

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 9, 2022**

5:00 P.M.

Meeting Held Via Zoom Conference

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 P.M.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Minutes.

Motion: To accept the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes by Ms. Matteo, seconded by Ms. Gil-Rodgers, passed unanimously.

Changes to Meeting Schedule

Mr. Hubelbank stated that the Committee's clerk, Mr. Buell, had noticed meeting conflicts on April 13th and on November 9th. He suggested that the Sustainability Committee meet an hour earlier on these dates and the Committee agreed with this course of action. No motion was passed to accept this change.

Continued Discussion of P.O.C.D. Updates

Review of Items Discussed in December

Mr. Hubelbank stated that a list of P.O.C.D. action items had been forwarded to the Committee prior to the meeting. *(This list will be included at the end of the minutes.)* Following this, Mr. Hubelbank indicated that the Committee had ranked these items by a level of importance by numbering items 1, 2 or 3 and shared his screen with the Committee.

Ms. Dyer stated that for number 4, the issue was ongoing and indicated that action was still needed. Discussion regarding agriculture within Washington ensued. Ms. Dyer stated that no regional "Farmers Alliance" exists within Northwest Connecticut. The Committee discussed the newly formed farmers alliance within Washington, and how a regional organization would be

beneficial to farmers within the State. Mr. Hubelbank stated that this conversation had led him to rethink how goals mentioned within the P.O.C.D. should be worded to better fit the town's present-day needs. Further discussion ensued. Ms. Matteo asked if gathering statistics on farming within the town would be done with the hope of eventually making the town self-sufficient in the future. Mr. Hubelbank stated that gathering statistics on subjects like farmland within Washington will assist in communicating the town's needs and goals more effectively to residents.

Mr. Hubelbank stated that the Board of Selectmen had discussed the possibility of implementing signage within the town to remind residents about state laws which prohibit prolonged car idling. Discussion regarding the possibility of All-Star converting to electric buses for Region 12's school buses ensued.

Mr. Hubelbank stated that the wording of the existing P.O.C.D. should be revisited to make it more "meaningful" so that it's goals may be more effectively accomplished.

Ms. Matteo stated that she would like to make public displays for section 1 which would help to educate more of the public regarding sustainable practices. Ms. Gorra stated that the Sustainability Committee does not currently have a budget for public outreach and indicated that the Commission should consider requesting more funds going forward for this. She went on to state that Mr. Hileman will also need feedback regarding the need for funds to be requested for the Committee to hire experts to assist in revisions to the P.O.C.D. Mr. Hubelbank suggested contacting Sustainable Ct for suggestions on which experts to contact for this.

Ms. Gorra stated that health and wellness, housing, economic wellbeing, and culture were only briefly mentioned by the P.O.C.D.'s sustainability chapter previously. She indicated that she felt that the Committee had agreed that these subjects were important for improving sustainability and that they should be flushed out going forward. Mr. Hubelbank agreed and indicated he would like this to be brought up later in the meeting during the discussion about items not currently included in the current P.O.C.D.

Mr. Hubelbank stated that Mr. Buell would begin monitoring town owned easements. Mr. Hagenbuch indicated that the Steep Rock Association is currently monitoring and testing several tributaries and rivers within the town. Further discussion regarding environmental monitoring efforts within Washington ensued.

Identify Actions that are not in the Current POCD.

Mr. Hubelbank stated that several important issues were not addressed within the latest version of the P.O.C.D. and indicated that he would like to consider what should potentially be added to the upcoming P.O.C.D.

Ms. Gorra restated that health and wellness, housing, economic wellbeing, and culture should be more directly addressed within the P.O.C.D.

Ms. Matteo asked if climate change would be included within the document and Mr. Hubelbank added this to the list of action items.

Ms. Weydig asked if the energy audit mentioned in the action item list had included consideration for on-site renewable energy. The Committee discussed potential solar for town buildings, and the implementation of new charging stations within the town. Mr. Hubelbank stated that the town had considered charging for the use of these charging stations and conversation regarding this ensued. Ms. Weydig asked if data on usage is available for the town.

Mr. Charles stated that walkable communities, regenerative agriculture, and resource efficiency should all be included within the P.O.C.D. and that the town's goal should be to eventually reduce its footprint to 0. Mr. Charles stated that he also felt that when discussing "arts" within the town, "crafts" like cabinet making should be included within this discussion. Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Hagenbuch stated that this P.O.C.D. had been written 10 years ago and that the town's needs had changed within that time. He indicated that he felt that the P.O.C.D. should reflect this change. He went on to state that the P.O.C.D., Sustainability, and the Resiliency Workshop should be bridged together. Ms. Gorra stated that the chapter order of the P.O.C.D. could be altered by the Planning Commission which would redefine the P.O.C.D.'s priorities. She outlined several aspects of the town which had changed since the initial P.O.C.D. had been drafted. Further Discussion ensued.

Mr. Hagenbuch asked how ARPA funds and the town's budget may be used to better address the town's sustainable goals. Mr. Hubelbank stated that the town is considering the use of ARPA funds to make WIFI more available within the town to provide an example of how these funds may be used.

Update on Resiliency Workshop

Mr. Hubelbank stated that he had invited a broad spectrum of community members to the Resiliency Workshop. He listed several attendees and indicated that at this meeting they had discussed future hazards which the town may encounter in the coming years. He indicated that a report would be written and sent to the town following this workshop which should help the town to better plan for these hazards.

Other Business to Come Before the Committee

Ms. Gorra stated that she had asked Mr. Becker to join a Sustainability Committee meeting to describe the new science building which would be net zero. She went on to state that she had recently learned about the development of 19 affordable homes which would be net zero in Norfolk.

The Chair Adjourned the meeting at 6:18

Respectfully Submitted,



Dennis Buell

Town of Washington

Sustainability Committee Clerk

2-16-2022

#	Ranking	Current Status	Action
1)	1	No Action	Provide a clearinghouse of information for sustainable practices throughout the community.
2)	1	No Action	Educate land use commissions on conservation designs and techniques appropriate for Washington.
3)	1	No Action	Incorporate sustainability goals into Land Use Regulations. Modify regulations to minimize site disturbances and incorporate low-impact development techniques.
4)	1	No Action	Continue farmland protection and coordinate with neighboring communities on a regional agricultural plan.
8)	1	No Action	Stress importance of permeable surfaces, rainwater basins, infiltration systems and vegetative buffers.
9)	1	Partial	Continue curbside recycling; consider a regional organic recycling facility.
11)	1	No Action	Continue to properly maintain municipal vehicles and institute an idling time policy.
13)	1	No Action	Implement context-sensitive roadway designs and create safer bicycling pathways.
14)	1	No Action	Require energy-efficient systems and designs for all construction and renovation; install LED street lighting.
16)	1	No Action	Complete an energy audit of municipal facilities; retrofit with efficient equipment and features where feasible.
17)	1	No Action	Educate citizens on property tax exemptions and renewable energy credit programs.
5)	2	In process	Reinstate budget line for the monitoring and maintenance of existing open space.
10)	2	no action	Locate and evaluate at-risk water resources; map, test, and identify areas of concern; educate public.
12)	2		Develop linkages between town-owned and private open space and maintain pathways.
15)	2	In process	Incorporate green cleaning and maintenance practices at all municipal properties.
6)	3	?	Prioritize stewardship of open space and conservation easements and expand baseline reviews.
7)	3	?	Identify and investigate septic system failures and underground storage tank leaks.

