

Town of Scarborough Sustainability Committee

February 28, 2024 | 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. | Scarborough Town Hall and via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendance – in person

Committee: Anton Bodor, Patrice Kastenzholz, David Kirstein, Deb McDonough, Rick Meinking

Staff: Jami Fitch, Sustainability Manager; Emerson Goodrich, Sustainability Fellow

Town Council: April Sither

Guests: David Kunhardt, resident and member of Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL)

Attendance – Zoom

Staff: Autumn Speer, Planning Director

To re-play the Sustainability Committee's 2/28/24 meeting, please use the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv_zakvl-IY

Call to Order

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am.
2. The Committee voted to approve the minutes from the 1/24/24 meeting. Deb motioned to approve the minutes, David seconded. Vote was unanimous.
3. Changes to the agenda: Add information about the [Too Good To Go app](#).

Old Business

1. Carbon Cash Back
 - Rick made a motion to not move the resolution in support of the carbon fee and dividend legislation forward to the Town Council. Patrice seconded. No additional discussion was allowed.
 - The vote was four in favor, one opposed. Motion passed.
2. Sustainability Reserve Account
 - Rick followed up with Councilor Anderson on a memo about establishing a sustainability reserve account. Jon asked if the account would be included in the Engineering and Technical Services Department budget.
 - Jami shared that she's touched base with Angela Blanchette and Tom Hall about the process. The Finance Committee will take up the request at an upcoming meeting.
 - Autumn shared that electrical permit revenues are trending below budget in FY24, so there may not be funds to direct to into the sustainability account this year.
 - **ACTION: JAMI will follow up to see if a member of the committee should be in attendance for the Finance Committee's discussion.**

Engineering & Technical Services

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3. C-PACE Ordinance
 - The C-PACE ordinance is scheduled to go to the Ordinance Committee on 3/13.
 - The previous Ordinance Committee received a presentation about C-PACE at their October 2023 meeting. A link to the presentation will be provided to the current Ordinance Committee with their 3/13 meeting materials.
4. Review of Council Goals
 - April provided a summary of and context for the Town Council goals pertaining to conservation and sustainability.
 - Patrice asked where Scarborough is in terms of the 30x30 goals. Jami explained that Scarborough is around 15% conserved, or about half way to the 30% goal. She also shared that the Open Space Plan will help refine these numbers. The Parks and Conservation Land Board is working on a request to re-authorize Scarborough's land bond to fund land purchases. The land bond is an important tool for attaining the 30x30 goal.
 - Rick asked if Conservation as understood by the Council is only regarding land. April said the Council's goals are meant to support ongoing work, but conservation is being talked about in a narrow scope or just pertaining to land.
 - Jami explained that the Town is developing an Open Space Plan to determine how the Town can achieve its 30x30 goal. An Ad-Hoc Open Space Committee to support the development of the Plan has been formed and includes representatives from several of the Town's advisory committees and other Town organizations.

New Business

1. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
 - Jami shared that some councilors have requested a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) be included in the Town's FY25 Capital Improvement Plan. The CAAP will include outcomes and recommendations from the Open Space Plan and Vulnerability Assessment plus additional information from a town-wide greenhouse gas inventory. The "action" portion of the plan will be a more elaborate version of the Town's Comprehensive Energy and Sustainability Plan, which was adopted in 2017.
 - Jami explained that the CAAP would go to bid to hire someone who could bring together the Open Space Plan, Vulnerability Assessment, and greenhouse gas inventory, along with strategies and priorities.
 - The Committee is in support of a CAAP. They would like to pursue a Community Action Grant to offset the cost of the CAAP. Jami shared that the fall funding round is probably the most appropriate time to apply for the grant.
 - Jami suggested that the CAAP could also be developed using the EECBG funding discussed at the last meeting. The EECBG grant is \$75,000.
 - The Committee supports for using EECBG for the solar array and seeking additional funding for the CAAP.
 - Rick asks if anything is needed from the committee and Jami suggests sending a memo to the Town Council in support of a CAAP, once the draft budget and capital improvement plan are available.
 - **ACTION: JAMI will begin drafting a memo on behalf of the Committee in support of a CAAP.**
 - Jami shared that she's heard comments from residents that sustainability is expensive. Educating the public about how long-term savings outweigh upfront investments would be beneficial.

- David Kunhardt noted that Piper Shores recently completed a climate action plan. He shared that they will save \$60,000 in the first year of implementation, which will continue to significantly increase will time.
- Jami suggested highlighting Piper Shores' sustainability efforts in a Town newsletter.
- Rick asked about the joint Town Council workshop that was held with Cape Elizabeth to talk about Sawyer Street.
- Jami explained that the Towns of Scarborough and Cape Elizabeth applied for and were awarded a \$1.59M grant from the Maine Natural Resources Compensation Program to restore Spurwink Marsh, including removing 1,400-feet of Sawyer Street from the marsh. Councilors from both towns and members of the public indicated support for the project.
- Each Town will need to contribute \$185,000 to construct the turn arounds at each the end of the road.
- There has been a lot of media coverage about the project in local papers and on television.
- The road closure would not happen until late 2026/early 2027. Initial work will focus on restoration and enhancement of the upper marsh to prepare it for increased tidal flow.
- Many people have asked about a bike or walking path being maintained across the marsh. The grant funding is contingent on the road being fully removed, so maintaining a path will not be possible. Removing Sawyer Street will allow the Towns to focus efforts and resources on other vulnerable roads.
- **ACTION: RICK will share Piper Shores Plan.**

2. Hosting a Coastal Meetup Event

- Jami asked about the Committee's interest in hosting a coastal meetup with support from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI).
- GMRI hosts citizen science events during predicted high tides, discusses the changes and impacts of high tides, and has community members document tides and observations.
- Jami shared that there are roughly 80 days in 2024 where tides will be 10.5 feet or more. High tides coinciding with storms, such as in January, have drastic impacts as well.
- Emerson explained how GMRI documents and shows the data collected by citizens and at the coastal meetups. She said it's a good way to get community members involved and thinking about impacts of weather events.
- The next feasible high tides for a meetup will be in August or September. The event is intended initiate community involvement and familiarize them with documenting the events. Participants will then be able to document future events on their own. Photos of past events can also be submitted.
- Astronomical high tides will become the normal tides moving forward, and documenting different types of tides will be helpful.
- The Committee supports coordinating a coastal meetup and suggests offering a table about the effort at Sustainable Scarborough Day.
- David Kunhardt suggested climatereanalyzer.org as another site for historical climate data. The site is affiliated with the University of Maine Climate Change Institute.
- August will likely be the target, Jami and Emerson will begin working on the format of the event and collaborating with GMRI.

Updates

1. Town Council Update

- April shared that the Ordinance Committee will take up the C-PACE ordinance in March.
- April and Nick are busy with the newly reconstituted School Building Project. Committee meets Monday nights at 6pm at the Public Safety Building.

- Getting ready to launch FY25 budget and the re-eval. The March Communications Committee meeting will be focused on budget communications.
- Anton asked about School Building project. April explained that Phase 1 is asking the 70 person ad hoc committee to develop a problem statement and recommendation to Council and School Board about what Phase 2 should be. April explained that the School Building Committee elected a leadership team to help steer the larger committee.
- The School Building Committee meetings have minutes and Zoom recordings posted on the [Committee's webpage](#). Meetings are posted in the *Scarborough Leader* under Things to Do, as well as on both Town Calendars and in the Town's e-newsletter.

2. Planning Board

- Rick shared that a new credit union is proposed at the corner of Payne Rd. and Gorham Rd. Portland Rugby Club got approved for a new facility on Two Road Rd. beyond the speedway.
- Autumn shared that the hotel/motel conversion to provide an option for affordable housing that will go back to council soon.
- The proposal for redevelopment of Beach Ridge Speedway should go to the Planning Board in a few months.

3. Conservation Commission

- Jami shared that the Commission recently wrapped up their proposed environmental standards, which proposes additional setback and buffers around natural resources. The environmental standards are scheduled to go to the Ordinance Committee in March for their initial review. SEDCO has requested a presentation on the standards for their Board. A GIS application is being developed to look at parcels that may be affected by the new setbacks. These will be some of the most stringent standards in the State. The benefits of the marsh system was particularly visible during the January storms, as it absorbed much of the energy coming in. These wetlands are not currently protected.
- Patrice asked about the timeline for the ordinance. Jami explained that it's expected to be a long process given anticipated public comment.

4. Transportation Committee

- The Transportation Committee is working on a traffic calming policy, which will go to the Town Council in March. The process will allow residents to request an analysis of their area if they believe speeds are too high. At least 10 people have to sign the request. Traffic calming measures include medians, islands, speed bumps, etc. in order to reduce speeds. The Town is purchasing temporary speed bumps as a test measure for certain areas.
- Anton asked about enforcing traffic laws using traffic cameras. State law prohibits this type of enforcement.
- David Kirstein asked about the Gorham bypass. Jami and April shared that the Town as a body is in favor of the project. April shared that she appreciates the chance for residents to weigh in but emphasizes the Town Council has no control or authority over the project.
- Jami noted that only 35% of the easements necessary for the project have been secured. Controversy over impacts to Smiling Hill Farm are noted.
- David Kirstein added that building roads rather than adding other forms of transit, such as buses, is not a viable solution. Jami noted that MTA has acknowledged neither new roads nor buses alone can address the connectivity challenges that have come with increased population in Southern Maine.
- Anton mentioned that new roads increase congestion, rather than alleviating congestion, creating a recursive problem.

- David Kunhardt noted that the State plans to revise Maine Won't Wait by December 2024, and Jami adds that she is following these revisions but neither she nor the Town is involved beyond that extent. Rick adds there are many opportunities to engage with this Council.

Next Meeting: March 27th, 2023

Topics: Sustainable Scarborough Day, Anton suggests Emerson leads a discussion on a topic of interest to her

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 am.

Future Projects List:

- Community solar / municipal solar array
- Municipal building energy audits
- Residential energy efficiency grants
- Electric school buses
- Recycling information for homeowners when houses change hands
- Composting
- Tree preservation ordinance