

**Town of Washington
Sustainability Committee
Minutes**

December 13th, 2023 - 5:00 Meeting via Zoom and Main Level Meeting Room

Members Present: Jay Hubelbank, Chris Charles, Monique Gil- Rodgers, Carole Matteo, Amy Dyer, Brian Hagenbuch, Hugh Rogers. **Absent:** Linda Frank

Staff Present: Michelle Gorra

1. Call to Order:

2. Approval of Minutes of October 11th, 2023- Jay Hubelbank made a motion to approve the minutes; motion was seconded by Chris Charles, vote: all in favor.

2. Update on Current Action Items:

a. Wake Boating – Jay and Carol - The Lake Waramaug Authority has hired a firm to conduct a study of how people use the lake. The study was supposed to be done in the fall. Jay will follow up with Jim Brinton and Sean Hayden to find out what the current timeline is. The firm will also conduct a comprehensive survey of water quality and the impact of boats causing large wakes this summer.

b. LISD- Jay and Chris- The LISD Committee has not met following the interview of two candidates. Once someone is selected, It will take 4-5-month to completed the work. Chris made a point that a manual will be separate from our zoning regulations. The Zoning Commission will be able to direct applicants to the manual. One of the goals is also to educate the public on how to do this on their own.

c. Unsustainable Town Practices – Jay has been working with Mark Showalter and Kevin Smith, as planning for the 2024-25 budget season is coming up- The goal is to transition from gas powered equipment to electric equipment where appropriate.

The committee also discussed how the town sands and salts the roads during winter storms. Jay said that he understood that the materials we use are more environmentally friendly than the State's materials. Jay will follow up with Kevin Smith to get the details on what the town uses.

d. Composting- Jay reported that we are collecting 5-6 containers a week of food waste. He noted that we are charged by the container to take them to a company in New Milford that uses them in their composting process. He will follow up with Jeff to see if we have an average weight of the containers. Collecting food waste is significantly reducing the weight of our MSW.

The Committee is also looking into composting the food waste at the Transfer Station. Monique has been doing research on how the town can get approval from DEEP to set up a composting system on site. The Committee will continue to work on this.

e. Traffic Calming/ Walkability Actions - Michelle reported that the town did not get the grant from the state . She spoke with DOT and they will review our application again for preparation for next year In the hope that we can better meet the state requirements.

f. Public Education – Jay told the group that we have \$5,000 in the 2023-24 budget to spend on public education. He asked the committee to think about what they would like to use the funds for and to come back to the next meeting with ideas for the spring.

g. Stonewall Identification- Chris No discussion on this items

h. Building to Net Zero – The Committee discussed the new ambulance building and what should be done during the renovations to try and bring the building to net zero. Chris noted that the architect was supposed to provide a list of energy saving measures and he has not seen that list. Jay said he would talk with Jim Brinton to see if the architect had provided a list.

i. Invasive Species – Jay asked Brian to update the Committee on the work Steep Rock did this year to remove invasive species. Brian reported that he was really pleased with the Phragmites control on Fenn Hill. They were able to remove almost all the Barberry bushes at the riding ring and also have mapped all of the knotweed all along the Shepaug. Removal will be a multiyear project. Additional work was done at Macricostas removing wild parsnip, which is 5 to 6 feet tall plant. He noted that if you break off the stem and get some fluid on your skin, it can cause significant burns, especially if you are in direct sunlight.

Brian also reported that the intern they hired did a great job mapping invasive species on Steep Rock properties. .

j. Solar/wind lights- Jay reported that we're moving forward with a solar light at the Titus Municipal Lot. Jim Brinton is working with Eversource to remove the existing light. We will have the ability to automatically turn the light on and off, as well as have it motion activated. Jay noted that if we like how it works, we can talk about adding a similar one to the Pavilion parking lot. He noted that Eversource charges the town for these lights and replacing them will save the town money for many years.

k. EV Charging stations - Jay received a proposal from Titan Energy to install two EV Charging Stations. He explained that Eversource will fund up to \$20,000 of the cost, leaving the Town to fund approximately \$4000.00 per pole. Jay will be talking with Jim Brinton and Linda Gomez about any funding available in the current budget. If no funding is available, he will recommend to the BOS that funds be put into the 2024-25 capital budget.

New Business – There was no new business

4. Other Business to come before the committee; Carole and Amy reported that they have been working on a midwinter social to be held at Town Hall. The idea is to: "Sustain our Town Spirit" in the

winter. The Committee recommended that they talk with Michelle to see if the Economic Development Committee would consider supporting the idea.

5. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

6. Adjournment by Jay H at 6:20pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Reale
Sustainability Clerk

Recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fh5AvfkShXo>