

**TOWN OF BOONE
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020
5:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Chairperson Quint David, Vice-Chairperson Harvard Ayers, Ben Scarboro, John Prickett and Lee Ball

Town Council Liaisons Present: Dustin Hicks, Nancy LaPlaca

Staff Members Present: Marty Little- Senior Planner and Marlene Crosby- Committee Secretary

Others Present:

Call to Order

Chairperson Quint David called to order the Boone Sustainability Committee, held in the Planning and Inspections Department – Upstairs Conference Room located at 680 W. King Street at 5:38 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Scarboro made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Ayers, to adopt the agenda as amended, with Chairperson David adding Public Comment after the Adoption of the Agenda and Election of Officers after Approval of Minutes.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Public Comment on Carbon Offsets

Ms. Mara Soo, Head of University Programs from UCapture, explained what this company does with carbon offsets and she handed out her business card (permanently attached.) Ms. Soo's company email address is mara@ucapture.com and the website is www.ucapture.com. She explained that this program is a free, green technology start-up that uses a current browser extension that only takes 30 seconds to download onto your computer. She said the browser gets 25,000 companies to pay for carbon offsets. She noted that the browser does not track your data and it does not advertise. She said that UCapture is affiliated with partner companies like Walmart, Target, Lyft, and Groupon. She said the browser extension is a way to get these companies that we shop with online to pay for carbon offsets and give us discounts for the offsets. She said if you go to a website of a partner company and purchase something, that website will pay UCapture from the sales commission. She said that 66 percent of that commission is used to purchase carbon offsets from verified carbon offset projects. She said this is a way to get funding for university research and nonprofits researching climate change mitigation.

Ms. Soo suggested presenting this carbon offset information to Council and local businesses. She said that the Howard Station Restaurant located on Howard Street in Downtown Boone is going

to be a part of the UCapture carbon offset program and it will include a discount program for their customers.

Mr. Marty Little, Senior Planner, asked Ms. Soo if there are other municipalities in North Carolina using the carbon offset program. She said that discussions have begun with a couple of municipalities but none in North Carolina. She said in North Carolina they have a lot of success with universities. She said that the projects that they are involved with are listed on the UCapture website. She said that if you scan her business card, it will open a link to her email address, and you can request information on the web links for said projects.

Approval of Minutes

Member Prickett made a motion, seconded by Member Ball, to approve the December 12, 2019 meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Discussion ensued on the member positions of the Sustainability Committee. Council Liaison LaPlaca talked about the things that the Council Liaisons can do on the Committee. Mr. Little noted that the Council Liaisons are not able to vote and are not part of the quorum for this Committee at this time. Mr. Little confirmed that at this time, the Sustainability Committee has six members which include two open member positions, not counting the Council Liaison positions.

Election of Officers

Chairperson David and Member Prickett nominated Vice-Chairperson Harvard Ayers for the position of Chairperson for the year 2020. Vice-Chairperson Ayers accepted the nomination for Chairperson because he has been on the Committee for a long while, starting with the Sustainability Task Force. It was the consensus of the Sustainability Committee for Vice-Chairperson Harvard Ayers to be the Sustainability Committee Chairperson for 2020.

Member Ball nominated Member Benjamin Scarboro for the position of Vice-Chairperson for the year 2020. Member Scarboro accepted the nomination for the position of the Sustainability Committee Vice-Chairperson, stating that he was one of the Chairpersons for the Sustainability Task Force and that he looks forward to being a part of the Town's drive towards Sustainability. It was the consensus of the Committee that Ben Scarboro be the Vice-Chairperson for 2020. The newly elected Officers will begin their tenure in February 2020.

Toolkit Discussion

Chairperson David began discussion on the draft Toolkit. He read aloud the "Intended Results" section found on page two of the draft Toolkit, included in the meeting packet. He said that these results are a good summary of the goals for all of the Town Departments. He noted that each Town Department has a large range of issues that the Sustainability Committee has been tasked with to make recommendations to help make each department more sustainable.

Chairperson David talked about the Police Department section of the draft Toolkit. He read aloud the “Summary” section found on page ten of the draft Toolkit. He noted that it has been proposed that the Police Department will be moving into the new Town of Boone Municipal Center, which will be proposed as a net zero building. He said as a result, there is not a lot of advice the Sustainability Committee can give. Chairperson David noted that the proposed time frame for the Town of Boone Municipal Center to be built is about two to three years depending on the Town budget.

Chairperson David began discussion on the topics that he had written for the Police Department. He said that he based his information for the Police Department on the STARS rating system. Chairperson David noted that the Police Department could track and monitor their employee greenhouse gases, focus on the turn-over of employees and living wages, give free tickets to employees and their families for events, conduct equity training, form a resilience plan for the top ten issues that the Police see daily, and note any noticeable stormwater issues that the Town needs to address.

Discussion ensued on net-metering. Council Liaison LaPlaca said, as the Sustainability Committee is reviewing the Town Departments, to look for a department that might be appropriate for some type of net-metering or net-metering pilot. Member Ball said when the net-metering pilot is done, he suggests looking into residential, government and businesses. He noted that he felt that there are a lot of opportunities for net-metering in businesses. Council Liaison LaPlaca noted that a large percentage of New River Light and Power goes to the Downtown area. Member Ball said that hopefully a green district would jumpstart the net-metering.

Discussion ensued on net-zero and net-positive. Council Liaison LaPlaca said that net-zero means that a building will produce as much energy as it uses. Member Ball said that net-positive means a building will produce more energy than it uses.

Discussion ensued on the status of the new Town Municipal Center. Member Ball asked how far along the Town is with the Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Mr. Little said he believes that the Town is beyond the RFP process and is currently in the design phase. Member Ball said from his experience, he has seen a lot of a misalignment of ideas with the best intentions in the design phase. He suggested following up with Mr. John Ward, Town Manager, to see what language was in the RFP. He suggested making sure that the construction company that is hired to build the center is experienced in net-zero and net-positive building.

Discussion ensued on recommending geothermal heating and cooling for the new Municipal Center building. Member Prickett said he uses this type of system in his house and it works great. He noted that this type of system does not take care of all of the electricity usage, but the system as a whole reduces the costs.

Discussion ensued on doing an analysis of vehicle mileage for the Police Department. Mr. Little explained that the Sustainability Committee could make a recommendation to Council to have an analysis completed on vehicle mileage, which is important in helping to gather the greenhouse gas data.

Discussion ensued on reducing costs at the historical Town of Boone Jones House. Chairperson David said one way to reduce costs is to provide solar outside of the house, possibly in the parking lot. He suggested permanent solar panels for the Christmas lights usage. He said it is difficult to find ways to reduce costs in a 100-year old building. He suggested finding ways for efficiency improvements within the historic limitations. He suggested one way is to baseline the energy usage and come up with a plan for offsets, or solar, for however many units they are using.

Discussion ensued on the proposed recommendations presented by the former Cultural Resources Director, Ms. Pilar Fotta. Mr. Little read the following recommendations: upgrade toilets, upgrade to double-paned windows, upgrade the refrigerator to a more efficiency mode, dog waste disposal bags and reduce waste for event give aways.

Discussion ensued on energy audits on the Town-owned buildings. Chairperson David said this topic can be included into the draft toolkit. He also noted that Mr. Ward had said that most of the Town-owned buildings have had energy audits. Member Ball said there was a free energy audit program but people did not use it. Council Liaison LaPlaca said that energy audits are beneficial. Member Ball said that there needs to be a way for homeowners to be able to have energy audits. He said that incentives are needed for renters but the landlords have to be involved with them.

Discussion ensued on the need for composting in the High Country. Member Ball said that the Town of Boone needs a composting facility.

Chairperson David talked about incentives for Town employees who submit ideas to help reduce the carbon usage. He gave an example of shorter workdays or reduced work hours.

Chairperson David suggested putting together a list of the individual Town Department recommendations along with the Sustainability Committee recommendations and divide the recommendations into broad categories. He suggested also including proposed Town-wide recommendations. He suggested making the first page the summary of the recommendations.

Other Matters by Committee Members or Staff

Chairperson David reminded the Sustainability Committee that the next meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2020.

Adjournment

Member Ball made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Ayers, to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Quint David, Sustainability Committee Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Committee Secretary

Mara Soo
Head of University
Programs, UCapture

mara@ucapture.com
[linkedin.com/in/marasoo](https://www.linkedin.com/in/marasoo)



Scan the QR code
to email me a note!

Offset your
organization's
carbon footprint,
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UCAPTURE
SAVE MONEY. SAVE THE PLANET.



Draft Toolkit

Town of Boone

Sustainability Committee

January 9, 2020

Stated Town Goals

- Climate neutrality for Town of Boone municipal operations by 2030
- 100% renewable energy for municipal operations by 2040
- 100% renewable energy for the Town of Boone community by 2050

Background

At the April 18, 2019 Boone Town Council meeting, the Town Council adopted the sustainability goals listed above in an effort to address climate change at the local level. The three goals are focused on two tiers of scope: municipal operations, which includes day-to-day functions of the Town of Boone as an organization and its employees, and the community as a whole. In order to address the first goal, climate neutrality for municipal operations by 2030, the Town Council charged the Boone Sustainability Committee with learning about the Town's daily tasks and recommending steps each department could take in order to move closer to achieving climate neutrality in the specified timeframe. These recommendations, as Council directed, should take the form of a toolkit, where each department could access a menu of opportunities in pursuit of neutrality.

Town of Boone Municipal Operations

The Town of Boone is comprised of nine departments, which serve in a wide range of capacities. These departments are made up of Administration, Finance, Fire, GIS, Human Resources, Planning & Inspections, Police, Public Works, and Cultural Resources. The energy needs of the Town of Boone vary greatly between several departments, as they perform unique functions for the community (for example: Public Works, which includes streets/sidewalk maintenance crews and the Wastewater Treatment Plant, has different needs than the Police Department, just as the Fire Department differs in needs from Planning & Inspections, and so on). While some recommendations apply to a broad range of municipal services, the Sustainability Committee recognized that others must be tailored to certain departments specifically.

Process

In learning about the functions of each department, the Sustainability Committee hosted several meetings with the Town Manager and each department head individually over the course of 2019. The departments housed in Town Hall were combined, as their energy needs are very similar. The framework for each meeting consisted of a presentation by the Town Manager and/or department head, discussion and questions from the Sustainability Committee, and finally a discussion of potential recommendations for the presented department as well as Town operations on a larger scale.

Intended Results

This toolkit aims to address, at least partly, Town Council's goals of climate neutrality for municipal operations by 2030 by presenting the Council with a list of recommendations for implementation through Town-wide and department-specific policy. This toolkit is not intended to be a cure-all for Boone's climate needs, but may serve as a first step towards policy and behavioral changes that increase the Town and its employees' awareness of climate change, and how daily tasks impact the bigger picture. This toolkit is meant to be a catalyst for greater sustainability practices in the Town of Boone.

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Executive Summary

To be completed at the end of the draft.

Town-wide Recommendations

Summary

Built Environment:

Climate and energy:

Economy and Jobs:

Education/Arts/Community:

Equity and Empowerment:

Health and Safety:

Natural Systems:

Discussion

Built Environment:

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Economy and Jobs:

Education/Arts/Community:

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Planning & Inspections

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Built Environment:

Climate and energy:

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Education/Arts/Community:

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Health and Safety:

Natural Systems:

Police

Summary

Built Environment: Getting a new net-zero building so n/a for now

Climate and energy: Add actual employee miles to GHG inventory. What emissions from the GHG inventory can't be offset due to safety issues, so we can address those separately, i.e. police cruisers etc. If electric bikes work well, we should get more.

Economy and Jobs: Job retention strategy and living wage update.

Education/Arts/Community: Updated community event budget and free tickets for employees/families to town events.

Equity and Empowerment: Ensure poverty/civil rights/human services training avail for officers.

Health and Safety: Big one for this dept. Resilience plan issues- top 10 issues department notes i.e. dangerous intersection needs improvement, drug use going up, elderly & accessibility around town etc. etc.

Natural Systems: Any storm-water or other issues the town needs to address, since this dept sees them first?

Discussion

Built Environment:

Looks like they have done some energy efficiency upgrades, and the new building will be net zero. New heat pumps are much better than older ones, so I always advise folks to price that out. In a building they may not be in soon likely not worth worrying too much over.

Climate and energy:

Already going paperless where possible, not sure what other 'waste' the dept might make. I will always recommend more digital when possible. Have some data on greenhouse emissions, most cities also keep up with employee travel emissions separately. Maybe come up with a mitigation plan for the emissions we can't get rid of, i.e. extra renewable or trees, offsets etc. Frankly the current police office is a great place to showcase some solar, but if we are leaving the building hopefully the new one will have some as well. If they are excited about electric bikes, then get them all one. For many departments their largest emissions source might actually be their employees driving into work- recording this even if just a guesstimate in miles driven each day would be a good start as part of reporting. We see it for the PD because they let folks take cars home, but every department likely has this same issue.

Economy and Jobs:

We did seem to have some employee retention issues. Maybe looking at workload, pay scale/studies, and exit interviews of why folks leave. For example, if they can't find affordable family housing nearby, we need to look into it and do something about it. If they are underpaid and always leave for a pay bump we

need to look into it. Having a reliable and sustainable police dept needs reliable and sustainable employees as well.

Education/Arts/Community:

Diversity, Community cohesion, historic preservation. Officers are present at many local events, so maybe a program to not only allow them to attend for work but also tickets/passes for them and their families as well. Coffee with a cop events are going well but maybe some extra budget for more community-cohesion type events for them to attend?

Equity and Empowerment:

Not sure what poverty and civil rights training our officers go through, but they are the front lines for a lot of this stuff on the street so it is extremely important they are trained and know what they represent when dealing with these issues every day. We sort of glanced off this but poverty and inequality issues are a big deal in this community.

Health and Safety:

This is a big one for this dept as well as the fire dept. Safe communities, emergency management, hazard mitigation, and preparedness for weather are issues our community needs to have a plan for in order to be resilient and sustainable. What might be interesting here is a yearly review of issues the dept is noticing increasing or decreasing in the community, and making sure the council is aware of it. Years back we had a town/gown committee talk about suicide and drug use and it was very eye-opening, but what changes did we actually make to deal with those changing issues? What is the #1 safety issue in Boone? Traffic? Heroin? High blood pressure? This department has the ability to make a big impact in this category of community sustainability, if we give them the chance. What are the top 5 intersections that could use safety improvement?

Natural Systems:

Green infrastructure and water come up here in relation to public safety. I know some of our folks are swift-water certified due to the flooding that happens in our area. Focusing on safety issues since this is the police dept, what areas would they recommend improvements being made if there is a spot where folks are getting flooded too often? An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure etc. etc.

Fire

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Appendix

Department summary materials and minutes of department meetings