

Town of Scarborough Sustainability Committee

June 24, 2026 | 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. | Scarborough Town Hall and via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Committee (in person): Ron Allen, Anton Bodor, Lydia Jopp, Patrice Kastenholz, Deb McDonough, Dan Shapiro

Staff: Jami Fitch, Helen Harman, Autumn Speer

Guests (Zoom) Maggie Sommers and Sarah Woodbury from Maine Conservation Voters

[Meeting recording](#)

Call to Order

1. The meeting is called to order at 8:02 am.
2. Patrice motions to approve the minutes, Lydia seconds. Vote was unanimous. Motion passes.

Public Comment

1. None.

Old Business

1. Data Centers
 - Jami updated the group on the status of Scarborough's temporary moratorium on data center development. The Town Council passed the six-month moratorium at its 6/3 meeting. The moratorium is retroactive to 4/1 and is set to expire in November. The Town Council is able to pass a six-month extension, if needed.
 - Maggie Sommers and Sarah Woodbury from Maine Conservation Voters (MCV) attended the meeting to provide an overview of issues surrounding data center development, the State's Data Center Advisory Council, and things municipalities should consider when evaluating data centers as allowable uses in their ordinances. MCV has pull together a [community toolkit](#) to help municipalities navigate the data center issue.
 - Highlights from the discussion with MCV:
 - Some of DEP's existing regulations have loopholes or vague language. Vague language gives the Department flexibility to implement the rules, how the language is interpreted varies depending on who the Governor is.
 - There are gaps in the State's current regulations: noise standards, thermal pollution (DEP allows development to impact water temps $\pm 5^{\circ}\text{F}$, which is too much from some aquatic species), and more.
 - PFAS products law doesn't go into effect until 2032, so developments don't need to comply until then. The law also includes broad exemptions that data centers could exploit.

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- “Closed loop” facilities still have some discharges and have the potential to discharge pollutants.
- Wastewater treatment facilities may require upgrades. It’s not clear who is responsible for paying for those upgrades.
- Data centers tend to drive up the cost of electricity for everyone due to their high use of electricity.
- Need to specify who is responsible for clean up or decommissioning of defunct facilities.
- The Public Utilities Commission has a case looking into data centers. CMP’s most recent rate proposal does not include planning for an increase in load from data centers, which means they’re not investing in their infrastructure. Rate payers may end up paying for at least a portion of the grid upgrades due to data center development.
- Seven municipalities have passed a data center moratorium and four others are considering it.
- [Nassau County, FL’s](#) data center moratorium included language related to salt marshes and saltwater usage.
- Maine should look at state regulations around mining and use it as a model for data center regulations.
- Questions from Committee:
 - Is there any discussion of emergency legislation to try to pass another statewide moratorium?
No. MCV is willing to reach out to legislators to encourage emergency legislation be introduced. The chance that another moratorium passes the Legislature is unlikely for several reasons.
 - Are there any positive aspects of data centers?
The Data Center Advisory Council is overall cautiously positive about data centers. Most members want to ensure the development happens in a responsible way that won’t impact the health of the environment or communities. Former brownfield sites are ideal locations for data centers (especially in economically depressed towns)
 - What is the next step for the Advisory Council?
They will continue to hold monthly meetings on specific topics. The Council needs to figure out public comment, and MCV is tracking this issue and will publicize opportunities to engage. There is a survey on the Council’s website that closes soon that hasn’t been well publicized.
 - Is there a sense of what the Council’s final report will entail? It seems like they have pre-determined the outcomes.
Public engagement and comment will be critical. Transparency in the process is also very important.
 - Are there any good data center models in other areas of the country?
Not sure. There is guidance that exists, but unknown whether any data centers have followed it. There is new technology that is starting to be used that’s supposed to be better, but not sure if there is a facility that has put all technology into practice. There are also tradeoffs in some of the new technologies. For example, closed loop systems are better in terms of water use but they use much more energy for cooling systems.
 - Is there a place where good regulation exists and a data center has been developed?
Data center developers tend to avoid areas where regulations are very strong.
- The Committee discusses how to help inform Scarborough residents of opportunities to engage on this issue.
 - Info can be shared in the Town Manager’s update at Town Council meetings.
 - Provide information in the Town’s e-newsletter and on social media.

- Council's Communication Committee may be able to support engagement.
- Scarborough's state legislators may be able to share info in their newsletters and on their social media.
- Community Facebook groups have a high engagement and may be able to share information.
- There is a group of Scarborough residents who put out signs that may be able to help get the word out.
- What additional information does the Committee need?
 - Committee should review pros and cons to data center development. What is the lifespan of a data center? Can they be developed sustainably? If the cons outweigh the pros, the Town should either set regulations or outright ban them.
 - Is there a way to address future high-input (water, energy, etc.) uses that haven't been contemplated yet?
- Key questions the Town needs to consider during the moratorium:
 - Should data centers be allowed in town at all?
 - If yes, where should they be allowed?
 - Should they be allowed by right, or only through a conditional/special use process?
 - What standards should they have to meet?
 - What information should applicants be required to provide before the town makes a decision?
 - What independent technical review does the town need?
 - Who pays for any impacts, upgrades, or additional burdens on public systems?
- Role of the Committee during the moratorium:
 - Develop list of pros and cons.
 - Suggest other guardrails if the Council decides to include data centers as an allowable use.
- **ACTION: JAMI will share the Advisory Council website and survey with the Committee. Future surveys will also be shared out.**

Updates

1. Town Council
 - The mobile food vendor ordinance was revised to allow food trucks in more locations, and mobile saunas may soon be an allowed use in Scarborough.
2. Planning Board
 - Planning Board held a public hearing on mobile saunas, reviewed plans for trail parking at a Scarborough Land Trust parcel, and considered site plan amendments in The Downs.
3. Sustainable Scarborough Day
 - Response from vendors and partners has been low this year. The Committee will discuss how to move forward at the next meeting.
4. Transportation Committee
 - A public meeting with Metro is planned to review the new transit service on 7/28 at 6:00 pm.
5. Conservation Commission
 - Conservation Commission reviewed the Low Impact Development standards and a proposed tree cutting and site clearing ordinance.

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 am.

Next Meeting: July 22, 2026 at 8:00 am.

Future Projects List:

- School Building Process
- Communications, outreach, and engagement
- Community solar / municipal solar array
- Recycling information for homeowners when houses change hands
- Composting/food waste
- Residential energy efficiency grants
- Coordination with Scarborough Public Schools
- Municipal building energy audits
- Electric school buses
- Tree preservation ordinance
- Swap shop
- Energy stretch code
- Incremental fees for trash bins
- 10-year cost-benefit analysis for building systems
- Storm drain stenciling