Commission was provided to Committee members in advance of the meeting. This was an information item for the Sustainability Committee.

Mike Bobinsky reported that the City received six (6) solar array proposals for constructing a solar array development at the Blackwater Road Superfund site. Staff will be conducting initial interviews with all six (6) proposers and work to narrow the list down to top firms for further consideration. The Committee will be kept informed on progress and latest information.

Plastic Working Group. Lilac presented the background with this program, several volunteers involved, developing background marketing, and promotional approach, with the goal of promoting reduce use of plastics in packaging, containers, etc. Lilac indicated High School students are involved and their group plans to have a promotional campaign for consideration by January.

Wendy discussed the Trash on the Lawn program and offered to assist Lilac with linking her program waste reduction program and participation with school staff organizers.

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.(from past meeting)
- Wendy will follow-up with Lilac about the Trash on the Lawn program at the Somersworth Middle School.
- 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, (from past meeting)
- Sarah will integrate the goals of the NH farm to schools program into the existing draft goals and actions document.(from past meeting)
- Crystal will prepare a draft letter to the City Council opposing the PUC proposal to reduce the Energy Efficiency Program.

Mike Bobinsky moved and Crystal seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:05pm

Submitted and prepared by: Michael Bobinsky