

# MINUTES OF THE SOMERSWORTH SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

City Council Chambers

March 27, 2019 6:00 pm

## Workshop on Organizing Public Forums

Members Present: Scott Orzechowski, Chair, City Councilor Ed Levasseur, Doug Watson, Devon Stanley, Michael Bobinsky, Director of Public Works and Sarah McGraw.

Guest: Lisa Wise Climate Adaptation Coordinator, UNH Cooperative Extension

Scott Orzechowski opened the meeting at 6:00 pm. Scott said that the committee is exploring holding public forums related to interesting topics about climate change at the Idlehurst School and possibly other venues in Somersworth. Scott has already contacted the superintendent and the Committee would need to fill out a building use application.

Lisa Wise from UNH Cooperative Extension, put together a document that provided insight and ideas for how to organize and hold events on various topics including climate adaptation, storm preparedness, carbon footprint, climate and health and similar topics that have been held in neighboring communities. For example, Dover held a public forum to gather input on climate adaptation master plan chapter. Lisa discussed different ways to hold a forum and how to engage participants at different levels. Other communities that have held these types of events include Dover, Madbury, Exeter, Portsmouth, and Newburyport. Lisa explained that these events are usually topic focused. For example, Laconia held a talk about wildlife and climate.

The Coastal Adaptation Working Group, CAW, works specifically with municipalities, usually pairing science with municipal action. Doug asked how to keep people engaged and how to attract different types of people. Lisa said that her group has done projects called Climate in the Classroom that brings parents in as well as students to learn about various topics. Ed commented from taking classes on holding forums and public events that post engagement is important as well.

Lisa mentioned that communities also hold Science Café's, at breweries and coffee/tea shops to bring together audiences that might not normally go to talks about Climate Change. Doug asked what Lisa about which topics that engage people immediately or garner the most interest. Lisa said that it can be useful to discuss relatable topics like ticks and squirrels that have been in the

news and frequently talked about in the community. Maple syrup and how it relates to a changing climate can also be interesting and provide a taste testing opportunity.

Ed also mentioned holding forums in community centers throughout the community can help bring a diverse audience.

Lisa said that topics on money savers such as energy efficiency, and weatherization can also garner community interest. Getting donations from organizations to help with cost of supplies or refreshments or event donation of time from speakers can help keep budgets low for events.

Sarah asked which type of topics to choose from when thinking about a speaker series. Lisa said it's good to think of 2-3 different topics then fill in with the speaker related to that topic.

Lisa provided insight on logistics for planning and preparing a workshop, how to capture thoughts and ideas and how to moderate a meeting.

Scott mentioned that he may reach out to New Hampshire Public Radio about having the podcast hosts from Outside In, host a podcast in Somersworth.

Lisa mentioned two dates for upcoming workshops, April 7, a climate café hosted by a High School and April 11, the Green Expo, both in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

The group thanked Lisa for her suggestions and help and invited her to possibly be a speaker in the series.

The meeting ended at 7:25.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah McGraw