

**Sustainable Lexington Committee
Minutes of Meeting of February 22, 2022**

A meeting of the Sustainable Lexington Committee (SLC) was held by Zoom conference. A quorum of six was present throughout.

Members Present: Cindy Arens, Celis Brisbin, Paul Chernick, Todd Rhodes (vice-chair), Dan Voss (Chair), Charlie Wyman

Members Absent: Archana Dayalu, Rick Reibstein

Staff Present: Martha Duffield

Other Attendees: Joe Pato (Select Board), Mark Sandeen (Select Board), Tanay Dalmia, Michelle Wu, Lin Jensen, Michael Schanbacher (Planning Board), Robert Peters (Planning Board), Mary Hutton (Mothers Out Front), Ricki Pappo (LexCAN), Jeanne Krieger, Marcia Gens, Betty Gau (Bicycle Advisory Committee), Tina McBride, Nick Afshartous

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm. Todd referenced the opening statement requested by the Town Clerk, and all members present responded that they could hear.

Approval of minutes. The minutes of January 25, February 1, and February 3, 2022, were all approved as written.

Comments from residents; New business. None.

Updates from Martha Duffield.

- Maggie Peard, the town's new sustainability officer, began last week at two days/week until she completes her master's in May.
- The Climate Action Plan appropriation request to Town Meeting will be \$50,570. Town Meeting originally appropriated \$85,000 several years ago for sustainability planning, of which \$35,000 remains. We obtained a grant of \$50,000 from MAPC, which requires a 1:1 match, and there are additional engagement tools the town would like to include totaling \$15,570, so Town Meeting will be asked to repurpose the \$35,000 and add the additional sum.

Article 35: Open Space Residential Developments. Bob Peters of the Planning Board presented an overview of the proposed zoning article. The Planning Board hearing is tomorrow evening and he invited any of us to attend and speak or send comments beforehand. He explained in response to a question that the proposal is essentially the same as the one presented in the fall except for an amendment on the floor of Town Meeting regarding parking and a change in the provision regarding historic preservation. Questions and comments followed regarding allocation

of gross floor area; provision for fossil-fuel free construction; design of open space parcels; possibility of dense developments far from major roads and transit routes; a note that this development option would be by right, not special permit; outreach; and enforcement of GFA limits. Todd noted that the committee meets again before Town Meeting begins and can consider taking a position when we meet in March.

Article 36: Mixed-Use Developments and Multi-Family Housing. Michael Schanbacher presented an overview of this article, which would revise the zoning in Lexington Center to allow for denser, mixed-use development. Questions and comments followed regarding fossil-fuel free language; thinking behind the height limits and concern that they're too high; will this alter the mix of businesses, which is currently heavy on banks and real estate offices while we're losing small retail and food shops; why the Center was chosen for this first zoning change to address the requirements of the Housing Choice Legislation for MBTA Communities; concern that enacting such a major change quickly without sufficient debate will make any tinkering later difficult, as developers will file to freeze their zoning, as they've done on Hartwell; HDC involvement; sustainability should be baked into everything we do; and provisions for parking.

Bike/Pedestrian Plan discussion. Betty Gau of the Bicycle Advisory Committee updated the committee on two initiatives. Town Meeting Article 12 appropriates \$65,000 for a bike/pedestrian plan. The Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Greenways Corridor Committee will write letters of support, and Betty asked if SLC will write one as well. Archana is drafting one for consideration at our March meeting. Betty also discussed the process for deciding what the plan will cover. If funding is approved, Sheila Page (Planning) will draft the RFP in May and June; the BAC and GCC plan to provide their input before then, and SLC comments and support would be welcome as well.

Climate Action Plan funding. Cindy described the basics of the process. Charlie asked if mixed staff/volunteer task forces will be used, as they did in Wellesley. Todd noted that Maggie, before coming to the town, worked for Wellesley's contractor, KLA. Mark expressed concern we may be getting a generic product, not a Lexington-based process, and need to put more thought into the design of the process. The turnover in both Lexington and MAPC has been a complicating factor, though this pause may be an opportunity to take stock of what has happened so far and talk about the outcomes we desire. The committee agreed to delay taking a position on this article until the March meeting. Todd will reach out to Martha and ask her to discuss the topic with Maggie Peard prior to the March meeting.

Staff and committee updates:

- Todd announced that Lin Jensen has been appointed as a member of the Sustainable Lexington Committee, and welcomes were extended all around.
- Maggie Peard has been appointed as our new Sustainability and Resilience Officer. She is a Williams grad and is finishing her master's in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts.

Update on results of Community Choice Aggregation communications in January. Todd shared the results from the ad, article, and postcards in January. There was a significant bump in new enrollees, but also a number who shifted from 100% Green to Basic; all told, there was roughly an increase of 80 in 100% Green enrollment.

SustainabLY update. Michelle reported that more signs would be useful in the cafeteria to both direct and educate students about food waste and composting. She also asked about food waste in town restaurants; Cindy explained that state law currently requires institutions generating 1 ton or more of food waste each week to compost, and that limit will drop to ½ ton in November. Tanay explained a proposal for a Lexington Sustainability Board to share information about sustainability initiatives. The committee was encouraging; the notion of a temporary installation at the library to test the concept was proposed, and Marcia mentioned that LexCAN is planning a town-wide Earth Day celebration on May 14 that would be a great tie-in.

Update on Article 40: Residential Zoning Incentives.

- Cindy reported that the first public hearing before the Planning Board was last Wednesday and was continued to the 23rd. The team will be presenting to the Housing Partnership on Thursday and the Select Board on Monday, and are discussing details of the proposal with town staff.
- Cindy and Mark also explained that the DOER stretch code proposal was very disappointing. Two comment letters to this effect are circulating around the state; one from towns, one from town officials.

Article 31: Building Energy Use Disclosure. Todd reported that they've received support from the Economic Development Advisory Committee. He also identified that several questions from Select Board have been answered. Joe recommended that those answers be sent to the Select Board members.

Article 27: Zero Waste Resolution: There were no updates on this article.

Article 2: Police Station Funding.

- Dan, Todd, and Celis updated the committee on the meetings and discussions with the Permanent Building Committee the first week of February. It was agreed that the engineer will design the subsurface infrastructure for solar canopies, with the question of whether to include solar in the construction documents postponed until later. Issues about what constitutes “net zero” (does it include an EV vehicle fleet?) and the area of proposed canopies were discussed. Celis suggested that we're at a critical decision point and need to challenge the way people think and challenge the architects to design the best-looking canopy possible.
- After further discussion, the committee agreed by consensus to send a letter of support for “net zero” as an important element of the proposal to go to Town Meeting, reflecting many positions TM has taken in the past, and to individually walk the three Select Board members not present through the case to be made. Key points for the letter are:

- The police station infrastructure should be designed for solar and storage, anticipating a fleet of EV vehicles in addition to building needs
- Consider inclusion in the bid documents themselves of the solar canopies as part of the overall project scope, and inclusion of solar and storage in the TM appropriation
- Long-term cost savings of solar and storage when compared with alternatives
- Solar and storage increases the resiliency of the police station in the event of grid disruption

Celis will draft the letter for review by Dan and Todd. Points raised in further discussion: the letter should go to Town staff first, then PBC, then Select Board members. The Sustainability Officer, DPF, and Police Chief should all be included. With the next major town building, solar should be included from the very first rendering.

Update on Noise Bylaw Referendum. The campaign is in full swing. Charlie updated the committee on activities of the Quiet Clean Lexington campaign, including recent media and campaign events.

Discussion of Mass Save activities with Homeworks. Ricki reported that Homeworks had been telling customers that air-source heat pumps needed gas back-up, which is not the case. They've agreed to change their advice and to notify customers of their error. Various people have complained about their experience with Homeworks, though poor marks may be an industry-wide experience because of so many new hires. Todd noted that we "fired" Homeworks once before. The current MOU was managed by Stella. Mark noted that the pressing need is less for energy audits and more for heat pumps. Further discussion followed. It was agreed that Ricki and Cindy will oversee Homeworks' outreach to those who they gave bad advice to, and will later sit down with Maggie to review the relationship with Homeworks.

Waste Hauling Contract. Lin noted that the waste hauling contract will be up for renewal soon and we should start discussing now what changes the town might want to pursue. It was agreed to place this item on the agenda next month for discussion.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Sustainable Lexington Committee will be at 6 pm on March 22, 2022.

The committee voted to adjourn at 9:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Wyman