

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes 2/22/24

Facilitation: Jess Blasko

Minutes: Evy Douglass and Gabe Weinrieb

Attendance: Kate Homet, Jess Blasko, Herb Lloyd, Bert Cohen, Effie Malley, Christina Dubin, Kristin Shaw (zoom), Leigh Hudson (zoom), Max Schrader (zoom), Chas Sullivan, Bill Lyons, Gabe Weinrieb, Evy Douglass, Josh Denton

Next Meeting: March 21, 2024

Minutes Acceptance

Accept January minutes

January minutes amendment -names missed on an attendance (Emma Jeffrey, Evy Douglass, Kristen Shaw, Gabe Weinrieb, Max Shraider (zoom), Brian Goetz, Jay Barnard, Jillian Richmond

Kate Cook is drafting roles for the committee

CAP will be brought to city council March-May

Effie motion, Herb Lloyd second-no objections

Updated Facilitator/Recorder Schedule

Kate Homet: Torey will facilitate when Jess is supposed to

The person's responsibility for finding a new facilitator if absent when originally scheduled

Skip the Stuff- Ordinance (report back to City Council)

Christina Dubin: "Skip the stuff ordinance."

Low Bar: switching take-out accessories from opt-out to opt-in

These items are not recyclable; less than 6% of plastic is recycled anyway

Restaurants will not spend the money on these items that are not needed (\$5000 per year)

Covers third-party delivery services (check the box)

Ocean-friendly restaurants: by default, are complying with this (press room, white heron, flatbread)

Why an ordinance: a level playing field for everyone, eliminates confusion and ensures new businesses are aware and will comply

The inspector would just have another check box when inspecting

Education and outreach: The sustainability committee partnered with the health department, allowing go between community and restaurants

Covers napkins, toothpicks, silverware, etc.

Jess Blasko: from the city perspective, this ordinance aligns with the values of many city organizations. This aligns with NHDES's goal of reducing our solid waste as a state. The council referred to the sustainability committee and legal.

Chas: In California, it comes in reusable containers, and you can get a discount if you get one of these reusable containers.

Christina Dubin: Reusable seacoast, four restaurant pilots (Dover and Portsmouth) where people get a reusable container to create a proof of concept.

Leigh Hudson: Incite how many people cannot afford these sustainable options. Jess clarifies that customers do not have to change anything fiscally. Leigh is interested in removing all plastics

Herb Lloyd: Add something under education and outreach to ensure we educate restaurant owners on other reusable options (ex. napkins not wrapped in plastic bags).

Kristin Shaw: from the health department, some issues must be addressed. Language needs to be changed to favor removing all plastics. The health department is eager to work on this. The health department has no authority over third-party apps—issues with previous ordinances enacted. Effie clarifies the timeframe for legal review. Kate informed us that the primary legal person (City Attorney Morrell) is on vacation, but if we need to work through these, we must push back the next city council hearing from March 18. Staff would look at it before early March, and the sustainability committee could vote on final edits in a special meeting before March 28.

Chas clarifies that this team has no objections as it is currently.

Kate Homet clarifies that the main issue is the ability of health to enforce.

Bert Cohen suggests that the sustainability committee favors the conceptual framework with people working on the language. When legal comes through, we could ask everyone on the committee for objections.

Leigh Hudson asks if this covers public places. Chirstina Dubin clarifies that it does not include these public places. Leigh believes that implementation in schools would be beneficial. Kristin Shaw says that the health department wants to involve schools in this.

Kristin Shaw informs us that a company that provides compostable restaurantware is interested in the sustainability fair.

Kristin Shaw clarifies that the current policy for city property does not include flatware so revisiting that is not a bad idea.

Bert Cohen motion that we wait until the final language to show our support

Jess Blasko motioned to move the meeting until March 21 to vote on the Skip the Stuff ordinance before the packet is due for the city to review. Effie Malley second- no objections

Small Gas Engines - Community Education and Awareness

Herb Lloyd proposed that we do an education campaign on lawn mower rebate programs. Educated about the benefits of moving to electric; the library was interested in creating a webpage draft of an article for the city newsletter. Effie explains you could add this to Bright Action. Kate informed the committee that it could be posted on a city website.

Effie Malley believes the city page needs to be updated, and it would be messy to have people post individual things. Bert suggests posting on the SEACAN website as an individual project. Jess adds that the sustainability committee website is a resource page that shows people's different efforts to become more sustainable. Bill adds that all these individual efforts are put into a broad concept. Effie Malley adds that inundating people with webpages is not beneficial.

Chas adds the idea of enabling heretics, giving people the power to allow grassroots ideas. What can we do to enable passionate people?

Herb Lloyd adds that we do not have any annual or long-term goals for the committee.

Bill Lyons suggests including links to other successful city programs so people understand how it is helpful and can learn more.

Neighborhood Tool Share Program - Community Education and Awareness

Herb Lloyd proposed a neighborhood tool share initiative. Wrote out the steps to implement this in your neighborhood. Recommends working with city staff, library director, and this committee to implement.

Effie Malley suggested adding to SEACAN. Suggest adding this to the city-wide neighborhood committee.

Bert Cohen asks what the committee is and what is the role in supporting individuals. Effie Malley shared that supporting the CAP and sustainable practices are our goals.

Jess asks to formulate more of a plan to bring back to the committee. Herb adds that the sustainability committee needs to draft the goals, initiatives, and priorities of this committee. Kate suggests allocating an entire meeting to goal setting. Chas asks each person have their own projects and come together to discuss.

Jess adds this content is important but we are going to step back and focus on our goals. Next meeting we should discuss our goals.

Sustainability Committee Webpage

Will discuss next meeting

Solar Overlay District and HDC solar panels

Josh says the city council asked the planning and sustainability department what makes the most sense. It is currently with the planning board. Effie adds the HDC wants to keep their view and Beth Moreau will report back at the March 4th meeting.

EV Charging

Josh has not heard back, but there has been an ordinance change allowing the city to make the necessary changes.

Community Engagement Committee

Bert adds as a standing committee we can support the community engagement of the CAP, Seacoast CAN as a major one. SEACAN is sponsoring community conversations.

Bill Lyons adds that Portsmouth Climate Action Now is discussing adding five more community conversations. Topic ideas: food waste and composting, transportation, health, adaptation and resilience, and energy. 90 minute meeting with some content presentation and some activities. Considering the sustainability fair as the first and finish the five within the calendar year. Kate adds the city is in support and is how the CAP gained support.

Effie Malley adds you could tie in Bright Action, giving people actions steps after the community conversation

Jess Blasko updates on the Sustainability Fair on Sunday, April 14th from 12-3pm at the Connie Bean. There are 12 groups confirmed out the 60 sent out and there will be food and live music. Jess confirms members do not have to be residents of Portsmouth.

CAP Workshop #3

Kate Homet adds that the third CAP workshop went well and the online reflection form closed last night. The city is reviewing to see what they can add. Effie adds that it is crucial for all department heads to review as many things are municipal.

Kate confirms that it will go to the city council for final adoption. Department heads, city managers, and the sustainability committee will also review.

Effie asks for a presentation on the renewable energy policy from Josh

Bill Lyons motion to adjourn- no objections