

**TOWN OF BOONE
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021
5:30 P.M.**

Members Present:	Chairperson-Brooke Kornegay, Vice-Chairperson John Prickett, Lee Ball, Joan Brook, Margie Mansure, Terry Cirone, Ballard Reynolds, and LuAnna Nesbit
Town Council Liaisons Present:	Nancy LaPlaca
Staff Members Present:	John Ward-Town Manager, George Santucci-Sustainability & Special Projects Manager, Ms. Shook Shook-Director Planning and Inspections

Call to Order

Chair Kornegay called the meeting to order at 5:31 and called roll.

Adoption of Agenda

Ballard Reynolds made a motion to approve the agenda. John Prickett seconded the motion to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

John Prickett moved to accept the January 14, 2021 minutes. Lee Ball seconded the motion to accept. Motion carried unanimously.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Old Business:

Green Building Permitting

Ms. Shook reminded the Committee that prior to George's hiring, the Committee had agreed on how to move forward with three tasks that Council approved. February's meeting was identified as the time for Planning Staff to present to the Committee what can and can't be done to incentivize green building and permitting. That includes building code and ordinances. Also she will review the town's alternative transportation plans.

Ms. Shook started with Green Building. Boone must abide by NC Building code. It maintains minimum standards for health and safety for the construction of all structures. Changes to the code can only be

made by presenting to the 17 member NC Building Code Council. While not an impossible task, it would be very hard.

Ms. Shook then moved onto the code governing incentives for Green Building and reducing energy consumption:

§ 160D-704. Incentives. (a) For the purpose of reducing the amount of energy consumption by new development, a local government may adopt ordinances to grant a density bonus, make adjustments to otherwise applicable development requirements, or provide other incentives within its planning and development regulation jurisdiction, if the person receiving the incentives agrees to construct new development or reconstruct existing development in a manner that the local government determines, based on generally recognized standards established for such purposes, makes a significant contribution to the reduction of energy consumption and increased use of sustainable design principles. (b) In order to encourage construction that uses sustainable design principles and to improve energy efficiency in buildings, a local government may charge reduced building permit fees or provide partial rebates of building permit fees for buildings that are constructed or renovated using design principles that conform to or exceed one or more of the following certifications or ratings: (1) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification or higher rating under certification standards adopted by the U.S. Green Building Council. (2) A One Globe or higher rating under the Green Globes program standards adopted by the Green Building Initiative. (3) A certification or rating by another nationally recognized certification or rating system that is equivalent or greater than those listed in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection. (2019-111, s. 2.4; 2020-3, s. 4.33(a); 2020-25, s. 51(a), (b), (d).)

Member Lee Ball asked if the Town could consider the additional incentive of fast tracking projects that sought to use green construction. Ms. Shook said that could be considered. The challenges are that it is an additional expense to the Town and that public meeting requirements would apply to some projects. The public meeting rule would require advertising meetings. This incentive would need to be approved by Council. General zoning reviews could be expedited.

Chair Kornegay asked if fee waivers were enough of an incentive to encourage these practices. Ms. Shook responded that the fee waivers could help offset the added construction expenses associated with green building. Density bonus would be additional incentives.

Member Joan Brook asked what the regulations are regarding pervious cover. Ms. Shook said that the state limits the stormwater regulations that Boone can require. Developments get credit for the existing impervious cover. Many development maintain the same footprint to avoid having to offset additional impervious cover.

Council member LaPlaca asked for clarification that Boone cannot change requirements but can provide incentives. Ms. Shook said that we can change things like the requirement that a new development must capture a 10 year storm to a 25 year storm. She said that the Planning Department is working on updating Boone's stormwater ordinances.

Council Member LaPlaca initiated a conversation about utility provided energy audits and water saving initiatives. These programs are underutilized. George shared that Boone offers \$100 rebates to replace

high flow toilets with low flow. Boone will work to market this service and those services offered by the utilities. John mentioned that Boone is hiring a new communications position that will help marketing these services. John also talked about Boone partnering with WAMY to offer energy upgrade to low income households. WAMY has the expertise and capacity to offer this to Boone's citizens. It is a great opportunity for Boone to support WAMY and not reinvent or duplicate a service that they provide. An additional opportunity is to set up a revolving loan fund with WAMY to offer low interest money to more homeowners for energy efficiency upgrades.

Member Nesbit joined at 5:59pm.

Alternative Transportation Plans

Chair Kornegay asked Ms. Shook to present the alternative transportation plans. Ms. Shook said that she wanted to share a high level review of where the town is regarding alternative transportation plans.

Ms. Shook began with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan that was adopted in 2014. Ms. Shook acknowledged that Member Mansure made substantial contributions to this plan as a member of both the Alternative Transportation and Transportation Committees. Ms. Shook explained that the plan focused on short term and long term recommendations. Short term recommendations refer to those that can be easily obtained through ongoing work like DOT resurfacing a road and adding painted stripes delineating pedestrian or bike paths. Long term projects include those that requires substantial funding, land or right-of-way acquisition, and access to additional infrastructure. Public Works references this document to determine next projects. DOT is now encouraging multi-use trails.

Ms. Shook then moved to the Downtown Alive Plan, which covers the Poplar Grove area. John said that he used this plan to get the Rivers Walk Development to install a greenway path along Boone Creek. Ms. Shook said that as a great example of how the Town uses these plans.

Ms. Shook then moved to the Middle Fork Greenway Plan. Town Council has adopted section 6 of this plan.

Ms. Shook then explained how these plans get implemented in conjunction with the Town's Unified Development Ordinance. There are 2 options, either the Town funds a project or a land developer constructs one as part the development.

One final option is the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). An example is a planned multi-use trail from Brookshire Park to Grove Street. To use STIP, the Town must provide a 20% match. For this \$2.5 million project, Boone provides \$500,000.

Ms. Shook then shared the spreadsheet that Public Works uses for sidewalk priorities. Finally she mentioned that these plans have a public stakeholder component. Stakeholders are updated every two years on progress made on the plans.

Member Brook asked if federal ADA monies could help install sidewalks. Manager Ward said not that he was aware of. There are federal monies that passed down to DOT that are funding \$2 million of the Grove

Street connector project. John also hopes that the \$100,000 that Boone is putting away each year to match the DOT money will continue beyond the Grove Street project and math subsequent projects.

John then shared the loss of sales tax revenue when, in 2013, the county changed how collected sales tax is distributed in the county. This has resulted in Boone getting 13% of total sales tax instead of 25% as Boone had received prior to 2013. This is more than \$1.5 million per year. Council has pledged to put all that money to sustainability projects if the county would revert back to the pre-2013 tax distribution.

Chair Kornegay had to leave the meeting at 6:10pm. She asked Vice-Chair Prickett to run the rest of the meeting.

Vice-Chair Prickett then asked about the lawsuit filed by Boone disputing the change in sales tax distribution. He wondered if there was dialog between the Town and County. Council member LaPlaca said that more than 2 council members and county commissioners could not without violating open meeting laws. Manager Ward said one possibility, now that the lawsuit is filed, is forced arbitration.

New Business

Budget Requests

Vice-Chair Prickett moved from Old Business to New Business. He asked Manager Ward to share the identified projects.

1. \$100,000 to complete converting the town's street lights to LEDs
2. \$45,000 to purchase and install 3 more public Level 2 EV charging stations
3. \$20,000 for tree planting on the Bolick property and elsewhere
4. \$7,000 to purchase two more Trash Trout that collect trash from streams
5. \$5,000 for reusable bags at the Farmers Market to replace plastic bags
6. Committee suggestions?

Manager Ward suggested that this is a start. The Committee can recommend additional projects.

Vice-Chair Prickett then asked the Committee for additional recommendations. Nancy suggested that we invite a consultant to speak to the Committee about energy efficiency. Member Brook asked if the Committee could suggest funding a Town Compost program. Manager Ward said that he didn't know what the budget for that might be and that we know the County is working on a program too. Member Brook asked Member Ball if he knew of options. Member Ball said he saw multiple ways to go. The best would be the potential county program. Next would be to explore the Town's contract with EDS for trash removal. Could the Town add curbside compost collection to that contract? Another would be a robust education program to encourage citizens to compost on their own. And finally to support private companies that are starting up in the High Country to go out and collect compost material for ultimate resale.

Ms. Shook reminded the Committee that they agreed at the December meeting to table future conversations on composting until the County was further along with their program. Manager Ward said the waiting for the county is best. He said he has contracted out compost collection in previous positions and that the Committee would be shocked at the cost for that service. Manager Ward said based on this

conversation that Boone would continue to fund backyard composter for the Town's resident. He' also asked the Town's recycling coordinator to look into getting in home composting pails that would promote Boone's Sustainability program. He also mentioned that the state prohibits the Town from competing with private industry. He mentioned that there are companies that will take compost at the Food Hub.

Manager Ward then suggested that the Committee could prioritize this list of funding requests or remove something for another idea, like money for the energy efficiency consultant. Member Mansure then suggested that the Town could offer monetary incentives to employees to encourage them to shop at the Food Hub to promote more local food consumption.

Vice-Chair Prickett asked if Manager Ward wanted the Committee to prioritize the projects tonight or wait to see how much the budget would be. Manager Ward said that George would need a recommendation tonight to take to the Council at the upcoming budget retreat.

Council member LaPlaca suggested that Boone may have an adequate number of charging stations. She asked Member Ball's opinion. Member Ball thought Boone could use a few more.

Vice-Chair Prickett then asked the Committee for a recommendation. Member Nesbit said the tree planting project was her top priority and that the EV charging stations would be second. She then said she had to leave the meeting for another meeting at 7:00pm.

Member Ball then moved that the Committee approve the list as presented and allow staff to prioritize based on the reaction of Council. Member Mansure seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Prickett called the roll for a vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Vice-Chair Prickett brought up the option to go to by-monthly meetings. Member Ball recommended that the Committee table that till next meeting when Chair Kornegay was in attendance.

Public Comment

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

Adjournment

Member Reynolds moved to adjourn at 7:10 p.m. Member Ball seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson, Brooke Kornegay

Sustainability & Special Projects Manager, George Santucci