



TOWN OF FAIRHAVEN, MASSACHUSETTS

# SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Town Hall · 40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

**Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 6:00 pm**  
**Town Hall, 40 Center Street**

It was advised that the meeting was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The Governor's Order suspends the requirement of Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location.

For this meeting, the Sustainability Committee convened by telephone and video conference via Zoom as posted on the Town's website identifying how the public may join. The meeting was recorded and televised live, and all attendees participated by phone and video conference.

Present: Anne O'Brien, Ann Richard, Susan Spooner, Karen Gent, Deirdre Healy  
Not present: Leon Correy, Lois Callahan, Wendy Drumm

Other: Bill Farrell, Fred Jones, Derek Frates, Erick Sa, Whitney McClees

Chairperson Richard called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Ms. McClees read the remote participation rules into the meeting.

## MINUTES

Deirdre Healy motioned to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 meeting. Anne Obrien seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

## SUSTAINABILITY CAFÉ/SUMMIT

At this time, the Huttleston Marketplace is still scheduled to begin in June. The committee had discussed participation as a part of the Marketplace, starting in June, and had planned to have reusable bags created for the event. Nothing has changed in the plans, but the company who is making the bags are currently not operating due to the COVID virus stay-at-home advisory. Ms. Richard will advise the committee on the status of the summit and the bags at the next meeting.

## EARTH DAY 2020

Ms. McClees said that the majority of the Earth Day New Bedford event has been altered to accommodate livestreaming and virtual events. EarthDay2020NewBedford.org has been set up for more information on the schedule of events. Ms. Richard asked Ms. McClees to use the Town's social media to promote the website as much as possible.

## EARTH DAY ECOCHALLENGE

The April EcoChallenge is underway and the group is doing well, currently ranked #6 globally out of 725 teams. Ms. Richard encouraged non-active participants to increase their activity to give the group a boost.

#### **SEED LIBRARY AND GARDENING**

Because the Millicent Library is currently closed, the Seed Library was moved to a location in front of Ms. Richard's house at 46 Hedge Street. Ms. Richard encouraged the public to come out and pick up free seeds. Ms. McClees added that the community gardens are currently open to residents wanting to rent a plot.

#### **SKIMMER UPDATE**

Ms. Spooner said that there was not a lot to report on the skimmer project that the Sustainability Committee was planning on sponsoring. Ms. Spooner shared some trash data on the kinds of trash that is picked up in the marine environment near New Bedford. She said that the current challenge will be to obtain funding for the skimmer, which will be more difficult under the circumstances with local businesses not being in a financial position to contribute to the acquisition. Ms. McClees said that a recent NOAA grant application may allow the committee to purchase the skimmer. NOAA will update the grant status in a couple months.

#### **GREEN TIPS COLUMN**

Ms. Richard said that it might be nice to have a garden tips column as a part of the Green Tips column scheduled. Although the Neighborhood News is restricting its distribution, the issue is still availability in some locations and online.

#### **PLASTIC BAG BAN DISCUSSION**

Town Meeting has been postponed to June 20 because of the COVID social distancing advisory. Ms. Richard advised that the enforcement of a waste or recycling order would need to be reinforced by the BPW. Petitioner Fred Jones said that he did not have a problem with making that amendment from Health Department as the enforcing authority to the BPW in the article. Ms. Richard asked Mr. Jones to consider amending the article himself on the Town Meeting floor.

#### **2040 MASTER PLAN**

Ms. McClees shared the portion of the Master Plan document that pertains to Sustainability Committee responsibilities under the plan. The Committee discussed reviewing the document and considering advocating for the formation of an acting subcommittee with various departments contributing.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

Ms. McClees said that we had a community resilience workshop in February for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning grant. There were a lot of town and regional organizations present. The outcome of the workshop was a list of priority actions in response to infrastructure vulnerabilities from coastal hazards and climate change. Those priority actions will be put together into a summary of findings and will, in the next few weeks, be posted on the Town's website. Depending on the status of social distancing, a public question and answer session will also follow.

The Green Communities grant is still moving forward, as is the solar project on the elementary schools.

The total number of grants received in the past year is about \$250,000 being managed. Annual, sustained savings will be about \$90,000.

Wendy Drumm joined the meeting at 7:01 pm.

The next meeting of the Sustainability Committee is scheduled for May 19.

Ms. O'Brien motioned to adjourn at 7:10 pm. Ms. Healy seconded. Vote was unanimous.