

Attendees (22):

Ed Lewis, Meredith Fields, Jeanne Trubek, Laurel Schwab, Lauri Murphy, Steve Steadman, Janet Buck, Pat Rathbone, Brian Hebeisen, Emma Clement, Varun Saluja, Ernesta Krackiewicz, Jacqui Gross, Ellen Menounos, Jennifer Smith, Leo Martin, Libby Shaw, Helen Soussou, Rick Kalish, Elodia Thomas, Lana Koko Taffel, Leyla Mandel

1. Introductions were made. Minutes of 12/21/20 meeting approved.

2. Draft letter regarding artificial turf planned at Grove St site by Buckingham, Browne & Nichols School (drafted by Janet, Meredith, Jeanne, Emma following last meeting). The draft that had been distributed was reviewed, Pat suggested edits including wording and a sentence at the end of the first section of the letter. Changes discussed and agreed. Discussion in support of the letter. Committee voted unanimously to send letter as edited to Town Council and cc'd to School Committee.

3. Energy manager report:

Ed reviewed S.2295 Climate Roadmap Bill: state bill with many specifics, guidebook for every five years, includes items on solar power, net metering, enables municipalities to adopt net zero energy codes, moving communities from natural gas to geothermal, voted through both houses of legislature and now on governor's desk.

Progress continues with installation of electric vehicle charging stations.

Ed reported on a recent conversation with high school Environmental Club advisor Jennifer MacDonald that included information regarding the Tree-Plenish program to offset high school paper use with local tree planting. Lana and Leyla said they are involved.

Ed noted that Facilities Manager Lori Kabel will be leaving in February, Ed will be Acting Facilities Manager until a replacement is hired.

4. Environmental Planner report:

Laurel reviewed the status of the Climate and Energy Master Plan process: a Request for Proposals has been published, deadline for proposals at end on January, review and selection of consultant to happen in February, committee to make selection to include both Town and community members.

Mt Auburn Cemetery is offering a Climate speaker series. Laurel will participate in the first of these on 2/10 along with John Bolduc and Kara Runson. Access will be available when the event gets closer.

5. Working group reports:

Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC): Lauri checked with Ed on status of updating/editing Watertown Electricity Choice flyer for potential use by WEC, XR (Extinction Rebellion) Watertown, and Sunrise (high school student) groups for joint effort to advertise the program and opting up to 100% green energy with door hangers they would collectively design, print, and distribute door to door. Libby Shaw will forward maps, directions, and door hanger design that Trees for Watertown used in its recent campaign to Jennifer Smith/XR and WEC group. Ed has connection to advisor at high school environmental club who could help. Ed will follow up with Peregrine on the flier text edits and graphics.

Trees: Meredith noted that planning for the second Trees & Climate Change Symposium, scheduled for 3/20/21, will resume after having been postponed last year due to the pandemic. The symposium will be held remotely, the planning group will reconvene. Libby described the program as the planning group has conceived it. It is hoped that Eric Kramer who worked on Cambridge Urban Forestry Master Plan will speak, also Watertown's new Tree Warden, Greg Mosman. There was also continued discussion and planning re the Tree-Plenish program (above), with orders needing to be in by March for delivery and planting of saplings in April.

Net Zero: Pat and Ernesta reported attending online meetings about Cambridge's NetZero initiatives. It is very concerning that Cambridge didn't meet any of their five-year goals for Net Zero emissions. The hope is that we can learn from their experience and their efforts at remedies: buildings over a certain size must report energy usage and will be taxed if over a certain amount of GHG emissions; considering full electrification generated by 100% renewables. See Jolly Tager's notes.

Transportation: Jeanne reported Lissa Gifford (not in attendance) sent information about Transportation Equity Day, which will be emailed to WE3C. Awaiting public hearing on redesign of Mt. Auburn Street.

Composting: Meredith noted news article forwarded by Lissa Gifford regarding food waste for composting to be separate from trash in Hamilton, MA beginning Feb 1. Also, Meredith reported Andy Airasian (WE3C member not in attendance) weighed food scraps for his four-person omnivore home and found that they disposed 200 lbs. in a year. Varun said his household participates in Black Earth Compost, supplies mixed food scraps (including meat) and buys finished compost from Black Earth Compost. Lauri noted DEP used to train composting procedures and Watertown DPW used to sell backyard composters, one of which she still has and uses but does nothing with the finished compost.

6. Continued discussion of needs for committee membership and leadership. Jeanne volunteered to chair next meeting.

7. Meeting adjourned 8:30 PM. Next meeting Feb. 22.