



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

ASHLAND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: 1/22/2026

Time: 7:00 pm ET

Location: Zoom

Present:

- Ashwin Ratanchandani: Chair
- Chuck Lidz: Vice Chair
- Cara Hulme- Member
- Amanda Flies- Member
- Todd Ching- Member
- Zack Trapper Fey- Member
- Sam Riley- Sustainability Project Manager
- Rob Moolenbeek- Resident
- Florence- Seidell- Resident
- Todd Ching- Resident

Citizen Participation:

Zack led the meeting, there was no citizen participation.

2026 Priority Projects

Education:

Cara put together a building best practices sheet with the goals and stakeholders of this project

Ash suggested sharing this with the Planning Department to make sure we are on the right track for what they expected.

Rob suggested connecting any ties made to the Comprehensive Plan.

Cara also mentioned that the Housing Plan was not mentioned until she spoke up, and wanted to make sure that it was noted.

Skip the Stuff:

Zack gave an update, he reached out to GreenNeedam and has not yet had a response. He also reached out to Ashland Town Pages, to submit information about Skip the Stuff. Ash reminded Zack that he had previously made a write up about Skip the Stuff for Energize Ashland he could use.

Zack shared what he had drafted up.

Ash asked the group if they would want to launch it as a bylaw for the spring or wait.

Zack voiced he does not think it is ready for the Spring. Florence voiced that before we do anything we need to get a pulse point from the restaurants.

Ash said that he has had some pushback with the business association and found that they do not pay attention until a warrant is posted, based on historical actions. He thinks based on the timelines we have time to have a public outreach campaign.

Amanda voiced her support as long as we do enough outreach.

The committee felt if they could get restaurant input they would pursue this but if not they would wait but do more education and outreach.

Community Solar:

Rob gave an update, they will focus on the MBTA parking lot due to its size. They have reached out to members of the Town and the State to get their support. Rob connected with someone from Resident Energy who will draft a proposal.

Climate Leaders:

Rob mentioned his conversation with Sam regarding the State's new Climate Leaders Designation as part of Green Communities, and the two steps that we need to take, the first being creating a decarbonization road map for all municipal buildings, the second being creating a Net Zero Municipal Fleet Policy.

Rob voiced that the committee should advocate for this, specifically the EV bylaw.

Sam voiced that with the Town's current finances it is hard to get the Town to commit to buy more expensive vehicles even if they have a better payoff period.

Energize Ashland:

The PlugIn Campaign is focused on Condos and apartments, because they do not use MassSave as much as homeowners.

The website is changing.

Sustainability Manager Updates:

Holiday Lights recycling is going on

Community Center is doing some work on the basement, we will have three heat pumps, LED lighting, and increased weatherization

Sam mentioned that several people asked if the committee would do anything about the town's AI usage/ use of services that are AI due to the enormous negative environmental impact that AI has. The Committee voiced an interest though it might be too hard to make a bylaw for.

Other Business:

Ash voiced how he thinks the Committee should best utilize Brandi's new role on the Committee to make the Committee more successful.

Zack suggested we make this a working topic as we work on our priority projects.

The meeting concluded at 9pm.

Zack asked again what people think about meeting once a month, this had hesitancy, but instead we schedule the meeting for 1.5 hours biweekly.

Next meeting will be

2/5 at 7pm on Zoom

Documents mentioned:

Skip the Stuff draft for Local Town Pages Article

Building Best Practices sheet

