

MEETING MINUTES**Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 6:30pm**

Ann Richard opened the meeting at 6:32pm

Quorum/Attendance

Present: Ann Richard, Tim Garcia, Wendy Drumm, Christin Ritz, Deirdre Healy, and Sustainability Coordinator Whitney McClees. Susan Spooner joined the meeting late.

Absent: John Pond

Ann Richard notified that the meeting was being conducted remotely and did a roll call vote to confirm that a quorum of members was present remotely.

Land Acknowledgement

Ann Richard read the land acknowledgement.

Minutes

None to review

Single-Use Plastics – Advisory Group Update

Ann Richard tabled this item to the next meeting for an update pending more information from the advisory group after information gathering from Health Agent Dave Flaherty.

Town Meeting article placeholders will be pulled because the language isn't ready for Town Meeting floor.

Green Spaces, Open Spaces, and Pocket Parks

Tim Garcia has nothing in particular to update but did note that the weather is getting warm and getting more recognition for green spaces and potential pocket parks would be good.

Ann Richard mentioned that the Selectboard is considering forming an Open Space Committee.

Whitney McClees provided some background on how the open space committee topic came up with the Selectboard.

Susan Spooner joined the meeting at 6:40pm.

Ann Richard noted that the Fairhaven Neighborhood News has offered to have the Committee do a column on various sustainability related topics so that could be a good fit to get the word out about open spaces.

Whitney McClees suggested highlighting a particular piece of open space each month.

Tim Garcia will look into writing some of these pieces.

Seed Library – Millicent Library

Ann Richard noted the seed library is up and running and has a lot of interest.

Thank you to Christin Ritz for the donation of seeds.

Millicent Library has a display up with books on gardening.

Seeds for Seniors

Wendy Drumm noted it is a fantastic opportunity for seniors. She has purchased trays with peat pots in them and provided them as a donation to the Seeds for Seniors program.

Ann Richard noted it started last year and that they are going to give out both new trays as well as seed refill packs for folks who kept their trays from last year. They are going to work with the Senior Center to get those dropped off.

EcoChallenge

Christin Ritz reached out to the middle school again to see if they were interested in participating and noted that we could also promote it in the Neighborhood News.

Susan Spooner asked if we could plant a tree at the library to replace the one lost in the windstorm as a celebratory event for Earth Month.

Ann Richard noted that due to the loss of a family member, she and her husband are donating a tree in the family member's honor to replace the tree at the library but that we could look into donating and planting a tree in another part of town.

Deirdre Healy noted that there will be an eco-parade on AHA night on April 14. The theme this year is superheroes, inspired by a graphic novel (<https://planetablu.com/>). If anyone is interested in having an eco-float in the parade, it can't use fossil fuels.

Ann Richard noted that Part for the Planet is happening at Buttonwood Park Zoo sometime in April as well.

2040 Master Plan

No particular discussion

Sustainability Coordinator's Report

Whitney McClees provided an update on various grants. She is working on preparing a grant application for a town-wide climate change vulnerability assessment for municipal infrastructure and natural resources and is exploring which grant program is the best fit.

She is also working on submitting a grant application to Massachusetts Emergency Management Association (MEMA) to get grant funding from MEMA to do our Hazard Mitigation Plan update, which is due by June 2023.

We were not eligible for the spring round of Green Communities Competitive Grant due to timing on finishing our current Green Communities Grant. She is planning to submit an application for the fall round of competitive grants. She noted that she is working on coordinating weatherization audits over the summer so it can be prioritized for the fall.

Ann Richard asked how the budget meeting went.

Whitney McClees said it seemed to go well, but that there isn't a recommended budget yet for Town Meeting. She reviewed some of the questions from the Finance Committee and budget team.

Susan Spooner asked questions about conservation permits passed prior to the current agent's tenure.

The Committee was supportive of a full time assistant for the Conservation and Sustainability Department.

Whitney McClees noted that the Conservation and Sustainability Department is currently the only regulatory department that is a staff of one.

General Business

The Committee discussed continuing remote meetings. Whitney McClees reviewed the legislative changes allowing remote meetings and provided an update on the legislation that will allow public bodies to continue to meet remotely.

Ann Richard prefers zoom meetings and noted that they are also more sustainable.

Susan Spooner would prefer returning to in-person meetings.

Wendy Drumm would prefer to stay on zoom.

Ann Richard made a motion to continue remote meetings through July 15, 2022. Seconded by Wendy Drumm. 5-1, motion passes with Susan Spooner opposed.

Ann Richard motioned to adjourn, seconded by Tim Garcia. Motion passed by hand raise.

Respectfully submitted,

Whitney McClees