

**TOWN OF BOONE
SUSTAINABILITY, ECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2019
5:30 P.M.**

Members Present:	Chairperson Quint David, Benjamin Scarboro, Lee Ball, John Prickett and Nancy LaPlaca
Council Members Present:	Sam Furgiuele and Marshall Ashcraft
Staff Members Present:	Marty Little – Planner and Marlene Crosby-Committee Secretary

Call to Order

Chairperson David called to order the Boone Sustainability, Economics and Environment committee, held in the Town Council Chambers Room located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road at 5:30 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Scarboro made a motion, seconded by Member Prickett to accept the agenda as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Member Scarboro made a motion, seconded by Member Ball to accept the December 13, 2018 Town Council and Sustainability, Economics and Environment Committee joint-meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Election of Officers

Chairperson David opened the floor for nominations for Chairperson for 2019.

Member LaPlaca and Member Prickett nominated Chairperson David to continue in the position of Chairperson for 2019. With no other nominations made, Chairperson David closed the floor for nominations. Chairperson David accepted the nomination for Chairperson for 2019. It was the consensus of the Sustainability, Economics and Environment Committee for Chairperson David to continue to be the SEEC Chairperson in 2019.

Discussion ensued on nominating SEEC members for Vice-Chairperson for 2019 without the member being present to accept the nomination. Member Furgiuele and Mr. Marty Little, Planner agreed that currently there are no general statutes or Town Code language to prohibit this topic.

Chairperson David opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chairperson for 2019. Member Ball nominated Vice-Chairperson Ayers to continue in the position of Vice-Chairperson for 2019. It was the consensus of the SEEC for Vice-Chairperson Ayers to continue to be the SEEC Vice-Chairperson in 2019.

Chairperson David said he would inform Vice-Chairperson Ayers that the SEEC has elected him for Vice-Chairperson for 2019. Chairperson David suggested that at the next meeting, Chairperson Ayers would have the opportunity to accept the nomination.

Discussion of the Energy Action Plan

Chairperson David began discussion on this topic stating that the SEEC has completed their goals and recommendations in 2014 and 2017. He said in 2019 it is time to revisit the SEEC's recommendations to Council. He said that several SEEC members wanted to move forward with the carbon reduction goals and the setting of the 100 percent renewable energy date. He suggested putting the proposed goals in the same format as previous recommendations to Council.

Member Furgiuele said that at a previous SEEC meeting discussion ensued on differentiating on going with all renewables. He talked about the argument of 2030 or 2050 for all renewables as opposed to being climate neutral which could still be a goal for 2030. He said he would like for the SEEC to discuss further the year 2030 or 2050 for a goal. He pointed out that the Town has ways to contribute to the climate neutrality without necessarily having all renewables for example planting trees.

Chairperson David explained that the City of Asheville, North Carolina looked at the carbon and renewable goals separately. He said they have chosen the year 2050 for their goal for 100 percent renewable energy.

Chairperson David talked about NTE having the options available for the Town of Boone to purchase 100 percent renewable energy just for electricity usage. He said this is easy to budget, if the people want to have it by taking one cent of property tax which is about \$100,000 per year. He said at this time, the Town of Boone does not have electric fire trucks and diesel will have to be used for the regular fire trucks. He asked if we want to offset this usage by planting trees or

by building more solar projects. He said there are options to cover the climate neutral part. He talked about having two goals, one for 100 percent renewable energy for electricity by 2030 and one goal to reach the full carbon footprint reduction by 2050. Member Furgieuele said he thought the argument before was that it is unlikely for the Town of Boone to be 100 percent renewable by 2030 because of the fire trucks and the issues with the water and water treatment plant. But it is not impossible to meet an earlier goal to be climate neutral because of the ability to continue to use some non-renewable fuels but still have offsets to counter balance them.

Chairperson David reminded the SEEC from the 2014 budget that \$740,000 out of \$1.2 Million of the Town's energy budget was electricity usage. He said it would be easy to separate the electricity usage from the renewables versus the propane and the fuel and gas.

Member Scarboro asked if the ultimate-goal is to be renewable or climate neutral. Chairperson David said the 2017 goal was 100 percent renewable sources by 2050.

Member Ball talked about New River Light and Power, through NTE, being able to provide solar for the Town, but if the goal is for carbon reduction, NRLP can also sell nuclear. He said the Town will need to decide on which one they want to buy. He said he feels that the markets will all play out and it will not be competitive like it currently is for the nuclear option. Member LaPlaca noted that Duke Power purchased the nuclear units and extended the terms so they could lower the rates.

Member LaPlaca suggested that the SEEC use the term "climate neutrality" or "greenhouse gas reduction" which is the term used by Governor Cooper. She noted that the price of coal is going down and the price of natural gas is going up.

Member Ashcraft talked about the reduction of greenhouse gases being the overall goal.

Member Scarboro said that climate neutrality is a much broader topic. He talked about the need to research the things that we purchase to see where they were made in order to make sure they were not made in factories that produce carbon.

Chairperson David said he would put together a list of goals for a resolution for Council based on the way that the City of Asheville did their goals. He said he would include the language that Governor Cooper used in this list as well. He said he would bring the list to the next SEEC meeting for the SEEC to review and then present to Council.

Discussion ensued on the goal of 100 percent climate neutrality by 2050. Member Furgieuele suggested having a more ambitious goal for the climate neutrality. He said we have the ability, especially with the Bolick property, to have a more ambitious goal. He said there are opportunities at the Bolick property that would count toward the climate neutrality for example the planning of trees. Member Furgieuele said if the earlier year 2030 gets adopted, he feels that it helps Council to encourage the Town departments and staff to cooperate.

Member Furguele said he had a Town department head approach him and suggested that a mission statement be adopted, which would be applicable to each Town department. He said that because of the expertise in every Town department, it might be possible to have a mission statement for each Town department.

Member Prickett asked if the mission statement would ask the Town departments to make a certain percentage of improvement by a certain time along with budget funding for improvements, if needed. Member Furguele said yes.

Member LaPlaca talked about using the best practice type of approach and set a goal that every year you reduce your energy by, for example two percent. She said this way you would be able to see continuous improvement and reduction.

Member Ball said that at Appalachian State University, they prefer looking at the year 2030 because most of the employees will be there when that year arrives. He said when they think of the goal of 2050, that year seems so far away and most of the employees may not be at the University at that time.

Discussion ensued on getting input from the energy users of the Town departments. Member Furguele pointed out that the Fire and Police Departments are the most resistive in getting their participation. He suggested putting the goal into their hands to figure out the reduction on being climate neutral by 2030. He suggested giving them a mandate approved by the Council and Town Manager.

Member Furguele explained that in general, 40 percent of the population of the United States does not believe in the climate change. He said he wondered how many Staff members have that viewpoint. He talked about possibly adding an educational component for the Town departments. He also mentioned the SEEC talk to the Town Manager about mandating the Town departments' in-service work.

Discussion ensued on resiliency planning. Chairperson David explained that resilience was one of the "Tenants of Sustainability". He suggested that he write a memo to explain the "Tenants of Sustainability". He noted that these "Tenants of Sustainability" have been in place for almost ten years. He suggested putting "resiliency planning" at the top of the list.

Member Furguele made two points about the Town Department's in-service work. He said not everyone learns by reading information. He said if you start talking to people throughout the community at large, he predicted that fewer than 10 percent of the people in the Town of Boone, including students, are aware of how dire the actual predictions are regarding climate change. His second point regarding the Town going from non-renewables to renewables is a vehicle issue. He said the issue is concentrated mostly with the Police Department. He said there needs to be a reduction in resistance, even if they do not see the need for it. He said the change needs to occur in the vehicle use in the Police and Fire Departments. Chairperson David said the Police and Fire Departments combined use is one-eleventh or one-twelfth of the Town's total energy

budget. He explained that the Street Department uses twice as much fuel as the Fire Department.

Member Ball said that he is encouraged by the survey from the NRLP presentation that said the community is willing to pay more for solar. He said he thinks it is worth it to pursue the solar project with NTE.

Discussion ensued on a Town Outreach Program. Member Scarboro said our impact on the climate could increase ten-fold if we had a significant Outreach Program. He talked about people that come to Boone could leave with some knowledge of reducing their carbon footprint.

Chairperson David talked about all non-emergency vehicles being electric or hybrid.

Member Furgiuele explained that we should be striving to address the use of fuels and practices in general by the larger community. He said perhaps we might have the capacity to do this with NTE. He also said that there are means through the Planning Department to make adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Ordinance, which can affect the building practices. He said the building department can review ways to incentivize the use of green building practices.

Member LaPlaca talked about adding educational information to the Town website to make it easy for the community to gain the information.

Chairperson David talked about a meeting that will be occurring on Saturday, January 12, 2019 at the “How Space” on Howard Street that will be discussing “climate action strategies”. Chairperson David noted that Appalachian State University has a lot of great resources that are available to the Town of Boone.

Chairperson David said that since 2014, the Educational component has been a part of the goals but there has not been a promotional type person provided to help with it. He asked at what time is the Town expecting the Town committees to take care of these issues and at what point is the Town going to hire someone to help with it. Member Furgiuele said it is the responsibility of the committee to do the discussing of the topics and make recommendations to Council. He said then the Town Manager is tasked with completing the approved recommendations.

Discussion ensued on transportation and replacing vehicles in the Town. Member Ball said it would be interesting to know what it would cost to offset the replacement of all the heavy trucks in the Fire Department. He said you could use this replacement information as a strategy. He suggested that in the interim, the vehicles start being replaced. He said then we might get to the point where, ten years from now, electric fire trucks would be a standard-type vehicle.

Member LaPlaca talked about the Executive Order 80. She pointed out that the SEEC should try not to spend too much time on some topics because the market is going to change.

Discussion ensued on net metering. Member LaPlaca noted that NRLP does not have net metering. She said she feels that this is needed, and it should be addressed but she does not know how to address it. Member Prickett said that they have net metering in Florida, but it is not available in Boone. He asked why is it so difficult to accomplish net metering in Boone. Member Ashcraft said that he is speculating that where the demand is higher, they are more receptive to it. Member LaPlaca noted that the investor owned utilities are the most difficult and there are a lot of municipal utilities in Florida. Member LaPlaca added that rebates do not make any sense unless you have net metering. Member Ball said he would talk to Mr. Ed Miller at NRLP about net metering. Member Furguele suggested that the SEEC make a recommendation to Council to ask Mr. Ward to work on net metering.

Member LaPlaca noted that the State of Florida is at one-percent solar now. She said that North Carolina is between four and one-half percent and six percent.

Discussion ensued on the \$100,000 budget amount. Member Furguele explained that Vice-Chairperson Ayers' approved plan with the \$100,000 has not been implemented. He said the \$100,000 amount of money has not been used and is still in reserve. He suggested that the SEEC make a recommendation to Council for their early budget discussions. He noted that the Council budget meetings will begin soon and the Staff will have to work on the implementation. He noted that by May of 2019, it will be too late.

Discussion ensued on providing solar fields. Member Ball noted that NTE is beginning to build the solar fields and this is how the solar will be available to purchase. Member Furguele said the Town cannot get all of its power through NRLP because Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation is serving the sewer treatment plan. Member Ball said the Town could contact NRLP and tell them that the Town wants the entire 500kw. Chairperson David said the Town can build its own solar plant and not have to purchase from NTE. Chairperson David said that some municipalities do want to maintain their solar fields.

Discussion ensued on goals for 2030. Member Prickett suggested putting together a list of terms to give some guidance on the goals, broken down by year with the percentage of improvements per year. Member Scarboro suggested the following: the mission statement of the energy action plan is to become climate neutral by the year 2030 and have a net positive impact through an "outreach program" on all residents in and around the area.

Discussion ensued on the rebate program. Member Furguele noted that he had proposed this program to Council. He said the Town Attorney had reviewed it and said it was legal but it has not been further discussed.

Discussion ensued on PACE financing. Chairperson David said the SEEC previously agreed to discuss this topic. He said he thinks there is only one other Town in North Carolina who has participated in this type of financing. He said in this program, the Town would set money aside to help finance solar projects. He said this money would be returned to the Town through the

tax bills. Member Furguele said that he guaranteed there would be Staff resistance against this topic.

Chairperson David said he would bring to the next SEEC meeting the past mission statement to be reviewed and discussed for short-range and long-range goal planning for 2019. He suggested including mission statement examples from other cities like Atlanta, Georgia and Salt Lake City, Utah in the recommendation packet so others understand what the SEEC is trying to do.

Member Ashcraft said he is not impressed by what Atlanta, Georgia, Fayetteville, North Carolina and in many cases what Asheville, North Carolina has done. Member Ashcraft said because of the difference in the size of each city, it makes the goals non-comparable. Member Prickett said in this case we need to look for examples that are similar to the Town of Boone.

Member Furguele said it is a selling point to the Council and the community to say that the Town of Boone is on the cutting edge of getting solar in the Town.

Discussion ensued on curbside composting. Member Ball said the County has interest in this topic.

Member Ashcraft asked the SEEC if they wanted to make a recommendation to use some of the \$100,000 to purchase a hybrid or electric vehicle, as opposed to holding onto the money to use for solar project charging stations, or planting of trees. Member Ball said this would be money well spent, especially when you are trying to get buy-in on the electric vehicles.

Other Matters by Committee Members or Staff

Discussion ensued on changing the date of the February 14, 2019 SEEC meeting due to Valentine's Day and prior commitments. It was the consensus of the SEEC to move the next meeting to Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. and change the meeting location to the Planning and Inspection Department – Upstairs Conference Room located at 680 W. King Street.

Discussion ensued on changing the time for future meetings from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. It was the consensus of the SEEC to not change the time of the meeting.

Mr. Little, Planner, explained to the SEEC about changing the name of the committee. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the SEEC to further discuss this topic at the next SEEC meeting.

Adjournment

Member Ball made a motion, seconded by Member Scarboro to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Quint David, SEEC Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Committee Secretary