

**Town of Washington
Sustainability Committee
Minutes
February 14th, 2024 at 5:00 PM
Meeting via Zoom and Main Level Meeting Room**

Members Present: Jay Hubelbank, Carole Matteo, Monique Gil-Rodgers, Chris Charles, Hugh Rogers
Members Absent: Brian Hagenbuch, Amy Dyer, Linda Frank
Staff Present: Michelle Gorra
Visitors: Ann Jamieson and Nora Hulton

1. Call to order: 5:00 PM By Jay Hubelbank

2. Approval of Minutes of January 10th: Mr. Hubelbank passed out a copy of the January minutes and asked the Committee to review them for the next meeting. He noted that the town was working to address the minutes taking issue and thanked Mandy Reale for attending the meeting and taking minutes. Jay made a motion to approve the December 13th, 2023 minutes, Carol Matteo seconded this motion, all in favor.

3. April Newsletter and Earth Day –

Jay reminded the Committee that we had agreed to use our funds to send out a newsletter to coincide with Earth Day. He went over a list of potential articles and asked the Committee if they had any other articles they thought should be included. The potential article ideas that were brought up were:

- Lawn Care: - could be one or two articles
 - No mow May, Mulching
 - Using electric powered equipment (leaf blowers, lawn mowers)
- Recycling: Jay/Michelle
 - Update on what can be recycled
 - Highlight new Plastic Bag recollection
 - Composting
 - Results from our efforts so far
- Pollinator Pathways
- Low Impact Sustainable Development
- Invasive Species- Brian H?
- Solar/Wind project - Jay
 - Firehouse added Solar Panels to it and is looking to do more.
 - Light in parking lot
- EV Charges - Jay
- Salt in Water/Water Testing
- Ambulance Building – Net Zero

Jay said he would send out the list to all members and ask them to review the list and sign up to write an article.

4. 2024-25 Budget – Jay noted there was \$5,000 in the budget for the commission last year. After discussion, the Committee agreed to request \$10,000. Michelle Gorra noted the cost for the newsletter alone is roughly \$3800-\$5000. The Committee also noted it would be nice to have extra room in the budget to do things such as Earth Day fliers, LED Swap light bulbs on Earth Day.

5. Updates on Current Actions

a. Ambulance Building - Building to Net Zero – Jay reported that Mark Showalter, and Jim Brinton spent time with the architect developing a list of work that would bring the ambulance building close to net zero. Jay distributed the list of items in the budget and noted that the building committee will also get together with the architect to review the list and get more details for each item. He will report back to the Committee.

b. Region 12 Ag-Science - Jay met with Tyler Cremeans, the director of AgScience. He mentioned there were two areas that the AgScience program may be able to work on with the Committee. Jay asked Tyler if there would be a student who would be interested in helping the Committee identify invasive species on town properties. Jay thought this could be a wonderful Senior Project. He noted that Brian Hagenbuch from Steep Rock has offered to train anyone interested Mr. Cremeans was also interested in composting more at Shepaug. Jay will meet with Tyler again in the next few weeks.

c. Road Salt/Well testing- Hugh Rodgers reported that he has been in touch with Farmington River Alliance about testing the Shepaug River for salt content. The Alliance has been testing the Farmington River for many years and is willing to work with us to test salt levels in the Shepaug. Hugh noted there are 5 tributaries that need to be tested to determine their salt level. . We will need 40 tests to do this, and then to upload the data to the National Salt Watch Site. Each tributary has to be tested 8x a year, Monique and Hugh offered to do the testing. The Committee agreed to move forward with the testing. Jay made a motion to purchase test kits for the 5 tributaries purchasing 40 tests, for an approximate cost of \$80, Carol seconded the motion, all in favor.

Hugh has been in contact with Beth Dun from York Labs in Newtown CT, to discuss working offering well testing to town residents at a discount price. York Labs is willing to offer us a reduced rate of \$90.10 for well test kits. The Committee agreed to proceed with this offer and to coordinate the program with our Earth Day event. The Committee talked about promoting the event prior to the event. Michelle suggested we collected data from residents and develop a database to track the salt content. Hugh will contact Beth regarding the privacy of the release of data.

d. Composting- Jay reported that there was nothing to report at this time. He noted Jim Brinton is working with The COG and plan a meeting with DEEP.

e. LISD – Jay reported the new State StormWater Manual has been released. The Land Use office has been reviewing it and the LISD Committee will meet at the end of this month or in early March.

6. Other Business to come before the committee - None at this time

7. Public Comment- Nora from Montessori mentioned she would love to write an article if-we still had room. Also, she would be very interested in helping with the Committee’s work on invasive species.

8. Adjournment; 6:15PM By Jay Hubelbank, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Reale
Amanda Reale

Recording:

