

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 6:30 pm
Town Hall, 40 Center Street
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ann Richard at 6:30pm, via Zoom

All participants were present remotely.

Present: Chairperson Ann Richard, Susan Spooner, Anne O'Brien, Deirdre Healy, Karen Gent, Leon Correy and Sustainability Coordinator Whitney McClees.

Alternates Present: Kathryn Moniz and Christin Ritz

Guests: Eliana DaCunha, Steve Theberge, Timothy Cox

MINUTES

Meeting minutes will be posted at the next meeting.

DISCUSSION: ALT MEMBER TO FILL VACANT VOTING SLOT

After the last meeting Anne O'Brien asked to become an alternate non-voting member via letter to the Selectmen. At the next Selectmen's meeting this will be addressed as well as moving an alternate into the voting position. Jim Anderson was first on the list of alternates as longest serving to become a voting member but it will be up to committee and he is not present at the meeting to speak on this. It is noted that Lois Callahan is actually the longest standing member ahead of Jim but wants to remain an alternate as she cannot make meetings on a regular basis. Leon points out that it is implicit that an active alternate member would want to become a voting member. A motion to fill the voting slot with Jim Anderson is first motioned by Susan Spooner and seconded by Leon Correy vote was unanimous by roll call (6-0).

COMMUNITY ELECTRICITY AGGREGATION

Update on the Community Electricity Aggregation program, continue to get word out to residents who should have received a letter notification. The new supplier will show up on electric bills received in February for January's bill cycle. The website Masscea.com/fairhaven is the best resource to find out more information.

PLASTIC BAN DISCUSSION

Came up on Town Meeting last year, Fred Jones was the citizen petitioner, Ann Richard reached out to Fred letting him know he would have to resubmit for this year's agenda but has not heard from him. Fairhaven resident Eliana DaCunha, who works with non-profit organization Surf Rider Foundation, reached out to Whitney on the topic and why banning plastic bags might not be the best solution yet. Their director of policy in working on this issue has found that many of these plastic ban bylaws have specific language regarding the thickness of bags allowed including the language proposed by Fred Jones for Fairhaven to ban bags <1.0mils. Bags less than 1.0 mils is very specific and not effective at reducing plastic, companies would just make thicker bags and also shifts businesses to use paper bags which also isn't sustainable

from cutting down trees and is also more expensive. Eliana presents 2 ideas to the committee-
1. Pass instead bylaws that would ban plastic utensils, stirrers, and Styrofoam in restaurants and not ban plastic bags because instead they want to petition for the state to put a state-wide charge on plastic bags. Cities individually can place charges on plastic bags however, towns can't because it is unconstitutional according to the Attorney General. 2. Get a petition for Fairhaven to pass to bring to states attention to put a statewide charge on plastic/paper bags to push everyone to use all reusable bags. Surfer's goal is to get as many towns as they can to get petitions and has language written already that towns can use. Eliana will send Whitney the documents.

The Town Meeting timeline is very soon, Friday, for articles that we could put a placeholder. The committee could vote to submit 2 placeholders and use the pre-written by-laws Surfer Rider has. This can always get passed over for now and give us time to do more outreach and be brought up again at the other meeting in the fall. Diedre Healy makes a motion for the 2 placeholders for the Styrofoam/plastic utensil ban and charge on plastic bags. Susan Spooner seconds and votes are unanimous by roll call (6-0)

SEEDS FOR SENIORS/SEED EXCHANGE

Seed exchange has been happening for 8 years that the Sustainability started held at the library, seeds brought in by community donations. Seed exchange moved to the Little Library this past year and was very successful and will be held there again this year as the Public library is closed.

Ann's other idea after the success of the seed exchange is to offer small kits for seniors in housing or at the Senior Center that they could start their own seeds. Kit comes in a small take-out container, with seeds and pots for transplanting. Ann met with Director of Senior Center and the Director of the Housing Authority and they really liked the idea. She also attended a United Way mini grant meeting last week and we could qualify for up to \$2,500. They could be delivered. Christin likes both ideas perhaps there could there be an outside location for pickup like at Millicent Library. Susan likes the idea and suggests we could use paper containers instead of plastic however the plastic serves as a greenhouse for the seed starters. Housing Authority residents are allowed to have 2 plant pots on their patio. This also aligns with one of the goals of the Master Plan to encourage backyard farming if they are planting vegetables. Leon shows support for the idea. As far as funds go the revolving account has \$1,300 and the Community Garden has \$475.

MARINE DEBRIS- WATERGOAT, other ideas

Susan met with Harbor Master Tim Cox and his assistant Ms. Souza to talk to him about his sense of our coastline and knowledge of location where trash is congregating. Carolin Reeves of Muddy Water Initiative with was helpful with her experience using the Watergoat that is about 8 feet long of buoys with recycled fishing net. It's been used for about 13 weeks and collected 20 42-gallon bags of trash that was prevented from going out into the ocean from the Charles River. Tim identified an area near Fort St by the hurricane barrier with a great amount of debris flowing from New Bedford into Fairhaven and collecting into this right angle. Resident Steve

Theberge comments there was an incredible amount of trash that collects in that corner area from his previous experience, and questions whether a net would more effectively catch the debris than what is already naturally occurring and picking up on the shore. There could also be an issue with brants (a small goose) that feed on eel grass and seaweed in that area getting caught in a net. Tim joins the meeting and reiterates the location north of the hurricane barrier by Fort St is the area of concern. (Whitney has an ortho map pulled on the screen) There is an access road and we would need permission from the property own to connect a Watergoat to their dock and we would need permission from the Army Corp which he believes they would be in favor for. We would need to find out how many feet to determine cost. Susan thinks for the 8' Watergoat at the Muddy River the cost was \$5,000 which is very expensive. Tim asks if there are grants we could apply for and Whitney will look into it. Kathrynne asks who will be in charge of collecting and how often. Susan says it would be volunteers once per week and we could reach out to local businesses for help. Karen Gent asks if there is an option to rent or lease a Watergoat before making the financial and volunteer commitment. Susan will look into getting more details. Leon comments we need to figure out the size, cost and feasibility before we go further. Whitney points out we need to also consider if the design is tidal vs current driven. Tim says maybe we could try anchoring a boom out to see if it would work. If this works here there is another location near Marsh Island that could benefit. Diedre Healy, speaks that we need to look at how much gets in there in the first place and the source of the trash.

2040 MASTER PLAN

This topic was passed over as it's come up and there's nothing additional.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST TRAINING

As Committee members, everyone must do conflict of interest training. Whitney will forward email around about the training. They need the receipt summary that you've done it and the certificate of completion. Documentation needs to be done by April 1st.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Whitney will send out a draft of the Report to the committee. Green Communities work at high school was completed, grant is getting wrapped up and finalized in time to submit an application for another round of funding. The MVP planning grant we completed 2/3 items. The last item, the review of 5 assets for vulnerability assessments is being finished up. Then get MVP designation so we can apply for action grants.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Next meeting February 16th, 2021 reviews items Whitney will share about annual report and the bag petition and also minutes from last meeting.

ADJORNMENT

Leon Correy motions to adjourn and is seconded by Karen Gent. Vote was unanimous by hand raise. (6-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Gent