

**TOWN OF BOONE
SUSTAINABILITY, ECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2017
6:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Benjamin Scarboro, Quint David, Bailey Winecoff and Chris Gentry

**COUNCIL
MEMBERS PRESENT:** Charlotte Mizelle

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections and Brenda Henson, Administrative Support Specialist

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Benjamin Scarboro called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m., seconded by Member David.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Scarboro asked each member to introduce themselves and give a brief history of the experience with sustainability. Mr. Landon Pennington a solar installer attended this meeting to answer solar questions. Mr. Chris Grasinger a small business lender attended this meeting to answer any questions on sustainability.

Discussion ensued on electric cars. Chairperson Scarboro said he has information on these new vehicles.

Discussion ensued on the agenda items for this meeting. Chairperson Scarboro suggested to amend the agenda to allow the guest speakers be a part of the solar presentation.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Member David made a motion, seconded by Chairperson Scarboro to amend the agenda to include a solar presentation before the short-term goals agenda item.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

SOLAR PRESENTATION

Vice-Chairperson Ayers and Mr. Landon Pennington made the solar presentation. He noted the solar resolution was passed on December 15, 2016. He said he has been asked to work on trying to help the Town of Boone municipality go solar by the year 2050. He noted that the Town of Boone has recently purchased 54 acres to build a new Town facility. He said he discussed with Mr. John Ward, Town Manager the possibility of including Town solar vehicles. He said he also let Mr. Ward know that by 2022 that Ford will have manufactured seven electric vehicles which will include police vehicles and other vehicles with four-wheel drive capability. He said the solar vehicles would need to be phased into the Town's vehicle plan.

Mr. Pennington presented some of the opportunities for the Town to include solar. He said that the Town will have to act now to plan for the year 2050. He talked about the cost of going solar and said that you have to purchase all of your energy up front. He communicated that solar energy without any tax credits at this time is six to seven cents a kilowatt hour. He said there are tax credits available, but unfortunately government does not pay tax, therefore the tax credits are not useful.

Mr. Pennington said that he started out providing solar for non-profit organizations. He found this to be a very difficult thing. He expressed it would be helpful if the Town had an investor that is interested in doing something good for the Town and not interested in making a profit to help add solar to the Town.

Mr. Pennington talked about partnering with the power utility companies, when going solar. He articulated that extracting your value out of the utility companies is a problem because of their high rates.

Mr. Pennington talked about increasing solar energy in the community. He spoke about the funding for solar coming from Town residents and needing a larger location for the solar structure than the size of Depot Street solar charging station.

Member David said since 2009 the Town has said that they would create an energy action plan. He read the motion made by the Sustainability, Economics and Environment Committee at their last meeting regarding the Boone 2030 Plan. He said having an action item to put together the energy-action plan that has not occurred yet. He explained that the money for the PACE program would need to be budgeted.

Vice-Chairperson Ayers talked about the need to increase green education and green jobs to support the increase in solar energy in the Town. He imparted that there are solar classes being taught at Appalachian State University.

Mr. Pennington said the larger barrier is not solar but the utility companies. He told the group that New River Light and Power is governed by the North Carolina utility's commission. He expressed that this provides some unique problems. His goal was to suggest to New River Light and Power to approach the utilities commission and petition them to allow this. He noted that there is not enough property in the Town of Boone to add a solar field.

Council Member Mizelle asked Mr. Pennington about the six cents cost for solar and if this is what you net after it is sold back to the utility company. Mr. Pennington said you pay your solar costs upfront and you do not have to pay a bill and the power comes back to you.

Council Member Mizelle asked if you are using your own power as the power is generated on the rooftop. Mr. Pennington said it depends on where your power is located. He said in Downtown Boone where he lives, he is technically using his own power but it depends on where the electrons are. He communicated that you have no say on how the wiring is done for the solar energy.

Member David talked about the Town of Boone yearly utility costs from New River Light and Power. He said the costs are from \$300,000.00 to \$400,000.00 and come mostly from the water and sewer pumps that use a lot of kilowatt hours.

Vice-Chairperson Ayers asked for the committee to consider pursuing the discussion of including solar in the Town. Chairperson Scarboro said this topic should be an ongoing long-term project.

Discussion ensued on the Town of Boone starting to buy electric vehicles. Council Member Mizelle said that by 2050 the Town of Boone could start buying electric vehicles for their fleet.

Discussion ensued on the Police Department driving electric vehicles. It was noted that the police officers drive their patrol vehicles home after their shift. This would continue to help not impact the environment.

Council Member Mizelle said that Mr. Jim Byrne, Assistant Town Manager is great at working on grants for the Town. Vice-Chairperson Ayers said he would like to talk to Mr. Byrne regarding trying to get some grants related to solar projects.

Council Member Mizelle noted that the Council Retreat will be in February 2017 and suggested that the SEEC give a short presentation on their budgetary needs.

Council Member Mizelle said that she would like to see rooftop solar on every future building. Vice-Chairperson Ayers said that rooftop solar is actually less expensive to install. Council Member Mizelle talked a solar field being added to the new Town of Boone property along with rooftop solar.

Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections asked the SEEC members about their permission to move forward and what does that entailed. Ms. Shook asked if they included the solar topic into the goals to be presented to Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Winecoff made a motion, seconded by Member Gentry to approve the December 8, 2016 as written.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

SHORT-TERM GOALS

Member David reviewed the short-term goals that were discussed at the last meeting on December 8, 2016. He explained that in 2014 the Sustainability Task Force created a list of short-term goals that were approved by the Council. He said the SEEC is attempting to create more short and long term goals.

Member David talked about the format of the budget he goals he will present to Council. He asked the SEEC, if they would allow him to work with Council Member Mizelle on the presentation?

Member David stated the short-term goals for Transportation. He said those goals were the bike initiative and bike shelter in permanent locations around the Town. He said he talked with Mr. Ward regarding these topics and Mr. Ward said there is probably room in the budget already for these for improvement of the Town. Member David said these topics need to be presented to Council for their approval.

Member David talked about the highway upgrade and safety plan, the Boone Greenway and green infrastructure plan that would include solar power and contribute to light pollution. He said a 2014 survey showed that everyone loved greenways.

Member David talked about the water meter replacement program. It was noted that this program may be coming online in a year or two. He said this is an approach toward smart meters.

Member David talked about the storm-water authority. He is suggesting that water runoff quality and quantity be investigated before it becomes a requirement.

Member David talked about the Town of Boone becoming a Bee City USA. He noted that the Town of Boone is already a Tree City USA.

Member David talked about creating a carbon report and monitoring program while putting together a five-year plan to manage carbon which goes back to the energy action plan in the Boone 2030 Plan.

Member David talked about coordinating a tree stakeholder meeting to discuss the urban forestry management plan. Vice-Chairperson Ayers said he wants to be part of this meeting.

Member David talked about the current adopted plans of the Town and reviewing them to include Sustainability and Resilience and modify plans if necessary. Ms. Shook said the current adopted plans will be looked at to see if any of them can be merged together. She said in the review of these adopted plans, the things that show conflict will be presented to Council for their review. Council Member Mizelle said the Supreme Court decision to remove the Extra

Territorial Jurisdiction from the Town has caused this topic to be removed from every adopted plan of the Town in addition to the new topics that need to be added to the Unified Development Ordinance.

Member David suggested to have a social sustainability stakeholder meeting to talk about the way that funds are being used for non-profits in the Town.

Member David talked about the short term economic goals for recycling and single-stream recycling. He said these things need to keep being promoted. He communicated the SEEC has discussed starting a large composting facility.

Member David talked about food goals. He wished that the Farmers Market initiatives were made a long-term goal. He said the new Town of Boone facility may allow a Farmers Market in their community space. Council Member Mizelle articulated that there will be an expansion and improvement of the current Farmers Market rather than being held at the new Town of Boone facility.

Member David talked about the energy action plan. He explained about the online dashboard to measure the information of how many ride bicycles, how much water is being used and how many people ride the Appalcart in the Town of Boone.

Member David talked about the energy plan in the Boone 2030 plan as being a long-term goal. He proposed putting together an energy-action plan. Mr. Pennington said it would be helpful for the SEEC to add a calculation on what it would take Boone to do business as usual by buying traditional power. He said to compare that calculation to buying rooftop solar by financing it with interest and compare it to solar plus interest metric to business as usual. He said you could show people that you can achieve your Sustainability goals in a more cost effective way. He suggested this is a good way to try and succeed. He said from day one solar plus interest is cheaper than business as usual and this is his suggestion on trying to sell solar to interested parties.

Member David talked about education and outreach. He suggested adding this information to the Town website.

Member David talked about the updating the merged adopted plans of the Town to include Sustainability.

NEW GOALS

Member David talked about each goal and how much money would they be spending to achieve each goal. He gave an example. Would it be better to spend money in another location than on one sidewalk to promote walking and biking? He said there needs to be discussion on where the money should be used.

DISCUSSION ON SENDING GOALS AND BUDGET INFORMATION TO COUNCIL

Discussion ensued on the SEEC's presentation of proposing budget requests to council. Member David said that the SEEC needed to get their proposed budget list together for items that may not be completed in that budget year. Member David also suggested having the budget amounts available for each item in case someone would like to sponsor an item.

Discussion ensued on endorsing the concept of 100 percent clean renewable resources by 2030. Council Member Mizelle said that this percentage may be a challenge to attain. Council Member Mizelle reminded the SEEC that they should be specific with their requests when asking for proposed budget items.

Discussion ensued on the new Town of Boone facility that is currently being planned. Vice-Chairperson Ayers talked about including the opportunity for solar in the development plans at the new facility. Council Member Mizelle said that the SEEC can propose solar to be incorporated into this project but they need to have the reasons why and the cost associated with the proposal.

Discussion ensued on the source for purchasing the police vehicles. Member David said the Town purchases these vehicles but some of that money comes from grants.

Discussion ensued on a goal to be suggested that the Town of Boone become a 100 percent clean renewable Town by 2030. Chairperson Scarboro said that feels like it is within reason to ask this of the Council. Vice-Chairperson Ayers said that green jobs and green education will sell this suggestion to the community.

Vice-Chairperson Ayers talked about adding clean renewable energy sources to the action plan. It was noted that before this topic is presented to Council, there needs to be research done to find out what it costs and how it is going to benefit the Town.

Member David talked about the charge of the SEEC committee from the Council. He read from the committee charge that the SEEC is to establish short and long-term goals and making recommendations to improve Sustainability in the community.

Ms. Shook noted that it is important to know that the SEEC is not always going to be the ones to implement their goals and recommendations because other committees of the Town might take them a step further. She said the Town has other committees that are handling some of the things that the SEEC is discussing. She noted that the SEEC list is long and she suggested that they could identify items on the list that include free resources and Staff resources may be used for items that may come to fruition.

Member David said to sum up the short-term and long-term goal discussion, he would like ask the SEEC for their permission to work with Council Member Mizelle to condense the list into one sheet. He suggested asking the Council approval of this list of goals like the 2014 list. He said after the SEEC goals list is approved and the SEEC needs to discuss how they are going to specifically budget for what the goals are going to be. He said this would approve the action plan and the green infrastructure plan.

Motion and Vote:

Member David made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mizelle that he could work with Council Member Mizelle to condense the goals to one sheet. The goals were discussed at the December 8, 2016 SEEC committee meeting.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Member Winecoff reminded the SEEC that part of their committee charge is to conduct focus groups and surveys and to hold a yearly sustainability forum. It was noted that this will have a cost associated with it. Ms. Shook noted that there are other stakeholder meetings held throughout the year that can blend well with the SEEC committee. She said one of the meetings that is held is the Annual Bicycle meeting. Council Member Mizelle said that some of these types of meetings have been held in churches and that would help save money.

Discussion ensued on adding the clean renewable resource plan to Council with the other goals. Member David suggested including the PACE program.

Motion and Vote:

Member David made a motion, seconded by Chairperson Scarboro to add the new goal of 100 percent clean renewable resource by 2030.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Discussion ensued on the stakeholder meetings.

Ms. Shook asked the SEEC about what type of Staff support they need for the recent request from Council regarding the 100 percent clean renewable resource. She asked for clarification on this topic. Member David explained what the SEEC is trying to accomplish with these requests.

Ms. Shook explained that the SEEC goals will be presented to Council for their review and they will balance those goals with the Staff's other responsibilities.

Member David talked about the possibility of using a consulting group or other agencies that can help with moving the proposed goals forward.

DISCUSSION ON SCHEDULING FUTURE SPEAKERS

Chairperson Scarboro made a motion to table this agenda item to the next meeting, seconded by Member Gentry.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

OTHER MATTERS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS OR STAFF

Set agenda for the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Scarboro adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Benjamin Scarboro, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Committee Secretary