

Strategic Sustainability and Livability Committee of Great Barrington

Minutes of August 24, 2020

Location: Zoom Meeting

Start: 5:32

End: 7:00

Name			Name	
Devan Arnold	X		Natalie Narotzky	X
Jesse Carter	O		Jovanina Pagano	X
Kate Burke	O		Mark Phillips	X
Ananda Hartzell	O		Aretha Whitehead	X

X = present O = absent

Note taker: Jovanina

ISSUE	DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS, DECISIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION/FOLLOW-UP NEXT DEADLINE
Approval of January, 2020 minutes	Unanimous approval	
Reconnecting since COVID (citizens and committee members)	Robby Baier (citizen) – passionate about making the Berkshires more bicycle friendly. Monument Mountain plan is really exciting!	

<p>each spoke)</p>	<p>Aretha – lots of watching kids! Usually run a climate change program for after school, but now cancelled. Culinary program and summer program as well. Greenagers has been exploring how to help out with families who don't have child care. 110 raised garden beds this year! Huge increase. SS&L work – wants to keep a good relationship with Sean Van Deusen, and stay focused around composting.</p> <p>Faith Shaeffer (citizen)– works with the National Young Farmer's Coalition. Works on federal level on farm policy and racial justice.</p> <p>Jesse – was in AZ studying regenerative ??? (construction, landscaping). Really energized around education and focus on the younger generation. Volunteered with the Food Pantry as a Spanish-speaking volunteer. Gave 90,000 lbs of food since March. Wants to stay connected to them around food security and continue to work with other Spanish speakers to make sure that folks who are native Spanish speakers are included and connected to resources.</p> <p>Charlie Medieros (citizen) – In transition, graduated from HS. At MMRHS – involved in a composting initiative. There's a new subcommittee at the HS – "Sustainable Monument". Wants to be a support of the committee work, particularly with the work with the school and around composting.</p> <p>Pedro Pachano – On the Planning Board. Interested in our work, particularly the LED work – the PB chair is interested in putting together a bylaw around lighting. Particularly big developments and new developments, like the Holiday Inn.</p> <p>Vivian Orłowski (citizen) – On the Ag Committee, still waiting to hear about the grant they wrote re: food security. Interested to hear about the MVP grant and next steps. Ag Commission – always looking for opportunities to protect pollinators, and the LED issue is related, given</p>	
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	<p>that lighting is a death traps for moths and other pollinators (many other insects as well). Sustainable Monument – in touch with them and SM wants Ag Commission input.</p> <p>Robert Holcomn (citizen) – Economic Development Committee. Interested in seeing if there’s any overlap with any of the work the EDC is doing.</p> <p>Jovanina – really interested in racial justice and wants to make sure that all the work we do has this as a central focus.</p> <p>Natalie – what sustainability policies can we focus on that have racial and social justice as the centerpiece.</p>	
Stanton Home composting project	<p>Peter Stanton - curious to know what the committee is focusing on in relation to compost.</p> <p>Aretha – She and Mark had a conversation with Sean Van Deusen many months ago, informative. Aretha has a relationship with Simon’s Rock, though the school is focused on safety first and it’s chaotic right now. Aretha interested in opening the conversation about composting with SR back up when the time is right.</p> <p>Mark briefly said: town is not in the position to take on composting – very complicated and expensive. Community partner would be ideal, then the town could submit a formal letter in support of composting. Offline follow up could happen so we could focus on this next meeting.</p> <p>Peter said that they are moving forward very quickly – Guidos from Lee is bringing composting material every night. Back of property is where the set-up is. USDA grant with consultants to help, registered with the USDA to do the volume they’re doing. Trying to get it set up as an employment opportunity for both residents and the larger GB community. Ultimate goal to have a product to sell. Working with</p>	Aretha and Mark will follow up with Peter post-meeting.

	Berkshire Compost. Also picking up Prairie Whale waste and the waste from all 7 Stanton Home houses. Not yet set up for the public. Support letter from the town could be really helpful	
Municipal Vulnerability Plan overview	Natalie, Mark, and Jovanina supported GB in writing the action grant proposal. We were planning to do the MVP Travelling Road Show, but COVID interrupted this part of the MVP process. Mark: Grant helps municipalities prepare for climate change. We focused on increasing social resiliency and public health in GB – specifically a racial justice and social inclusion analysis. Our project was in direct alignment with the Core Values of the MVP program, particularly around EJ populations.	
Sustainable Monument 2025	Group of folks – students, staff, citizens – put this plan together, good support on recent school board meeting. Jen Salinetti is hoping for folks from this committee to work with the district to create a sustainability committee that is dedicated to this project. Jovanina and Aretha, Charlie, and Robbie are interested in this project. Plan incorporates the triple bottom line focus.	
LED street lights	Street lights are a big source of energy expenditure and expense for municipalities. The committee explored the 3 options and sent recommendations to Mark P and Chris R, speicially that we look into owning the street lights because it offers the town many more options around brightness and design, etc. The town is likely to pursue a pilot in some area. Vivial O: Professor Lowenthal is very willing to meet with whomever is working on this in a municipalities. Pedro – Planning Board is interested in the lighting issue from both an energy and aesthetic perspective. Natalie – wants to know what other bylaws around energy efficiency are happening or possible? Pedro – the PB is really in the best position to make zoning laws that impact this.	Natalie will send our findings and recommendations to Pedro
Livability	Already almost impossible for more middle class folks and working folks to be able to afford living in GB. And now, the real estate is going	Aretha and Natalie are interested in following up with

	<p>bonkers. Pedro: PB has commissioned a housing study (BRPC) to learn what kind of housing stick is out there. Some questions – what is rental, what is owner-occupied, what is short-term rental. Commissioned the report before COVID, but hopes to see more recent data. Trying to establish a section in the zoning bylaw to encourage affordable housing and increase the possibility to have child care and housing for the elderly. These issues will be the focus for the foreseeable future. It's complicated because there are few incentives other than allowing developers to make more money. GB has been in a housing crisis basically since 2001. Natalie – interested in regulation of short-term rentals. Pedro – really hard to get info from orgs like AirBnB. Abandon homes – Town Manager is working with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to release these and make them possible for use by the AHTF. The problem is that the town really needs to entice developers and private home owners to act in ways that support affordable housing. “It's about creating a long-lasting and rich community.” The Planning Board could really use some help in finding other models across the country to use as guidelines for how to move forward. Problem is that GB is changing rapidly and is urbanizing.</p>	<p>the Planning Board about this issue</p>
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Adjourned at 7:00

Minutes submitted by Jovanina Pagano on 10/23/2020