

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 6:30 pm

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ann Richard at 6:36pm, via Zoom
Present: Chairperson Ann Richard, Christin Ritz, Deirdre Healy (until 6:45pm), Susan Spooner, Tim Garcia, and Sustainability Coordinator Whitney McClees.
Absent: Karen Gent, Wendy Drumm
Guests: Christine Smith, Liz Wiley, Eliana DaCunha

CHAIR PERSON'S WELCOME AND MEDIA NOTIFICATION by Ann Richard

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT read by Ann Richard

MINUTES

Approval for minutes for the August 17, 2021 meeting motioned by Christin Ritz, seconded by Deirdre Healy, passed unanimously (5-0) by roll call vote.

Approval for minutes for the September 21, 2021 meeting motioned by Deirdre Healy, seconded by Christin Ritz, passed unanimously (5-0) by roll call vote.

We welcomed a new committee member, Tim Garcia. We are very glad to have someone joining us.

Ms. Richard noted that congratulations were in order to Karen and Adam Gent on the arrival of Rowan Mackenzie Gent on October 20, 2021. Ms. Richard also noted that the Committee will need someone to take minutes in Ms. Gent's absence as she is very busy with a new baby.

SOUTHCOAST FOOD POLICY COUNCIL – MARION INSTITUTE

Christine Smith presented a PowerPoint on the Marion Institute's Southcoast Food Policy Council's Food System Assessment. The Marion Institute's (MI) Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC), consists of nearly 300 community partners that represent farmers, fishers, food pantries, churches, social service agencies, schools, institutional buyers, and a diverse group of partner organizations throughout the Southcoast of Massachusetts, representing Fall River to Wareham. The mission of the SFPC is to connect, convene, and advocate for local food producers, consumers, and community partners who seek to generate policies and practices that strengthen our regional food system, enhance food security, and promote health equity.

Ms. Smith overviewed the Food System Assessment process, which contributes to the Massachusetts Local Food Plan. The food system Marion Institute is assessing how our food is produced, processed and packaged, distributed, acquired, consumed and disposed of, or recovered. She also reviewed some of their findings from the Food System Assessment. More information can be found on their website: <https://www.marioninstitute.org/programs/sfpc/food-system-assessment/>

Deirdre Healy left the meeting at 6:45pm

Ms. Richard mentioned that the Committee is working on local bylaws related to plastic packaging and asked about how the report deals with food packaging.

Liz Wiley responded that the report focuses more on reducing food waste, but that increasing the regional food supply network will reduce the amount of food packaging consumed.

Ms. Spooner noted that in a recent stay at Tobey Hospital a significant amount of food is thrown away throughout the day and asked if Marion Institute has been in contact with SouthCoast Hospitals at all.

Ms. Smith noted that currently the law is if an institution produces 1 ton of food waste per week, they are required to compost it or work with a farmer to dispose of it sustainably. The law will change in 2022, requiring the same regulations of half a ton of food waste per week. This is the Organic Waste Ban that went into effect in 2014.

SINGLE USE PLASTICS

Ms. Ritz provided an update on what the subcommittee has been working on. They are seeking the Committee's approval to send a letter to the Board of Health requesting a meeting to seek their support for the single-use plastic and polystyrene reduction bylaws proposed for the Annual Town Meeting in 2022.

Eliana DaCunha reviewed the PowerPoint she has been working on for the meeting with Board of Health that reviews the public health risks of plastics and polystyrene.

Ms. Ritz noted the subcommittee is also seeking approval of the fact sheet/support letter to businesses when the subcommittee is going to businesses to seek their support for the proposed bylaws.

Ann Richard made a motion to approve the letter and send it to the Board of Health, seconded by Susan Spooner, passed unanimously (4-0) by roll call vote.

Ann Richard made a motion to approve the handout for businesses, seconded by Tim Garcia.

On the motion, Ms. Spooner asked to review the letter and wondered if there should be some additional information related to cost in the letter.

Ms. Ritz clarified some of the bullet points related to cost.

Ms. DaCunha asked to clarify one of the bullet points related to the language between toxins leaching into food and cancers.

Motion passed unanimously (4-0) by roll call vote.

GREEN BUSINESS RECOGNITION

Ms. Ritz discussed her idea on incentivizing businesses to implement sustainable practices by having some kind of recognition. When businesses are voluntarily implementing sustainable practices, they could receive some kind of recognition by the Committee that may then encourage other businesses to come on board.

ECOCHALLENGE

There was a short discussion about the April 2022 event and what we could possibly do at this time to promote the challenge and get more people involved. We could also use event as annual recognition of green businesses, which Ms. Ritz had discussed previously. There were other ideas that were also discussed, possibly giving a potted plant to green businesses.

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATORS REPORT

Whitney reported that the town received a Green Communities grant in July and she was just now able to announce it. It was an embargoed announcement which was a total sum of \$184,986. for FHS upgrades and energy systems. Whitney is working on a report to submit to the state for the funding.

GENERAL BUSINESS

December 14, 2021 will be the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Ann Richard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Susan Spooner, unanimous (4-0) by hand raise.

Respectfully Submitted,
Notes submitted by Sustainability Coordinator Whitney McClees
Draft by Ann Richard