

# Strategic Sustainability and Livability Committee of Great Barrington

Minutes of October 21, 2020

Location: Zoom meeting

Start: 5:34

End:7:01

## PRESENT:

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

X = present on Zoom    O = absent    Ph = phone attendance

Note taker: Jovanina

ISSUE	DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS, DECISIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION/FOLLOW-UP NEXT DEADLINE
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	Citizen Introductions	
<u>August 24, 2020</u> <u>minutes</u>	Motion to approve by Jesse, seconded by Aretha. Approved unanimously	
Composting update	<p>trying to identify if it makes sense if the town should and can be involved in composting. Sean VD confirmed that the town needs to go through a formal proposal and bidding process for any entity to operate in any fashion out of the transfer station. Not sure what the committee's role would be, though likely would be to write a letter to the SB to encourage them to explore and pursue this process. Awareness that if the committee supports this action on the Town's part, we would need to be aware of any conflict of interest as far as people</p> <p>Melissa Higgins - state has many programs that help municipalities go through this process. Wise to connect with these organizations. Mark has some of this info. Berkshire Zero Waste, a good start. Stanton Home is working with Recycling Works MA.</p> <p>Peter- the transfer station is just one avenue. Can pursue other options like public drop-off at Stanton Home, for example. He's looking at some options for this now. Worried that the bureaucracy of the town to get in the way of forward motion on the issue of composting. Could the town put up a collection location at the transfer station. Sean VD said that they would need to change the permitting at the transfer station and there is NO MONEY for this initiative. Could learn from North Egremont. Juliette Hass, Egremont Sustainability Coordinator. There is a 3-stage process there, including a drop-off and the ability to take finished compost.</p> <p>Mark - our committee role is to keep seeing if the town can be involved in any way. Even putting up a sign at the transfer station would be equivalent to advertising, which would again require a permitting process.</p> <p>Melissa - there are benefits to dealing with the bureaucracy, visibility and the ability to track impact and document success. Benefits the reputation of the town. Both she and Peter see the benefit of keeping the compost local. Problem of the transfer station is that it's likely that most residents don't use it; needs to</p>	<p>Mark/Aretha will get in touch with Juliette to learn what their process was.</p> <p>A letter of support, or a letter to the Selectboard?</p>

be potentially multiple locations so it's easy and accessible.

Conversation about what is mission-aligned with this work. Peter - Promoting the work of businesses that employs people to develop compost. Economic development and job creation, healthy soil, food waste staying local and becoming a resource.

Jesse - wondered if the HS could be involved in the composting initiative. Aretha said that they are composting but the piles aren't open to the public.

<p><u>Sustainable Monument 2025</u></p>	<p>Jovanina quickly reviewed the Sustainable Monument initiative and that the school committee will be meeting to determine if it can move forward officially tomorrow night, Thursday, Oct. 22. Committee members reviewed the letter.</p> <p>Motion to approve - ARetha, seconded by Jesse. No discussion. Role call - motion passes!</p>	<p>Will send to the committee</p>
<p>MVP grant</p>	<p>Natalie provided an overview of the program. Still very much in the scope-ing phase and getting the contractors on board.</p> <p>Early stages - education and engagement process including training and education for town staff and committee members (town wide) around racial equity and climate justice. SS&amp;L committee members will have a lot to do!</p> <p>Highly rated by the state - very competitive and we were scored very high.</p>	
<p>Affordability</p>	<p>Faith - most of the info on regulating short term rentals. Comes from big cities, but there are some concepts that are adaptable to GB. Conflict between the financial opportunity vs. people renting out houses for extra money without understanding the impact on the community on a whole. Worth noting the AirBnB is well-known for bringing lawsuits against municipalities. Currently suing MA re hotel tax.</p> <p><u>Among the Options:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- simply registering the rental. Making it easy, cheap, self-reporting, is more likely to ensure compliance.</li> <li>- restrictions - only primary residences are eligible to get permits to have short-term rentals. Also a cap on the number of nights, can raise or lower that cap. MA has a state-wide requirement that 5.6% hotel tax. Municipalities can add to that by 6%. Can tailor this for different income levels</li> <li>- Adjusting the cap according to value of the home. For ex: for homes worth less than the median, can have a higher cap, and for homes that are more, fewer nights.</li> <li>- Supporting community members - primary residence. require that the home be</li> </ul>	<p>Next steps - research small towns, talk to reps from the PB and the SB, discuss at the next meeting and determine what suggestions to present.</p> <p>Lenox did do something...?</p> <p>Natalie will research small municipalities.</p>

	<p>occupied by the primary owner for a number of months or years before getting the permit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incentives for landlords to not switch over to short-term rentals.</li> <li>- using the hotel tax to support affordable housing.</li> </ul> <p>Faith - ideas for next steps - wants to see what other small towns have successfully done as a model for how to proceed. Natalie added that the intersection of a small town and a very touristy town would be smart.</p> <p>Maybe present to the SB a suite of ideas to get this rolling again.</p> <p>? Would the state be able to provide more specific data about where the taxes are coming from? Maybe just find the correct public record? Cities have required that the 3rd party company report, but AirBnB refuses or pulls out.</p> <p>Possible that if there's a coalition of many towns, could have more power to leverage change.</p> <p>Aretha - could Smitty or Adam Hinds help get info?</p>	
Net Zero Energy Reseach	Jess shared a report that presents ideas and actions from all over. Will sort through and present ideas relevant to GB at the next meeting.	
	<p>Motion to adjourn, Jesse, seconded by Mark.</p> <p>Next Meeting - November 18 at 5:45</p>	

Minutes submitted on 11/22/20 by Jovanina Pagano