

2022 13 Jul, 8:30 am

TOWN CLERK
LEXINGTON MA

**Sustainable Lexington Committee
Minutes of Meeting of April 26, 2022**

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

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

Members Absent: Archana Dayalu

Staff Present: None

Other Attendees: Joe Pato (Select Board), Robert Peters (Planning Board), Mike Boudett (Capital Expenditures), Gerry Paul (Tree Committee), Ricki Pappo (LexCAN), Jeanne Krieger, Marcia Gens, Dan Miller

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 March 22, April 1, and April 12 were all approved as written.

Comments from residents; New business. Todd noted that he had passed an email inquiry from Westford about SustainabLY on to Maggie. He shared the announcement from the state that they have replaced their GIS interactive map program “Oliver” with an improved version called MassMapper.

Staff updates: Martha wasn’t able to join us. Todd reported that he spoke with Maggie last week, and she noted that Michelle is graduating this year and Maggie would like to start the application process for her spot on SustainabLY. Cindy added that Maggie is also wondering how to engage youth more broadly.

Lin asked if it would make sense for members of SLC to have liaison responsibilities with certain Town departments to foster communication and engagement. Todd replied that Maggie will become full time and start attending our meetings in June, and that once she’s fully engaged, he suggested that we could explore regular engagement with certain town staff. Rick noted that it was only after sitting down with Mike Cronin that the toxic use reduction program gathered steam.

Preservation and Retention of Large Shade Trees in Lexington. Tree Committee chair Gerry Paul gave a short presentation, explaining that the Tree Committee is focused heavily on the tree bylaw, cutting on demolition sites, and strengthening the review process when someone wants to

cut down a town tree. They would like to do more about cutting of non-protected trees, such as when a new homeowner moves in. He described their attempt last year to promote a bylaw change requiring reporting when trees are cut on private property, simply to gather information, but decided with Select Board input that it wasn't ready yet and moved to have it indefinitely postponed. He would also like to kickstart Lexington Friends of Trees to make it a more active, robust presence.

Paul C. asked about the property on Worthen Road across from the high school, and Dan Miller described the property and the issue. Discussion ensued. Celis made the point that we need to recognize the value of trees not just for carbon sequestration but for all the benefits they provide, and particularly for their role providing shade at athletic fields (increasingly important in a warming world) and for their ability to lower ambient temperatures for whole neighborhoods. Lin offered to build a website that provides information on these points. Further discussion included the tree inventory, the tree canopy assessment, the Town's setback tree planting program, the 37 pines at the tennis courts, and better control over protection provided for trees at construction sites.

Articles passed by Town Meeting - Discussion of next steps:

Article 31: Building Energy Use Disclosure. Todd reported that he has talked to Maggie and she is looking forward to digging into implementation when she starts full-time in June. In the meantime, they have started cleaning up the spreadsheet of affected buildings, and are looking into training on the Building Energy Analysis Manager (BEAM) program. There is a period while it's free but we need to enter into an agreement soon, which might not be able to wait until Maggie is on full-time.

Article 27: Zero Waste Resolution. Lin asked if we can talk at our next meeting about how to facilitate inclusion of town-wide compost pick-up in the next waste hauling contract, or consider other contractors for that service alone. Cambridge and Hamilton have town-wide programs. Some state funding may be available to study the feasibility of composting food waste at Hartwell. Todd will put this on the agenda for the next meeting and we'll look to Cindy and Joe (both on the Town's Solid Waste Task Force) to inform us of what SLC can do that would be helpful.

Article 2: Police Station Funding - Next steps on solar canopy plans. Todd reported that funding for the police station was approved. Dan noted that the work needs to begin on solar design to be ready for the fall town meeting.

Article 7: Climate Action Plan (CAP) – Schedule. Todd spoke with Maggie, who will jump into this more deeply in June. She anticipates a year-long program and will advocate for expanded representation beyond outreach to staff.

Article 35: Open Space Residential Developments – Regulations. Bob Peters explained that the Planning Board will be discussing their work plan for the coming year on May 4, and he will

advocate for the OSRD regulations to have high priority, with a goal of having them in place before the OSRD zoning provision becomes effective. Cindy and Ricki spoke, encouraging a very open, transparent and inclusive process for developing the regulations, particularly since the new provision is by-right. Bob invited comments to the Planning Board through the website and to members of the Board.

High School: Cindy reported that LHS and Recreation have a working group to address land swap issues since the entire town-owned complex is on the table. Once they do that, they'll be an MSBA-compliant process to define the feasibility study, and SLC will have a seat on that, probably a 5-year commitment.

Upcoming events:

- Earth Day in May: SLC will participate at the hub. Eloise, the sustainability intern, will be tabling with staff. Todd will come with a tent and materials to represent the Sustainable Lexington Committee.
- Bike Walk Bus Week: We'll have a small table. Todd will go, Archana may help, others are welcome. Todd will send a follow-up email to finalize plans.
- Discovery Day: SLC is signed up for Discovery Day; help will be needed. Living Landscapes will have their own space and tent this year, hopefully nearby.

Community Choice Aggregation: Todd showed a model postcard that Peregrine could do to promote participation. The committee agreed that the two priorities to include are (1) how to know if you're already included in the program and (2) information about all the offers from suppliers that come in the mail soliciting customers for their "green" alternatives.

Discussion of Mass Save activities and residential transition to heat pumps with relationship with Homeworks, Abode, others: Ricki reported that Maggie has re-upped the MOU with Homeworks. There's interest in exploring a relationship with Abode or All In Energy to provide coaching for people interested in exploring heat pumps. Ricki noted that only a small fraction of Lexington Homeworks customers sign-up through the portal.

Discussion on the siting of solar in Lexington: Rick reiterated the three big ideas that came from his BU students: the need for and value of technical assistance, particularly for small businesses like the program in Medford; the opportunity for the town to explore community solar on business rooftops; and the opportunity to place solar on underutilized parcels (under powerlines, over wetlands, by the highway). He has a student looking at RFPs that employ innovative approaches and avoid damaging natural systems. A discussion followed about solar on town parking lots and impediments to doing so. Mike Boudett reported that John Livsey said at a recent Center Committee meeting that solar would be looked at with every parking lot reassessment. Celis noted that this keeps coming up, and we need to use every feasible parcel of land to maximize town revenue and increase our resilience, and we need to maintain momentum through these conversations to achieve results. After further discussion, Dan and Todd agreed to

ask Maggie and the town's GIS department to finish an inventory of Town-owned properties that Stella had begun so they could then be evaluated for solar.

Todd reported the news from Shawn Newell that the solar canopies at schools won't be live until October because of supply chain issues with the batteries. HDC has so far resisted panels on the front of the firehouse. Charlie expressed dismay at the HDC's opposition, and Todd agreed to write to HDC to express our support for the panels; Dan and Charlie will review.

Municipal building operation policy – Discussion of the policy and update on the municipal building Capital Planning Tool Update: The concept of a municipal building operations policy that addresses building performance, a companion to the integrated building policy that covers design and construction, was approved by Town Meeting three years ago as part of the vote that approved the latter. But no progress has been made since then, despite numerous inquiries. Mike Cronin is presenting DPF's capital planning tool to financial staff in May. Ideally the tool will incorporate some of the metrics of an operations policy. Dan circulated a draft a number of months ago, which isn't that different from the construction policy; it identifies standards that municipal buildings would be expected to meet. Joe suggested Dan write a status memo that Joe can present to the Board, and he will encourage the Board to set a goal to complete it this year.

Embedded carbon. Ricki asked that at some point we talk about embodied carbon in construction projects, which doesn't appear in the integrated building design policy checklist. Celis noted that up to now we focus mainly on operations, while ignoring the carbon dioxide generated when demolishing buildings that may have life left in them and manufacturing and transporting the components of new buildings. What is the total impact of creating a building? He proposed to take a fresh look at the building policy, suggesting that it might also incorporate tree and landscaping standards and strengthened solar language, and this would be a good thing to do before the high school planning begins in earnest. Discussion followed with several committee members voicing similar points of view. Todd asked Celis if he could begin the process.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Sustainable Lexington Committee will be held at 6 pm on May 24, 2022.

The committee voted to adjourn at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Wyman