



TOWN OF FAIRHAVEN, MASSACHUSETTS

# SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Town Hall · 40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

## Meeting Minutes

### July 21, 2020

***Town Hall, 40 Center Street***  
**Fairhaven, Massachusetts**

**Present:** Chairperson Ann Richard, Susan Spooner, Wendy Drumm, Anne O'Brien, Karen Gent, Deirdre Healy, Jim Anderson, and Sustainability Coordinator Whitney McClees. Some members in attendance could not vote because they were not yet sworn in due to Town Hall closure.

**Absent:** Leon Correy and Lois Callahan

Chairperson Ann Richard called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. The meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom conferencing and was recorded for Cable Access (Erick Sa).

### REORGANIZATION

Ms. Richard asked Ms. McClees to chair the meeting for a reorganization. Ms. O'Brien nominated Ms. Richard for Chair. Ms. Drumm seconded. In favor: Wendy Drumm, Ann Richard, Anne O'Brien, Deirdre Healy. Other members present were not sworn in and could not vote. There were no objections. Motion carried. (4-0).

Ms. Richard nominated Ms. O'Brien for Vice Chair. Ms. Healy seconded. In favor: Wendy Drumm, Ann Richard, Anne O'Brien, Deirdre Healy. Other members present were not sworn in and could not vote. There were no objections. Motion carried. (4-0).

Recording Secretary – Ms. Richard nominated Karen Gent for recording secretary. Ms. Healy seconded. In favor: Wendy Drumm, Ann Richard, Anne O'Brien, Deirdre Healy. Other members present were not sworn in and could not vote. There were no objections. Motion carried. (4-0).

### MINUTES

The minutes of the May 19 meeting were presented to the Committee. Ms. Drumm motioned to approve the minutes of the May 19 meeting. Ms. Healy seconded. Motion carried. (4-0).

The June 23 meeting minutes were tabled to next meeting.

### COMMUNITY ELECTRICITY AGGREGATION UPDATE

Ms. McClees reported that the Committee had received a number of online and paper surveys of resident interest in the Community Electricity Aggregation program regarding its interest or support in a 10 percent mandatory increase in renewables for the upcoming program renewal. There were

128 responses. 80 responded in the affirmative that they would support a 10 percent mandatory increase in renewables, which is the equivalent to 62.5% in favor. Forty-five responded not in favor. Three responded that they were not sure. There were a number of people across demographics and the age group most in support of the increase was the 65 plus age-group. They were the most in support of the initiative. The next Board of Selectmen meeting is August 17. Ms. Richard said that she has already filed a request with the Board of Selectmen to include the renewables survey response on the Selectmen's agenda, and will invite Laura Gardner of the Climate Reality Group to attend with Ms. Richard.

### **PLASTIC FREE JULY ECOCHALLENGE**

It is not too late to join the July Ecochallenge. There are some participants but not as many as usual, possibly because of the time of year.

### **REUSABLE BAGS BAN**

Ms. Richard said that the Commonwealth has lifted its ban on plastic bags in response to reducing Covid-19 numbers. Ms. McClees said that she had spoken to the Health Agent regarding the ban lift, but that some individual retailers may be treating the issue differently. The Health Agent also urged ongoing caution and sanitation protocols.

### **ANTI-RACIST SUBCOMMITTEE**

On the request of Ms. Healy, there was a request to discuss the creation of an Anti-Racist Subcommittee. Ms. Healy stated that there is angst in communities regarding the issue of racial justice, and she said that it is a sustainability issue, as it impacts the health of the community. She said that there is a lot of environmental justice issues that impact our black and brown communities harder than white communities. She said that she wanted to take a step in the direction of fixing that.

Susan Spooner commended Ms. Healy for bringing the issue to the Town. She wondered if Ms. Healy wanted to create a subcommittee or to create a new group entirely. Ms. Healy said that her thought was to bring this to a broader group of people.

Ms. Drumm lauded the letter that Ms. Healy submitted. (See attachment). She said that she would like to see an audit included to address income disparity, and other issues of equity within the community that minority communities are facing. Ms. Healy said that she would like to see transparency, caution, and intention in the process.

Mr. Anderson said that the letter was "deeply political" that the group would have to take ownership of. He indicated that there were some edits that he would make to the letter, mainly to state positive objectives.

Ms. O'Brien said that as the HR Director, she would have to recuse herself from the sending of the letter, but that she would encourage the Sustainability Committee to advocate for an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and to ask the Board of Selectmen to create such a community to get more people of color on boards and committees, especially on elected boards.

Ms. McClees offered to gather edits from individual committee members for compilation and distribution at the next meeting on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. That meeting will be held specifically for the finalization of that letter.

#### **GREEN TIPS COLUMN**

Ms. Richard submitted a column to the Neighborhood News prior to its summer break. Another column will follow in August.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Ms. McClees presented the idea of pursuing the program formerly known as the STAR (LEED certification) program. The Master Plan will remain on the agenda until an action plan is devised.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 28 for consideration of a letter regarding the proposed Anti-Racist subcommittee; the next regular business meeting is scheduled for August 18.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Healy motioned to adjourn at 6:59 pm. Ms. Spooner seconded. Vote was unanimous. (4-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Minutes approved August 18, 2020