

Somersworth Sustainability Committee  
Minutes of the April 20, 2017 Meeting  
Executive Conference Room  
City Hall, One Government Way  
Somersworth, NH

The Committee meeting was called to order by the Chair at approximately 6:00pm. Attending the Committee meeting included Scott Orzechowski, Chair, Jennifer Soldati, Doug Watson, Sarah McGraw, David Crossan, (as invited guest and member of the Community Garden Program) and Michael Bobinsky.

Sarah McGraw moved and Mike Bobinsky seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2017 Committee minutes. All in favor, with Jennifer Soldati abstained.

Scott opened the meeting indicated there was no correspondence to be read into the record and proceeded to take up unfinished business involving the review and consideration of a new Tree Ordinance by the Public Works and Environment Committee. Other Correspondence received included Doug Watson sharing an email he received about a trail grant program to enhance the walking path between Maplewood Elementary School and the Middle School. Mike Bobinsky mentioned a concluding Eagle Scout project that involves signage identifying the habitat in the area and the future TAP grant that involves improving the walking surface of the trail and future lighting. Both of these programs seem to address some of the suggestions from Doug's email.

The Committee discussed participating in the Spirit Up Somersworth event for May 6, 7:30am-12:30pm, to include having an informational table at the volunteer check-in location at the Middle School parking lot. Other committee members discussed suggested materials, displays and informational summaries that could be made available for the event. Mike was to consider use of the NRRRA recycling trailer as possible promotional item; will evaluate how that may work or not work in partnership with Waste Management's displays of information about recycling and waste reduction. Mike further suggested that a basic summary of all of the key sustainable initiatives the City is current involved with may be a good resource to have as a handout of things going on in the City during the May 6 event. Mike was also asked to send Community Garden Notes to Jennifer Soldati so she could work on preparing a brief handout highlighting the Community Garden program for the public.

Scott brought up to what degree the Committee was interested in advocating for more HHW collection days; discussed adding links to the City's website showing where consumers can get rid of HHW material. Mike explained that HHW disposal is the highest cost of any solid waste removal and that is why communities struggle to have broad or frequent collection services for this waste stream. Working with other communities like the May 6 HHW collection event in Rochester seems to be the most cost effective at this point. Still willing to pursue other grants and aid to offset program costs.

## **Unfinished Business**

Scott asked where things stand with the Tree Ordinance. Mike Bobinsky provided some updates. The Public Works and Environment Committee recently reviewed the proposed Ordinance and focused on the establishment of the Tree Board. The Council Committee is more comfortable with assigning the Tree Board to the Conservation Commission rather than establishing a separate Board. The Conservation Commission has had recent discussions about this and seems to be in agreement to accept this assignment. The Sustainability Committee members were advised by Mike Bobinsky that the Public Works and Environment Committee will be reviewing an updated version of the Tree Ordinance showing that the Tree Board is in fact assigned to the Conservation Commission; after that, it is anticipated that the Committee will approve and forward on to the City Council for review and final consideration for adoption. The Sustainability Committee members seem comfortable with having the Tree Board assigned to the Conservation Commission and will monitor the development of next steps toward adopting the new Ordinance.

Note: City staff has filed for the annual 2016 Tree City USA designation in early January, to include expenditures related to tree maintenance and planting as required by the Application. Staff referenced the current Planning Board Landscaped Ordinance as part of the submission as the proposed Tree Ordinance has not yet been officially approved by the City Council. Once the Tree Ordinance is approved by the City Council, it will be part of the City's annual submission for the Tree City USA application. Staff anticipates submitting an Arbor Day proclamation for the City Council to act on at the early May, 2017 Council meeting.

## **New Business**

Evaluate City facility cooling costs with the intent to improve on efficiency and lower costs. It was agreed to continue this discussion into next month's meeting and review steps the City has already taken to improve on the City Hall HVAC system and other systems in the City/Schools. Also to review past energy audits that were conducted. Scott agreed to follow-up with Andy Lucier to arrange a tour of the City Hall and perhaps other key City/School facilities' HVAC systems to learn more about existing equipment and energy costs. Scott plans to contact Andy Lucier in the Schools to arrange this tour. Scott also brought up the idea of using special grasses that are drought tolerant and/or require less or no fertilizer. Mike Bobinsky added that except for limited areas where weed control application is used, the Public Works Department does not apply fertilizer to the grounds at City parks and the Forest Glade Cemetery.

## **Announcements:**

Doug Watson was approved by the Mayor for a new term on the Sustainability Committee, and was acted upon at the April 17, 2017 City Council meeting. Doug also discussed updated information about the Farm to School program and that the Farm to School coordinate through the School Department worked with students at Idlehorst Elementary School on replanting the

raised bed gardens on the school grounds. She worked with students on a spring planting to allow for some vegetables to be available before school ends its session in early summer.

Mike Bobinsky moved and Jennifer Soldati seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was approved.

**Next Meeting is May 18, 2017, at 6pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Michael J. Bobinsky**