



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

ASHLAND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: 1/8/2026

Time: 7:00 pm ET

Location: Zoom

Present:

- Ashwin Ratanchandani- Chair
- Cara Hulme- Member
- Amanda Flies- Member
- Todd Ching- Member
- Reshum Aurora- Member
- Zack Trapper Fey- Member
- Sam Riley- Sustainability Project Manager
- Brandi Kinsman- Liaison from the Select Board
- Rob Moolenbeek- Resident
- Florence- Seidell- Resident
- Elham Arabi- Resident
- Todd Ching- Resident
- Margy Gassel- Resident

Citizen Participation:

The meeting started with wishing Happy New Year and some personal updates.

Ash welcomed Brandi to our meeting and the committee went around and introduced themselves to Brandi.

Upcoming Town Meeting:

Ash mentioned that the Warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting is approaching, and wanted to gauge the opinion of the Committee if they wanted to submit that for Town Meeting.

2026 Priority Projects

- Skip the Stuff
 - Ash gave background to the project and how a year ago the committee made a push for eliminating non-recyclable materials as take out containers, this was met with pushback from the restaurants. Since this summer the shift has been to

push residents to stop putting extra items (condiments, plastic utensils) into their orders, unless the customer specifically asks for them.

The reason that the committee is looking to make this a bylaw is based on how other municipalities who have done this the restaurants like to have the fallback of blaming the town if consumers become upset about the action. This would save restaurants money as well as reduce waste.

Brandi supported the idea, and added it would be helpful to work with the ABA as well as put out some surveys to bring back to the businesses.

- Sustainability education with the Planning Board and increasing our presence at Planning and ZBA meetings
 - Ash shared how members of the sustainability committee has been more involved with the Planning Board and ZBA but as private citizens, in combination with the Town Planner having some misconceptions about Sustainable initiatives for new buildings has made the committee want to step up in creating educational materials for members of the boards to help them better understand. Todd voiced the importance of sticking to our commitment of Net Zero and knowing that it will have a cost.
- Brandi suggested that we ask to be put on Planning Board agendas to make the educational presentations and use examples.
- Cara volunteered to curate a library of information that could be stored for committee members and staff to access

Zack mentioned that these are good priorities to have, in the past we have had a lot of projects in the works but have not gotten to the finish line with as many as we would like, so by sticking to 2 we can make an impact.

School project:

Reshum sent Sam some table tents to be printed off to go on all the school tables.

Ash asked post the table tents what will be the next steps?

Rob advocated that the solar project should still be worked on and a priority.

Final priority list for 2026:

- Community Solar (Chuck and Rob as lead point)
- Skip the Stuff (Zack take lead point)
- Education for Planning Board (Cara take lead point)

Sustainability Manager Updates:

- Holiday lights recycling bins will be at Town Hall as a joint project with GreenUp Ashland
- A Post Card will be going out in the next few weeks to educate residents about MassSave

Committee Housekeeping:

- Everyone should attend the open meeting law training
- Zack asked if the committee will be willing to meet once a month due to the lack of meeting over the last few months.

Ash voiced concerns against this, but echoed that he would like to see new leadership step up due to a lack of meetings when he is away. They decided to push the idea to the next meeting where there will be more members.

Meeting concluded at 9pm.

Next meeting will be

1/22 at 7pm on Zoom

