

2022 13 Jul, 8:34 am

TOWN CLERK  
LEXINGTON MA

**Sustainable Lexington Committee  
Minutes of Meeting of May 24, 2022**

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

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

Members Absent: Rick Reibstein

Staff Present: None

Other Attendees: Joe Pato (Select Board), Mark Sandeen (Select Board), Mike Boudett (Capital Expenditures), Robert Beaudoin (DPW), David Pinsonneault (DPW), Nancy Sofen (Tree Committee), Andrew Brousseau and Conor Miller (Black Earth Compost), Ricki Pappo, Marcia Gens, Mary Yardley, Ruth Abbe, Tina McBride, Amy Permuter, Gerry Yurkevicz, Hien Nguyen, Janet Kern, Mary Hutton, Sam Hall, Tanay Dalmia

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 April 26 were all approved as written.

Comments from residents; emails to committee mailbox; new business. Marcia requested that the Black Earth presentation be recorded for the benefit of those who couldn't be present, and Todd agreed.

Food waste composting opportunity at Lexington/Hartwell Compost Facility. Andrew and Conor of Black Earth Compost introduced themselves. Black Earth was started about 11 years ago and they've been operating in Lexington for about five years. Andrew walked the committee through their proposal to lease land and construct a compost facility at Hartwell, in return for which (depending on the details) they could offer the town low-cost or free curbside collection. The initial stage of compost treatment needs to be inside to minimize odor and animal issues, particularly with birds given the proximity of Hanscom. The facility would be a regional one in order to subsidize service to Lexington, with roughly a 3:1 ratio of food waste from other towns to that from within Lexington.

Considerable discussion followed. Dave Pinsonneault said they are interested in exploring the proposal but also pointed out that there are many existing uses of the Hartwell property and they have to consider the proposed facility's impact on other uses. Robert Beaudoin mentioned that there are many potential synergies of having Black Earth at Hartwell but also challenges; he mentioned the need for more carbon, a concern about quality of material from other towns, and

the opportunity to work with restaurants in town that are mandated to begin diverting food scraps in November if they produce more than ½ ton per week. Other discussion touched on Black Earth's offer of add-on services if they're the hauler (textiles, electronics); permitting issues; timeline from approval to operation (2 years, one for permitting, one for construction) and what we could offer town residents in the meantime; and screening to eliminate trash from finished product. Andrew and Conor were thanked for their presentation.

Proposed letter/analysis to the Waste Reduction Task Force and/or Select Board regarding food waste curbside pickup. Lin presented a rough draft of a letter drafted with help from Cindy, Hien, and others outlining the need and feasibility of town-wide curbside compost pick-up, with approximate costs for various collection options. The town's current waste-hauling contract expires in June 2023, so now is the time to explore options for compost. Considerable discussion followed. Lin noted that the only way to have high participation is to have free town-wide pickup. Hien said that among the lessons from the LexSort program is that one of the barriers to entry is just getting started, and having a starter kit has been a big help. Dave said that they are in the process of having discussions with their current waste hauler, and will then be looking at the Black Earth proposal. They use grants to purchase carts and starter kits for new Black Earth subscribers. Lin noted that there are two decisions facing the town – the Black Earth Hartwell proposal and whether to offer town-wide food waste collection – and argued that the latter should be addressed as soon as possible. Andrew noted that Lin's analysis was a good one and that Black Earth's proposal would be the cheapest option for the town because it combined collection and Hartwell composting. Marcia pointed out that in the past (e.g., recycling), we didn't always get what we thought we were. Dave said he'd be calling a meeting of the waste reduction task force in the next two weeks. Thanks were extended to Lin for her work, for Dave and Robert for participating, and to Andrew and Conor for their interest and ideas.

Staff updates: No staff were present. Cindy noted that Andrew from NEEP is ready to work with Maggie as soon as she's on full time. Todd reported that our allowance to have remote meetings currently expires on July 15; Joe explained that without legislative action, rules allow remote participation as long as the chair and a quorum are physically present. Mark has met with Senator Barrett to strategize House prospects for the provision in the Senate climate bill allowing 10 pilot projects for electrification (Section 52 in S.2819). Ricki mentioned that Senator Barrett has also introduced a budget amendment providing \$45 million for deep energy retrofits. Mark added that the senator thinks we'll be able to raise the limit for home solar projects from 10kW to 25kW, and to implement a single-parcel rule streamlining homeowners' ability to add capacity to an existing solar array.

SustainabLY: Tanay reported that he is working with Maggie on applications for additional members of SustainabLY for next year. He also said they are looking for project ideas and he and Michelle would welcome suggestions.

Proposed updates to the Integrated Building Design and Construction Policy. Celis explained that it has been a few years since the Integrated Building Construction and Design Policy was adopted, and that while it has been operating well, it's becoming apparent that there are some

areas where it could be improved, particularly as we look ahead to the high school. He mentioned nine specific areas:

- Encouraging integration of solar into new buildings from the beginning, not just making them solar ready;
- Evaluating the potential for new buildings to be resilience hubs;
- Recognizing the value of mature trees and the urban canopy to both lower ambient temperatures and reduce cooling loads through their shade;
- Revisiting the Board of Health recommendations on building construction post pandemic;
- Recognizing embodied carbon and how and when to incorporate that into decisions on whether to build an entirely new building or reuse portions of old ones;
- Evaluating the potential for buildings to be designed to operate in microgrids;
- Adding EV parking lot standards for municipal properties;
- Addressing the split incentive problem (weighing life cycle costs of alternatives, not just capital costs); and
- Incorporating sustainable site design and landscaping standards of the kind that the three-committee ad hoc team developed and presented to the Planning Board in 2021.

Celis asked for feedback on any of these points. Mike explained that he is relatively new to the Capital Expenditures Committee, but from his experience operating costs are considered. He asked if solar has ever been cut from a building project; Mark replied that there are several examples, including its elimination from the new DPW building because the roof wasn't designed to carry the load, and the long delay at Hastings in connecting the array. There was further discussion about (1) existing buildings, not just new ones, (2) recognition that a number of items the town will want at the high school won't be funded by the state, but we'll do them anyways when it makes good sense, and (3) trees and whether their carbon, including lost sequestration, is considered in any carbon accounting.

The committee's consensus feedback to Celis was positive and encouraged him to proceed, and suggested that the best vehicle for incorporating new or revised standards is in the checklist, not the policy itself; the former was intended to be reviewed and updated periodically, while it was hoped the latter would not. The committee recognized the urgency of this to get in front of the high school design process. Celis will prepare a rough draft. Todd remarked that after one more round of SLC discussion, we should bring the Permanent Building Committee into the discussion and then other committees (School Board, etc.), which was Celis' thinking also, with hopes of reaching consensus in the fall.

Updates on building/solar projects: Police Station, High School, Firehouse solar, solar canopies, etc. Todd reported that the school canopies should become operational in August (there have been battery issue delays). The police station override is coming up on June 6. We need to start having conversations with HDC on solar to be ready for fall town meeting. Mark noted that there has been a bid from John Carroll to move the Hosmer House to his property, which undermines Mark Connor's innovative design for additional solar at the police station.

Update on project to develop an inventory of potential solar sites in town. Dan reported that he met with Maggie and the town's GIS team, and they have pulled together a database of all municipally owned parcels with environmental and zoning attributes, which will enable some high level modeling of what we could do with existing buildings, parking lots, and other town-owned property.

Update on Municipal Building Operation Policy and Department of Public Facilities Capital Planning Tool. Dan and Todd reported on the May meeting at which Mike Cronin introduced DCF's capital planning tool, which tracks the expected remaining life expectancy of various building systems in all town-owned buildings. Dan pointed out that the tool doesn't measure the systems' performance relative to desired outcomes, which should be the key metric. Considerable discussion followed. Dan will attend the June meeting.

Update on BEU-D program. Todd reported that Jeanne is updating Joe's original spreadsheet so it should be ready for Maggie in June.

Update Community Choice outreach in January. Todd noted the update from Peregrine that he circulated before the meeting. Mark reported that Eversource has filed for a basic service increase of 2 cents for the summer (when there is usually a drop in prices), which will only increase the price advantage of Community Choice.

Discovery Day. Todd will be in touch with folks who might help staff the booth on Saturday; Todd's son will deliver the materials and help set up.

Comprehensive Plan. Cindy noted that the Planning Board is beginning a public review of the Comprehensive Plan on June 1. The plan, in talking about potentially conflicting values, mentions housing creation and sustainability as potentially in conflict, perpetuating the mistaken notion that sustainable design necessarily costs more to build and operate. Ricki noted that the Planning Board will also soon begin work on the regulations for the new Open Space Residential Design provision.

Mark noted that he is working with Maggie on a proposal for a Hartwell Avenue geo-microdistrict, which would supply ambient water to buildings in the district (to run ground-source heat pumps) instead of gas. This will illustrate one of the scenarios discussed for transitioning off natural gas.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Sustainable Lexington Committee will be held at 6 pm on June 28, 2022.

The committee voted to adjourn at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlie Wyman