

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

Members Present: Chairperson-Brooke Kornegay, Vice-Chairperson John Prickett, Lee Ball, Margie Mansure, and Terry Cirone
Town Council Liaisons Present: Nancy LaPlaca
Staff Members Present: George Santucci-Sustainability & Special Projects Manager
Others Present: Lily Kincaid, Matthew McGregor, Ricky

Call to Order

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

Adoption of Agenda

John Prickett made a motion to approve the agenda. Lee Ball seconded the motion to approve.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Terry Cirone moved to accept the February 11, 2021 minutes. John Prickett seconded the motion to accept.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Old Business:

Project Updates

George told the Committee that he presented the budget approved by the SC as is. The council had a few questions about Trash Trout devices and the Reusable bags for the Farmer's Market.

The budget items were as follows:

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

Councilwoman LaPlaca confirmed that the Council was supportive of the request.

George then reported that NRLP has been working to provide Boone as much as 11 MW of utility scale solar power. Most of that power will come from off the mountain. However, NRLP has a goal is to install 1 – 2.5 MW of solar in or near Boone.

Councilwoman LaPlaca asked if George could report back if there is a gap the cost of power. She also suggested the NRLP could do one-on-one contracts with landowners in Boone. She used the library as an example.

George mentioned the Bolick facility provided Boone with an opportunity to generate green power. Boone could provide the power back to NRLP who would make it available to the citizens of Boone. George further mentioned that Blue Ridge Energy has not provided any potential green power sources yet. Boone may have to buy more than it needs for municipal operations from NRLP to offset the power Boone uses from BRE.

Member Ball reminded us the NRLP is also looking at the County landfill as a potential solar site as well. Both the Bolick track and the landfill are in BRE's service area. NRLP can generate power outside its service area. However, it cannot provide power to customers outside its service area.

George mentioned that NRLP is also pursuing a 2 MW battery system. This started a good conversation about battery technology and recycling. Member Cirone said that recycling Lithium Ion batteries is very hard and is only happening on a very limited basis. We're all hopeful that the new technologies will solve these problems.

George then brought up Boone's lack of EV charging stations. The budget request would fund 3 charging stations. Councilwoman LaPlaca then asked if the model of charger would be able to generate revenue for the town. George responded that the current charging station on N. Depot costs Boone \$100/month on average. Right now, the cost per station increase for EV charging stations that can take credit cards is not worth it. George reported that Boone is looking into Charge Point stations, which have the ability to charge customers. Member Ball mention that App State is using Charge Point stations but not charging customers. There are some contractual issues that need to be worked out before ASU can charge customers.

George then reported that Boone is supporting AppalCart's new electric bus charging station. We're also looking into Park and Ride opportunities.

George then moved onto water and waste projects. On water George provided brief reports on the Peacock Lot/Boone Creek restoration project, Winkler Creek stormwater study, and the Bolick/South Fork restoration project. On the waste side, George spoke with Cole at the county. The county is moving forward with a recycling program. Boone will partner with the county when this service is available. George reminded the committee that Boone still offers composters to residential landowners in town. Boone has purchased a Trash Trout. We're awaiting delivery. Chair Kornegay reminded us the App State has a volunteer program that Boone should take advantage of.

On food, Member Mansure reminded us that Boone committed to the 10% local food program. George said that his biggest impact would be on the town municipal operations and holding the town accountable to it commitments. Member Mansure also said that the county is perusing an animal processing facility to be placed at the county landfill. The waste could provide a high nitrogen compost.

This concluded the updates.

Chair Kornegay then moved the committee onto to a discussion about adjusting the meeting schedule. We discussed moving to every other month meetings. George mentioned that we may want to consider successive February and March meetings to work on budget proposals. Councilwoman LaPlaca shared her support for moving to every other month meetings. Member Ball shared his support for bi-monthly meetings and suggested that George bring a potential future meeting schedule to the next committee meeting. Vice Chair Prickett expressed his support for bi-monthly meetings.

Member Ball moved that the committee meet bi-monthly and that George will bring a meeting schedule to the April meeting for review. Vice-Chair Prickett seconded the motion.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

New Business

Members priorities and backgrounds

Chair Kornegay shared that her background is in farming systems, food systems, and food equality. She is most interested in sustainable food production in the High Country.

Councilwoman LaPlaca shared her passion for distributed solar and net metering.

Member Mansure said that she and Brook came on from the Watauga Food Council. She agreed that they both have similar goals around food systems. She is also very interested in composting.

Vice-Chair Prickett shared that he is a chemist and has worked in many environmental, QC, and product development labs. His primary interest is in transportation and energy.

Member Cirone said that her background was in environmental health and safety and engineering. She worked in industrial chemical and recycling. She worked with stormwater, wastewater, and still has many contacts in the recycling industry. She would like to install solar on her home.

Member Ball said he is interest in everything. His background is biology and he taught building science at App State. Very interested in climate action and composting. He is very interested in transportation – buses and bike share. He would like to help the green building industry.

George shared that Ella, the committee's sustainability scholar, submitted her resignation. Her school workload has increased and force her to make this hard decision.

Member Ball suggested that George share progress against project list at each meeting. Active projects could drive future topics for meetings.

Chair Kornegay said that her priority is feeding people in need. The pandemic has exposed the stress on the food system. She shared that the Food Access group produced a list of priorities and she will share that list.

Councilwoman LaPlaca asked for technology that can help people better understand their energy consumption. Do the electric companies provide these resources? Are there other sources? This led to a broader conversation about GHG footprint tools. Member Ball and Member Cirone expressed concerns about inspiring homeowners to take advantage of the tools that we promote.

Public Comment

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

Adjournment

Member Mansure moved to adjourn at 7:20 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