

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 8, 2021**

5:00 P.M.

Meeting Held Via Zoom Conference

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mr. Hubelbank, Mr. Charles, Ms. Dyer, Ms. Gorra, Ms. Gil-Rodgers, Ms. Rowe, Mr. Hagenbuch
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Ms. Payne, Ms. Armstrong, Ms. Matteo
Staff:	Mr. Buell, Ms. Gorra
OTHERS:	Ms. Bennett

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:03 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Consideration of Minutes for November 10, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Hubelbank asked if there were any comments or corrections for the November 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes. With no comments or corrections, a motion was passed to approve the minutes.

Motion: To accept the minutes as written for the November 10, 2021 Meeting by Mr. Hubelbank, Seconded by Ms. Gil-Rodgers. Passed unanimously.

Presentation of Sustainability Reward

Ms. Gorra presented the Committee with the award that had been given to the Town of Washington following the approval of Bronze Certification. She stated that Gold Certification would soon be made available for towns to obtain and indicated that at the conference where this award had been presented she had been given the opportunity to speak with other Sustainability Committees and groups from the area.

Following this, Ms. Gorra indicated that she had gone to several booths at this conference and that she had spoken with Mr. Moots who graduated from Shepaug and who worked with Green Leaf which is a group that works on green energy. She then showed the Committee a pamphlet from Integrated Services for a Sustainable Future. She indicated that she felt this company may be a valuable source of information for the Committee going forward, particularly in terms of revisions which shall be made to the P.O.C.D.

Mr. Hubelbank indicated he would like to begin collaborating with nearby towns which have been certified through Sustainable Ct. The Committee expressed agreement, and Mr. Charles indicated that education within the town should also be prioritized.

Mr. Hubelbank stated that the town had entered two years of energy use into a program which enabled the town to begin to track energy usage. Following this, he indicated that the town had begun discussions with Efficient Energy and Maintenance to develop a report on energy usage which would enable the town to become more responsible in terms of energy usage.

Ag-Stem Advisory Board

Ms. Bennett discussed the Ag-Stem Advisory Board with the Committee and expressed her desire to have some members of the Sustainability Committee join this Board. Following a short summary of the purpose and responsibilities of the Advisory Board, Ms. Dyer asked if any minutes for this board exist, and Ms. Bennett indicated that she would have these minutes sent to the Sustainability Committee for their consideration. Mr. Hubelbank indicated that it would be helpful for Ms. Bennett to provide a list of members of this advisory board to the Sustainability Committee.

Mr. Hubelbank stated that he wished to begin collaborations between committees and groups within the town.

The Committee then discussed the difficulties that Region 12 has faced in regard to energy usage and updating schools within the town. Ms. Bennett indicated to the Committee that updating these buildings has been immensely difficult, and discussion regarding this subject ensued.

Discussion of Plan of Conservation and Development

Discussion of Goals

Mr. Hubelbank stated that he would like to examine a document that he had shared with the Committee which lists important items from the P.O.C.D., and which Commission had been assigned to specific items. Mr. Hubelbank indicated that at this meeting he did not wish to pursue solutions to these items, but rather that he wished to determine whether or not they were projects that should be pursued going forward.

*A portion of this document is attached to the end of the minutes. Below is a list of specific items which prompted conversation within the Committee.

5. Reinstate budget line for the monitoring and maintenance of existing open space.

The Committee discussed the differences between town owned easements, and easements that had been dedicated by residents to be Conservation Easements. During this discussion, the Committee asked Mr. Buell to investigate how town easements were being monitored, and to provide the Committee with a list of Conservation Easements. Mr. Hagenbuch offered to have Mr. Buell tag along with the Steep Rock Association while they monitored easements to see how they conduct their monitoring.

Mr. Charles stated that in the past, the town had stressed the importance of protecting open spaces opposed to creating affordable housing. The Committee agreed that a need existed within the town to address the lack of affordable housing.

7. Identify and investigate septic system failures and underground storage tank leaks.

Mr. Hubelbank indicated that this item did not seem clear to him. After a short discussion, the Committee agreed that this was a low priority item for the Sustainability Committee as it was the responsibility of the Health Department to identify and correct septic related issues.

9. Continue curbside recycling; consider a regional organic recycling facility.

The Committee agreed that this was an important issue, and Ms. Gorra indicated that the town should consider a change in how recyclables are taken care of. A short discussion regarding this subject ensued.

10. Locate and evaluate at-risk water resources; map, test, and identify areas of concern; educate public.

Mr. Hagenbuch stated that this section should be reworded to focus on water sheds and indicated that the Steep Rock Association had begun monitoring watersheds within the town.

11. Continue to properly maintain municipal vehicles and instate an idling time policy.

The Committee discussed laws related to idling cars, and issues that exist regarding idling vehicles. Ms. Dyer suggested having signs installed to help spread information on this issue. Mr. Hubelbank stated that he would address this issue with the Board of Selectmen at their next meeting.

Following this discussion Mr. Hubelbank stated that he did not wish for the list to become immensely long, but that he felt some items should be added. He then provided affordable housing as an example.

Mr. Hagenbuch stated that the town should also examine landscaping in public land, and indicated that using climate resilient plantings, and removing invasive species should be priorities for the management of town owned land.

The Committee then discussed problems caused by landscaping equipment. During this discussion, the Committee stated that 2 cycle engine machines will be banned in California within the next 2 years. The Committee then discussed the possibility of having a similar town ordinance passed within Washington in the future.

Using Google Doc to Edit the Current P.O.C.D.

Ms. Dyer shared her screen with the Committee showed a Google Doc that she had created which would enable the Committee to comment, and make potential revisions to the existing P.O.C.D. Discussion regarding potential changes to this document ensued. During this discussion, the Committee also discussed the possibility of hiring consultants to help with potential revisions.

Ms. Gorra stated that the Housatonic Valley Association had received a grant to install rain gardens at Habitat for Humanity homes, and indicated that they hoped to have some of these installed in homes within Washington.

Discussion of Collaborating with Other Like-Minded Groups in Town

Mr. Hubelbank indicated to the Committee that he wished to begin collaboration between Commissions and groups within the town. He indicated that he did not have a proactive way to go about creating this collaboration, but indicated that he wished for the Committee to begin a discussion on how this may be done.

Update on the Resiliency Workshop

Mr. Hubelbank stated that a new designation would potentially be created by Sustainable Ct which was referred to as the "Climate Leader Designation." He stated that to become a "Climate Leader" towns would need to gain 100 points in specific areas of Sustainable Ct. Mr. Hubelbank went on to state that a workshop had been created in relation to this.

Mr. Hubelbank went on to inform the Committee that the Nature Conservancy Workshop had been set up and that he was in the process of organizing a number of people within the town whom he hoped would attend this meeting.

Update on Right to Farm Ordinance

The Committee did not discuss this agenda item.

Other Business to come Before Committee

No new business was discussed by the Committee.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dennis Buell

Town of Washington

Sustainability Committee Clerk

12-9-2021

1)	Provide a clearinghouse of information for sustainable practices throughout the community.	Conservation Commission (PC)	1-3 Year Implementation
2)	Educate land use commissions on conservation designs and techniques appropriate for Washington.	Conservation Commission (PC)	1-3 Year Implementation
3)	Incorporate sustainability goals into Land Use Regulations. Modify regulations to minimize site disturbances and incorporate low-impact development techniques.	Zoning Commission (PC/CC)	Ongoing Effort
4)	Continue farmland protection and coordinate with neighboring communities on a regional agricultural plan.	Conservation Commission (PC/BOS)	4-6 Year Implementation
5)	Reinstate budget line for the monitoring and maintenance of existing open space.	Board of Finance (BOS/CC)	1-3 Year Implementation
6)	Prioritize stewardship of open space and conservation easements and expand baseline reviews.	Conservation Commission	1-3 Year Implementation
7)	Identify and investigate septic system failures and underground storage tank leaks.	Health Department (BD)	Ongoing Effort
8)	Stress importance of permeable surfaces, rainwater basins, infiltration systems and vegetative buffers.	Inland Wetlands Commission (CC/PC/ZC)	Ongoing Effort
9)	Continue curbside recycling; consider a regional organic recycling facility.	Board of Selectmen (CC)	Ongoing Effort
10)	Locate and evaluate at-risk water resources; map, test, and identify areas of concern; educate public.	Conservation Commission (IWC)	Ongoing Effort
11)	Continue to properly maintain municipal vehicles and institute an idling time policy.	Highway Director (BOS/BOF)	Ongoing Effort
12)	Develop linkages between town-owned and private open space and maintain pathways.	Conservation Commission (P&R)	4-6 Year Implementation
13)	Implement context-sensitive roadway designs and create safer bicycling pathways.	Board of Selectmen (BOF/PC/HD)	4-6 Year Implementation
14)	Require energy-efficient systems and designs for all construction and renovation; install LED street lighting.	Board of Selectmen (ZC/BPC)	4-6 Year Implementation
15)	Incorporate green cleaning and maintenance practices at all municipal properties.	Board of Selectmen (BPC)	4-6 Year Implementation
16)	Complete an energy audit of municipal facilities; retrofit with efficient equipment and features where feasible.	Board of Selectmen (BPC)	Immediate Implementation
17)	Educate citizens on property tax exemptions and renewable energy credit programs.	Board of Selectmen (TXA/PC)	Ongoing Effort

