

Sustainability & Natural Resources Management Board

Minutes: 4 11 24

Approved: 7 18 24

Attending:

Community Forest Working Group:	Dave Griswold
Conservation Working Group:	Jane Costlow
Natural Products & Agriculture Working Group:	Chris Carson
Sustainability Working Group:	Ralph Harder
Mayor's Representative:	Councilor Tim Cowan ABSENT
Planning Board Representative:	Stacy LaBlanc ABSENT
Excused:	None
Staff:	City Mgr. Crowell, Jonathan Labonte

Guests: None

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Call to Order: 6:06

- 1. Minutes** for 7 13 23 and 1 18 24 were approved.
- 2. Public Participation:** None
- 3. New Members:** Brian Cullen was approved as a new member of the Sustainability Working Group.
- 4. Solid Waste and Recycling update:** Ralph gave an update on work to develop recommendations to address the Council charge to review solid waste and recycling in Auburn. SNRB approved a motion to establish a Solid Waste and Recycling Task Force consisting of Sustainability Working Group members, SNRB members and other volunteers as needed.
- 5. Community Resilience Partnership:** Jonathan Labonte reviewed the steps taken to successfully apply for a Community Resilience Partnership with the State. An internal review and public workshop took place this winter. Discussions have focused on how

the City will promote engagement. Our application has been accepted, allowing the City to apply for grants. The City has applied for a \$50k grant to install EV chargers at the library (2) and the hockey arena (4) and is waiting to hear. There will be another round of grant applications this fall.

6. Comp Plan: Phil reported that the process to update the Comp Plan will start this fall.

7. City Manager's Sustainability Initiatives Report:

- a. Community Resilience Partnership grant application (see above)
- b. Nearing completion of work under a \$75k Federal Energy Efficiency Block Grant \$75k for mechanical upgrades to Auburn Hall.
- c. Working with CMP on interconnection studies for roof top solar projects at the Arena and APW building.
- d. City saved approximately \$300k in 2023 per the Net Energy Billing Credits Agreement to purchase electricity from the Hackett Mills Hydro Facility.
- e. Working on upgrading the Building Automation Systems at all city schools to increase efficiency of mechanical equipment.
- f. Working with the School Department and consultants to capture tax credits available to municipalities under the Inflation Reduction Act. The ELHS geothermal system qualifies. System upgrades for energy efficiency will involve 47 buildings, including the new fire station, the public safety facility and the new PAL Center.

8. Transit: A transit working group will convene in June. Focus to include:

- a. 1 year extension of City Link agreement (LATC).
- b. Pilot bus program for direct service between L-A and Portland, targeted to start in June.
- c. Expanding the Work Transit program which provides transportation from home to work location. Several businesses are participating with good results. This allows job applicants without transportation to go to work.

9. Working Group updates:

- a. NP&Ag WG- 2023-March 2024 Summary
 - i. Compilation of a Resource List for farmers.
 - ii. Inventory of land uses (and land use) in our Resource Protection Zone
 - iii. Letter of support for the Food Forest Proposal
 - iv. Hosted community listening session in January for the Non-Hobby farmland use ordinance in the Lake Auburn Watershed.
 - v. Formation of a working group to create guidelines for ag/farm use in the Lake Auburn Watershed district.
 - vi. Reviewed, discussed and offered constructive ideas for 2 proposed farm plans.

- vii. Reviewed and discussed Local Foods Action Plan
 - viii. Discussion with Chris Piercy from the Auburn Schools Food Service on accessing more local foods for school meals program.
 - ix. Planning farm visit event in the fall.
 - x. Organized and promoted April 13 Land Use Forum.
- b. Conservation WG-
- i. Pollinator Garden webinar was presented in March. About 30 attended. It is posted on the City U-Tube channel. A demonstration pollinator garden plot will be established at Pettengill.
 - ii. Earth Day pick up at various locations is planned for 4 20.
 - iii. A revised grant application for the removal of the Littlefield dam has been submitted. Initial feedback is positive. Waiting for a decision.
- c. Community Forest WG:
- i. Bittersweet video was developed with Conservation Working Group. Credit to Carol Lane for the videography. It is posted on the City U-Tube channel and has gotten 200+ views.
 - ii. Arbor Week (May 19-25) plans include roll out of “Notable Trees of L-A”, and screening of a film on the American Chestnut at the Senior Center on 5 23. Representatives will attend the State Arbor Week Event in Augusta to receive Tree City USA recognition for 21st year.
 - iii. Work is being done to apply for a Project Canopy Grant to make improvements at the Tree Nursery.
 - iv. CFWG met with representatives of Bowdoin College’s Tree Campus committee in March to exchange ideas.
- d. Sustainability Working Group:
- i. Efforts have centered on the solid waste and recycling project.

10. Sustainability Manager Position: SNRB members inquired about the possibility of establishing a Sustainability Manager position to coordinate efforts, provide focus and inform the public of Auburn’s efforts. Phil said there are several positions currently working on these issues: Derek Belanger on energy efficiency, the ELHS systems manager, and Jonathan Labonte for transportation.

NEXT MEETING: July 11, 2024

Adjourn: 7:20