

Minutes of the Somersworth Sustainability Committee Meeting

Date: February 15, 2017

Meeting called to order at 6:10 PM

by Chair, Scott Orzechowski

Attendees/Members:

Scott Orzechowski, Chair

Sarah McGraw, Community Member at Large

Michael Bobinsky, Director of Public Works and City Manager Designee

Doug Watson, Community Member at Large.

Approval of minutes:

It was moved by Sarah McGraw, and seconded by Michael Bobinsky to approve the minutes of the December 15th meeting. Unanimously approved.

Correspondence:

Scott reported that no correspondence had been received.

Unfinished business:

1. Participation in the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) rain barrel and compost bin sale:

Scott reported that the city would have to buy the barrels and bins in bulk (full pallets) and receive delivery. To avoid the complexity of processing orders, collecting payment, and storage/delivery, Michael recommended that the city and Sustainability Committee endorse residential use of rain barrels and compost bins with information about purchasing them included with the water bills and by providing a link to the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA)'s website on Channel 22, the City website, and the Manager's Newsletter. Sarah suggested that the community garden members may be interested in organizing a sale as a fundraising event. Scott reported on other possibilities for making barrels and bins available through the Strafford County Conservation District's annual sale or purchasing from an alternate source, e.g., Earth Machines.

Action: Scott will check with Alena Warren at the County Conservation District to see if they are still having the sale and if it's possible to collaborate. Michael will draft an announcement for the city's websites and newsletter. Add to agenda of the next meeting in order to review and implement.

2. Hazardous waste collection options:

Scott suggested the possibility of forming a sub-committee to explore alternatives to the single day event at the Turnkey facility in Rochester that would increase access (convenience and frequency) to hazardous waste disposal and expand the range of materials that will be accepted. Michael suggested exploring options with Waste Management since the city has a contract with them. Other possibilities discussed included linking hazardous waste disposal with the new storm water compliance mandates, and collaborating with surrounding communities, e.g. Berwick, Dover, and

Rochester. Sarah suggested that NRRA may be a source of information about household waste recovery and that the city may benefit from becoming a member of NRRA.

Action: Michael will contact Waste Management and provide information about MS4 permit regulations promoting green infrastructure to be included with minutes and discussed at the March meeting. Sarah will obtain NRRA membership information and hazardous waste information to present at the March meeting.

New Business:

Formulate a plan for active recruitment of committee members:

Scott reported on his efforts to reach out to the schools to find teachers and/or students who may be interested in serving on the committee. At this point, no one has expressed an interest. Sarah suggest contacting the Superintendent to ask that an invitation be extended to teachers to join the committee or nominate a student representative. Doug suggested reaching out to the community garden members to assess their interest in having a representative. Recruitment of a committee member from local businesses was also discussed with Velcro and the Geothermal contractor on route 108 mentioned as possibilities. It was suggested that Velcro be invited to participate through a commendation from the city for their recent commitment to invest in sustainable solar energy.

Action: Scott will contact the superintendent to request that an invitation to join the committee be sent to teachers. Michael will provide Doug with a copy of updated contact list for community gardeners. Doug will contact community gardeners to request their representation. Doug will contact Geothermal business. Invitation to Velcro currently unassigned. Add to agenda for March meeting.

Other new business:

1. Earth Day activities and Mayoral proclamation:

A recommendation was made that the City and Sustainability Committee formally recognize Earth Day. Possible activities discussed included a proclamation by the mayor recognizing the City's accomplishments, e.g., tree ordinance and Tree City status, solar energy efforts, community garden, Farm to School, Mast Point Dam, green infrastructure, writing a press release for media coverage, and planting a tree on city property.

Action: Scott will update database of committee accomplishments. Discuss city Earth Day activities with Mayor Hilliard (unassigned) and invite him to March meeting. Put on agenda for March meeting.

Announcements and Reports:

- Michael reported on the City's work with private investors to develop the NH Solar Garden at the Superfund site on Blackwater Rd. The planned project would provide 50% of the power required by the combined city departments. Michael also shared Velcro's plan to install a large solar array to supply power for its factory. On the topic of green energy, Sarah asked if there were any opportunities we could explore for installing electric vehicle charging stations.

Doug questioned whether the installation of EV charging stations could be negotiated during the planning of the solar garden project.

- The community garden organizing committee is planning a spring opening.
- Doug provided an update on the Farm to School program and suggested that the Committee invite Wendy Berkeley, the Somersworth Farm to School Coordinator, to the March meeting. Action: Doug to invite Wendy to March meeting.
- Michael reported on the “Cigarette Butlers” that have been placed downtown and at some of the Coast bus stops. This has been a successful project, helping to keep the city clean and reducing the number of cigarette butts entering the stormwater system.
- Doug announced an event sponsored by the Seacoast Sustainability Alliance. “Soak Up the Rain”, a presentation on water conservation strategies, will be held on Thursday, March 9, 6:30-8:30pm in the Levenson Room at the Portsmouth Public Library.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Sarah McGraw and second by Michael Bobinsky, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 by unanimous vote.

Minutes prepared by Doug Watson

Respectfully submitted,
Scott Orzechowski, Chair