

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 21, 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: Dave Bell, Travis Rapoza

CHAIR PERSON'S WELCOME AND MEDIA NOTIFICATION by Ann Richard

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT read by Ann Richard who notes to please contact her if anyone has suggestions to edit the language.

MINUTES

We did not receive the minutes to approve. Karen Gent mentions she is due in 7 weeks and will need someone to take over the minutes for the next meeting.

Kids Fest: October 9, 2021

We'll be doing the costume swap, reusable bags, right now the box is full with donations, there are adult and children costumes. The time for the event is 10-3 and several people have volunteered to help set up the table.

NORTHEAST MARITIME INSTITUTE SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

Dave Bell gives an introduction that he and Ann used to be colleagues at Tabor Academy and one of the initiatives he started there on the teaching faculty was an oyster farm at Tabor and Ann as librarian saw the student grassroot success of sustainable food growing. Now today, he was asked by NMI to start a sustainable aquaculture for the school. In process of submitting a 2 year degree curriculum to the State Board of Education. Educational components and community benefit and benefit to the fisheries industry. While waiting for approval they have been collaborating with the local growers. Dave is offering this background to committee members and is open to questions. Having worked with the town of Marion for 30 years, he's hoping he can help do the same in Fairhaven.

Ann states she would like to promote this program in our committee and gets other Committees educated as well. How will pollution play a part in all this?

As far as pollution there is significant research that shows the environmental ecological benefit of aquaculture oysters and seaweed are beneficial to the ecological footprint to climate change. Whitney asks if he is establishing submerged aquaculture like seaweed.

NMI, if approved, will be able to conduct research and part of the instruction will align the educational experience to show the benefits of aquaculture as a food source and the ecological benefits to the communities and coastline restoration. We could have a more sustainable food system.

Susan Spooner comments that Mattapoisett has had a robust oyster farming endeavor for 5-6 years. There are citizens that have private seeding areas as well. Is Dave in touch with any one there?

Dave answers that Mattapoisett waters about Fairhaven waters and has already done work with Michael Ward who owns Mattapoisett Oysters. Part of the curriculum is to work with the industry farmers. Students will gain experience and provide valuable labor to these farmers.

Diedre asks about pollution, we have worked a long time on shoreline pollution like plastics, is there any joint effort there?

Dave answers yes, they are looking for ways the students can approach the environment and economy from a regenerative point of view. Things like shoreline plastic has negative impacts with harvest so that is of importance.

Ann asks if the course has any prerequisites or is it open to the public?

Dave states while they are awaiting curriculum approval, he has put in plans for next summer a community education program "aquaculture certificate program" for 16 years and older to work on NE maritime site and work with Timmy and his ongoing propagation efforts and real public outreach. More experiential education.

SINGLE USE PLASTICS – Subcommittee Update

Christin Ritz opens, she, Eliana, and Wendy have met 3 times as a subcommittee. Their ultimate goal is to pass the by-laws that were tabled. 2 bylaws- disposable plastic reduction bylaws- food establishments would not be able to give out single use plastics unless asked for, 2nd was for reducing poly styrene, retailers prohibit sales of coolers, toys etc. made from poly styrene. Would like to connect with the board of health, specifically the polystyrene piece as it is a health concern. They are hoping if we had their support, it would help the cause and get on their agenda at a future meeting. Then get endorsements from local businesses to help move this forward.

Wendy updates bills of the state and other news like McDonald's making toys with less plastic. Virginia just passed a bag law 5 cents charge where 3 cents go to state 2 go to retailers. On the Bills we wrote, the good news is they made it through to the joint committee on the environment and natural resources and agriculture. They had a hearing 6/15. Many towns have gone ahead on their own instead of waiting for the state. Wendy is keeping track of all the bills. Fall Town Meeting? Target Date December 14th. Spring Annual Town meeting might be more realistic.

ECOCHALLENGE – Planning for April Event?

Whitney, we've been supporting 3 Team Southcoast challenges. We bypassed the event in July, there's another one in October but perhaps we prioritize the one coming up in April. Ann votes to wait so we can promote more.

Ann invites comments to guests listening in on the meeting.

Citizen Travis Rapoza, who lived in Boston, comments that Somerville has a 10-cent charge on plastic bags that was retained by the businesses.

Christin responds that there is a law that cities can enact those charges but towns cannot.

FAIRHAVEN TREES

Ann brings up the topic on trees if committee members are aware of what is going on in Town and cutting down trees. The Planning Board is working on a bylaw for the process. Whitney notes the carbon sequestration that you get with large trees is much greater than small saplings.

Susan is passionate about trees and how significant it is going forward. It would be worth it for Don who is passionate about this, 63 trees are significant and would like to see the tree warden and Sustainability Committee to create a template going forward and coordinated communication.

2040 MASTER PLAN

Continue to keep on agenda. Wendy is drafting a letter to the Board of Health regarding pesticides.

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATORS REPORT

Whitney updates she's still working on the EV grants there are shortages with the computer processing chips causing delays and increased prices. Eversource has already made the connections for the charges. Hoping by next meeting she'll have more to update on the Green Communities. There is an event hosted by Southcoast Progressive Voices on the Green Future Act from 7-830 tomorrow night.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Next meeting: October 19, 2021 possibly move it to the 26th?

Travis asks the Committee if we've discussed the Arbor Funding. The funding is used for energy efficiency and weatherization.

Ann comments everyone is looking for that money and on other committees. It will be interesting to know where it goes. Maybe a portion of money to go to sustainable initiatives.

Whitney notes the Town is working with a grant consultant and Paul Foley on what this funding might be used for.

Susan is wondering if we can discuss a home for Afghani refugee families in Fairhaven. The UU has a powerful committee and is engaged in that kind of justice. This is linked to sustainability and extending a hand.

Ann does not believe our finances would be able to support this; perhaps we could offer promotion of any efforts.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Gent