

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 6:30 pm

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ann Richard at 6:30pm, via Zoom
Present: Chairperson Ann Richard, Karen Gent, Wendy Drumm, Christin Ritz, Deirdre Healy, Susan Spooner, and Sustainability Coordinator Whitney McClees.
Guests: Eliana DaCunha and Gary Lavalette

CHAIR PERSON'S WELCOME AND MEDIA NOTIFICATION by Ann Richard

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT read by Ann Richard

MINUTES

Approval for minutes for the July 20, 2021 meeting motioned by Christin Ritz and seconded by Wendy Drumm (5-0), Susan Spooner abstained.

COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION

Leon Correy has resigned so we need to elect a new Vice Chair. Ann nominates Wendy, seconded by Susan. Wendy accepts the nomination. Roll call vote (6-0).

DEI COMMITTEE

Diedre Healy updates now that we have a new Selectboard there will be a separate committee called the Belonging Committee. If anyone is interested in joining, they have to write a letter to the Selectboard. First meeting is Sept 8th.

KIDS FEST: OCT 9, 2021

This is a new event being co-sponsored by the Millicent Library and Office of Tourism located at the academy building on the lawn. The Sustainability Committee was contacted, we could sponsor the Caterpillar Lab. Susan notes that by October caterpillars will have turned by that point, how would that translate to the event. Whitney explains they do a variety of presentations and programs and utilize different critters that are available in that season. There would be a cost to this; it could be a good opportunity since it's part of a larger event. If he is available see what the cost is. Ann will send out an e-mail. Wendy has a large kite that could possibly be used to demonstrate wind power for sustainability to the kids. Christin asks about the Halloween costume swap that we've done in past years. Eric from Fairhaven TV says they're planning on having the Halloween event in the auditorium but it might be virtual again. Ann will check about drop box locations for the costumes. Whitney there was a drop box in town hall as well.

SINGLE USE PLASTICS

A Draft Letter was emailed this afternoon to the committee. Wendy- the intent is to write a letter to Mark Montigney and Rep Strouse about the 3 different bills and we want their support- bottle bill, ban single use plastics, 10 cent deposit fee, extended producer responsibility- recycling costs increase. The solution for recycling cost increase is companies that are making packages should reimburse towns and be fined for unrecyclable toxic packaging. Letter says these

packages damage the environment, wildlife and goes with more educational info. Protect valuable fishing industry. Our request is for them to take action and support these bills. Susan comments she would love to see in the intro of the letter we should say in "light of the recently released united nations report..." and emphasize the urgency of this topic. Eliana DeCuhna adds that Surfrider is having a meeting tomorrow about this topic. The letter needs to be proofread for spelling; Whitney will circulate anything that needs to be signed. Ann makes a motion that we approve sending this letter and is seconded by Susan (6-0). Eliana touch base on the bylaws that were previously tabled, is the interest still there in reaching out to businesses.

GLYPHOSATE AND OTHER TOXIC CHEMICALS

Ann reached out to Vinny about what the Town uses and his response was per the license we have with the state everything used is over the counter and can be found at the hardware store. Ann continues, there will be a Roundup ban in 2022 for residential use but we don't want to wait. Wendy states even though you can't use it residentially, her concern is if it's still used commercially. Ace hardware had 30 products with harmful chemicals.

Gary Lavelette uses his natural weed spray and concentrates its use on sidewalks where people walk their dogs. He uses vinegar to reduce the PH of the plant and soap with salt water in a sprayer. The Unitarian Church uses it to kill poison ivy. He's been taking care of town walkways and driveways with gravel. As one of the members of Conservation, they had someone from the Buzzards Bay Coalition spraying pesticides on Marsh Island, he notes we haven't had a hurricane or flood waters in a long time which would bring salt water over the land. Before they start spraying anything with chemicals try the salt water where invasives have taken over instead. There are other alternatives that should be tried first. Whitney adds that in areas where plants aren't used to salt that would work well but for example phragmites are adaptable to their environment like coastal areas it might not be effective.

A caller-in, Karen Vilandry, does volunteer work for Hands Across the River Coalition and they are very familiar with the chemicals in New Bedford Harbor and therefore would not recommend using any salt water from this area because of the PCB contamination. She states you are better off using tap water, vinegar, table salt and dish soap and spray that on the sidewalks instead of using the sea water from the harbor.

Ann clarifies that as a Committee this is not what we're doing ourselves nor is the Town dredging up water from the harbor to use in weed spray, this is just a conversation the Committee is having in relation to toxic chemicals.

Gary responds he uses a well he would not use salt water from New Bedford Harbor he's researched how much salinity can be used on historic bricks and is cautious with that. He's also going to contact Vinny if he can spray around the Rogers ball field.

Wendy comments when it's convenient that we try to find out for informational purposes what the DPW is using for weed control.

2040 MASTER PLAN

Continue to keep this on the agenda.

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATORS REPORT

Whitney is still waiting to hear back about the Green Communities application, hopefully by next meeting. Building on upgrades to the existing infrastructure of the high school, LEDs and further reduce energy footprint. Most towns highest energy use buildings are the schools so most Green Communities target energy use reduction of schools. The EV grants are still progressing forward. Eversource finished connections and is still waiting on EV pricing to come down and computer processing shortage. The select board last week approved moving forward with the next stage of a solar canopy over the council of aging and rec center parking lot. Solect Energy could add public car chargers. Solar on the rooftop of the middle school is a possibility. Susan comments her auto mechanic has a couple gas pumps and would like to start to convert to getting an electrical outlet, is there anyone that can help him start that process. Whitney says she can look into it. Karen Gent also comments she is familiar with the incentive programs for car chargers and can be contacted as well.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Next meeting is September 21, 2021 remotely. Could have more members joining us.

ADJOURNMENT

Ann motions to adjourn and is seconded by Diedre. Vote was unanimous by hand raise (6-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Gent