

**SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE, CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** December 18, 2025

**Time:** 6:30 — 8:30 PM

**Location:** Conference Room A City Hall

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Bill Lyons, Bert Cohen, Effie Malley, Rhianne Tallarico, Fred Calcinari, Jess Blasko, Colleen Spear

**Excused Absences:** Nancy Clayburgh, Josh Denton, Sully Otis, Emmie Wentworth

**Staff in Attendance:** Kate Homet

**Guests in Attendance:** Tyler Garzo, Evy Douglass (PHS), Max Wiater (DPW)

**Facilitator:** Bill Lyons

**Minutes:** Rhianne Tallarico

**Agenda**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes**
- 3. Committee Administration - January Election**
- 4. Community Engagement**
- 5. Trees in Portsmouth**
- 6. CAP - Committee Action Tracking**
- 7. Capital Budget Requests from Committee**
- 8. Portsmouth Master Plan**
- 9. Energy Advisory Committee Update**
- 10. Content Topics, Presentations for Future Meetings**
- 11. Other Business**

Topic	Notes	Votes / Actions
Acceptance of Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Motion made to accept Nov 2025 minutes with discussed minor edits</li> </ul>	<b>Vote:</b> Nov 2025 minutes with discussed minor edits accepted
Committee Administration - January Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Co-chairs Jess Blasko and Effie Malley will step down from their role, necessitating election of a new chair or co-chairs in Jan 2025</li> </ul>	N/A
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Portsmouth Climate Action:</b> No update</li> <li>● <b>Community Conversations:</b> Looking for future discussion topics</li> <li>● <b>BrightAction:</b> Contract ends in Mar 2026 and budget does not support renewal. Consider brainstorming other ways to fund (\$2500/yr).</li> <li>● <b>Committee Webpage:</b> Committee discussed minor edits to updated webpage content</li> <li>● <b>Sustainability Fair:</b> Will occur on Friday April 10, 2026 from 4:30 - 7:00 PM</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action:</b> Add “BrightAction Website Walkthrough” to future agenda</p> <p><b>Vote:</b> Fred to finalize and implement committee webpage content</p>
Trees in Portsmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Max, an arborist from Portsmouth DPW spoke to handling of trees in Portsmouth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Portsmouth ordinance only applies to trees in public spaces</li> <li>○ DPW is putting resources towards public trees</li> <li>○ More language about conserving trees in permitting process could be helpful</li> <li>○ Future ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Put signs on trees listing the benefits of each single tree (CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered, stormwater absorbed, etc.)</li> <li>■ Localize animal waste, as it affects the tree bark</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Action:</b> Jess to facilitate discussion with Margot Doering and Sustainability, Trees and Greenery and Conservation Committees on reducing old, grown trees that are cut down
CAP - Committee Action Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Live dashboard or publicly available tracking of CAP progress with graphics/visuals would be valuable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At a minimum:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Action:</b> Kate to explore what CAP progress tracking on Portsmouth website is feasible

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What % are complete and what are they?</li> <li>■ What % are underway and what are they?</li> </ul>	<b>Action:</b> Add “CAP Tracking on Portsmouth Website” to future agenda
Capital Budget Requests from Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Public Transportation Feasibility Study was heavily discussed at recent CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It was understood that this is not just about microtransit</li> <li>○ About half of the City Council spoke in support of the proposal</li> <li>○ The Council voted to list with the parking garage study and to fund in 2027 with general funds or other revenue</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Committee should begin thinking about CIP proposals for 2027</li> </ul>	N/A
Portsmouth Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Master Plan Advisory Committee met in Nov 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Learned results of public outreach</li> <li>○ 2.6% of city population have voted/provided input on Master Plan, the vast majority are retired</li> <li>○ Citizens care about accessible housing, protecting city character, focus on non-downtown Portsmouth, lower taxes, etc.</li> <li>○ Core values of Master Plan: Vibrancy, Authenticity, Diversity, Connectivity, Resiliency (Note: These are the existing core values, but new Master Plan will revise their definitions)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Next meeting in Feb 2026</li> <li>● Goal to have first publicly available draft in April 2026</li> <li>● Sustainability Committee may suggest heightening the urgency of sustainability (i.e. greenhouse gas reduction)</li> </ul>	<b>Action:</b> Add discussion of what this Committee wants to relay to the Master Plan Advisory Committee to Jan 2026 agenda

Energy Advisory Committee Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A level 3 charger has been installed in downtown Portsmouth (behind Piscataqua Savings Bank)</li> <li>● The Energy Advisory Committee is now a permanent committee</li> <li>● The Energy Advisory Committee is concerned that citizens using Community Power (which uses renewable energy sources) will switch to Eversource, as Eversource now has lower rates</li> <li>● An RFP (request for proposal) for the Jones Avenue Solar Array Project is being drafted by an outside firm</li> </ul>	N/A
Content Topics, Presentations for Future Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider further discussion or presentation on electric school buses</li> </ul>	N/A
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Opportunity to define capstone project for UNH business student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cost to Committee: \$0</li> <li>○ Proposed Capstone Project: Report to Sustainability Committee on communication mechanism(s) to best engage with stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Committee will soon be appointed a new City Council liaison</li> <li>● Next Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitator: Rhianne Tallarico</li> <li>○ Minutes: Jess Blasko</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Action:</b> Kate to talk to city Legal and HR departments about feasibility of defining UNH student's capstone project</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Relay to Colleen that she should proceed with UNH student capstone project application (NOTE: Application due Dec 31)</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Kate to take inventory of who has not been in attendance</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Add Colleen's liaison spreadsheet to future agenda</p>