

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"> Motion made to accept Nov 2025 minutes with discussed minor edits 	Vote: Nov 2025 minutes with discussed minor edits accepted
Committee Administration - January Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	N/A
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portsmouth Climate Action: No update Community Conversations: Looking for future discussion topics BrightAction: Contract ends in Mar 2026 and budget does not support renewal. Consider brainstorming other ways to fund (\$2500/yr). Committee Webpage: Committee discussed minor edits to updated webpage content Sustainability Fair: Will occur on Friday April 10, 2026 from 4:30 - 7:00 PM 	Action: Add “BrightAction Website Walkthrough” to future agenda Vote: Fred to finalize and implement committee webpage content
Trees in Portsmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max, an arborist from Portsmouth DPW spoke to handling of trees in Portsmouth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portsmouth ordinance only applies to trees in public spaces DPW is putting resources towards public trees More language about conserving trees in permitting process could be helpful Future ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put signs on trees listing the benefits of each single tree (CO₂ sequestered, stormwater absorbed, etc.) Localize animal waste, as it affects the tree bark 	Action: 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"> Live dashboard or publicly available tracking of CAP progress with graphics/graphics would be valuable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At a minimum: 	Action: Kate to explore what CAP progress tracking on Portsmouth website is feasible

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What % are complete and what are they? ■ What % are underway and what are they? 	Action: Add “CAP Tracking on Portsmouth Website” to future agenda
Capital Budget Requests from Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Public Transportation Feasibility Study was heavily discussed at recent CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was understood that this is not just about microtransit ○ About half of the City Council spoke in support of the proposal ○ The Council voted to list with the parking garage study and to fund in 2027 with general funds or other revenue ● Committee should begin thinking about CIP proposals for 2027 	N/A
Portsmouth Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master Plan Advisory Committee met in Nov 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learned results of public outreach ○ 2.6% of city population have voted/provided input on Master Plan, the vast majority are retired ○ Citizens care about accessible housing, protecting city character, focus on non-downtown Portsmouth, lower taxes, etc. ○ 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) ● Next meeting in Feb 2026 ● Goal to have first publicly available draft in April 2026 ● Sustainability Committee may suggest heightening the urgency of sustainability (i.e. greenhouse gas reduction) 	Action: 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"> • A level 3 charger has been installed in downtown Portsmouth (behind Piscataqua Savings Bank) • The Energy Advisory Committee is now a permanent committee • 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 • An RFP (request for proposal) for the Jones Avenue Solar Array Project is being drafted by an outside firm 	N/A
Content Topics, Presentations for Future Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider further discussion or presentation on electric school buses 	N/A
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to define capstone project for UNH business student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cost to Committee: \$0 ◦ Proposed Capstone Project: Report to Sustainability Committee on communication mechanism(s) to best engage with stakeholders • Committee will soon be appointed a new City Council liaison • Next Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Facilitator: Rianne Tallarico ◦ Minutes: Jess Blasko 	<p>Action: Kate to talk to city Legal and HR departments about feasibility of defining UNH student's capstone project</p> <p>Action: Relay to Colleen that she should proceed with UNH student capstone project application (NOTE: Application due Dec 31)</p> <p>Action: Kate to take inventory of who has not been in attendance</p> <p>Action: Add Colleen's liaison spreadsheet to future agenda</p>