



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

ASHLAND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: March 1, 2022

Time: 7:00pm ET

Location: Zoom Video Call

Present:

- Ash Ratanchandani – Chair
- Chuck Lidz – Vice Chair
- Cara Camerato-Hulme – Member
- Margy Gassel – Member
- Matt Marshquist – Member
- Margaret Musoke Member
- Florence Seidell – Resident
- Mark Dassoni – Resident
- Rob Moolenbeek – Resident
- Terry Campbell Resident
- Brian White Resident

- Meeting was kicked off at 7:00PM
- Ash Ratanchandani, chaired
- Ash informed the Committee that the new Sustainability Manager had just resigned after only a week in the role
 - Next steps: Town manager was screening additional candidates and would inform the committee on potential interview dates
- Ash proposed that the Net Zero plan should include some thoughts about a governance model to ensure oversight over development of action items
- Ash had a discussion with the Town Manager and had solicited some feedback from Rob S. Both agreed to put some thought into a potential model that may work in a town setting
- Ash presented a problem statement that highlighted the need for governance

Problem Statement

/ ILLUSTRATIVE

Based on Research, established best practices and stakeholder input we have developed a Strategic framework to achieve Ashland's Net Zero Aspirations

Challenge

- The strategic framework is directionally accurate but not at the level required for implementation
- Strategies will need to be turned in action plans requiring
 - specific areas of expertise
 - deep stakeholder engagement
- Action plan will require different stakeholders and often a different approach
 - individual approval (town meeting, a specific board or town policy)
 - budgets, timelines and measurement criteria
- Individual action plans require an accountable party to implement the plan
- NetZero is not a priority for the other stakeholders

We need

- A Multi disciplinary operating team
 - Focused on developing action plans
 - In line with the strategic framework
 - Governed by the Sustainability committee in collaboration with the Select Board and Town leadership
- The Team would drive specific initiatives while the Sustainability committee focuses on the larger strategy
 - Co Developed focused resolutions that can be
 - > Brought to the right forum for approval AND
 - > Driven to implementation by targeted teams
 - A clear charter with governance and oversight
 - Established measurement criteria to show progress, and allow for course correction

And a proposal for a potential governance and operating team

Proposed governance and composition of the operating team

/ ILLUSTRATIVE FOR DISCUSSION

Governance

- Select Board (Select members)
- Town Manager
- Sustainability
- Planning (select members)

Action Plan Implementation (based on the plan)

(coordinated by Sustainability Manager)

- Sustainability
- Planning
- Board of Health
- Open Space and or Conservation
- Historical
- Town departments (planning and finance)
- Others?

Roles & Responsibilities

- Guidance and Oversight, Cross Functional Input, Evangelists
- Alignment to broader town initiatives, Implementation approvals
- Net Zero strategy, Prioritization recommendations, communication
- Budget (potentially with input from finance)
- Provide additional input to prioritization if required
- Develop Action plans based on Priority
- Identify and secure approvals required
- Establish measurement criteria and mechanism
- Develop tactical implementation details
- Implement the Action Plan

Overall feedback from the Committee was that while the idea held merit the proposal may not fit well in a town setting, and needed additional development. It was decided to defer any vote on the proposal and to develop the idea further post the Town meeting session based on if the Proposed strategy was accepted by the town.

Updates on collaboration with the Planning Committee

- Matt, Margy and Cara have kicked off working sessions with some members of the planning committee to align on a prioritization model for individual actions articulated in the Net Zero strategy
- The list is not fully ready for review but the team is making some solid progress, and is referring to the MAPC handbook to support the discussion and the prioritization effort

Updates on Outreach and Library Event

- Kevin confirmed that the planned library event had been posted on the facebook page and was being promoted
- Matt also confirmed that we would be sending out a newsletter update on the Open forum at the library
- Margy confirmed the event was receiving some interest, but due to a lack of sign up's we may need to move to a Zoom only model. She will continue to monitor and collaborate with Mina Jain at the library

Draft letter to DOER on Stretch Code Straw Proposal

- Matt and Chuck informed the committee that there was a proposal from A coalition of sustainability advocates is submitting a letter to the DOER with comments on their straw proposal to update to the stretch code. If they implement a strong net zero stretch code, it could be a huge leap forward for the state's efforts to reduce emissions and help standardize the approach to reducing emissions across the state. Without it, we will be attempting several local workarounds to reach the same goal.
- As required by the 2021 Next Generation Climate Roadmap, DOER recently outlined its ideas for an opt-in net-zero stretch code in a straw proposal. The straw proposal for the net-zero stretch code is a huge disappointment because it is not all-electric nor does it sufficiently create an electric preference in the code. We view this as a threat to climate mitigation efforts, as well as a threat to health.
- A link to the letter can be found here
- [MA NZB Coalition DOER Stretch Code Straw Proposal Comment Letter 2022-02-20 .docx - Google Docs](#)
- Committee voted unanimously to sign the letter and encourage Town leaders to do the same
- Matt will reach out to leader to solicit their signature to the letter.

Meeting was closed to 8:59 PM