

**TOWN OF BOONE
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, April 8, 2021
5:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Vice-Chairperson John Prickett, Lee Ball, Margie Mansure, Benjamin Scarboro, Ballard Reynolds, Joan Brook, LuAnna Nesbitt, and Terry Cirone

Town Council Liaisons Present: Nancy LaPlaca, Dustin Hicks

Staff Members Present: George Santucci-Sustainability & Special Projects Manager

Others Present: Lily Kincaid, Matthew McGregor, Ricky

Call to Order

Vice-Chair John Prickett called the meeting to order at 5:30.

Adoption of Agenda

Lee Ball made a motion to approve the agenda. Ballard Reynolds seconded the motion to approve.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Ballard Reynolds moved to accept the March 11, 2021 minutes. Benjamin Scarboro seconded the motion to accept.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Old Business:

GHG Tracking Tools

George shared GHG tracking tools for review. Vice-Chair Prickett asked for feedback.

Terry said the EPA tool wouldn't accept propane. Only natural gas. Carbonfootprint.com not intuitive, you needed to have all your bills and know , needed a tutorial

John liked the energy audit tool.

Lee commented that the carbonfootprint.com and the federal tools were good resources. They all take some time to get used to and some persistence.

Joan liked the home energy audit. She thought it was very user friendly. Helpful for people who like to do their own home projects.

John commented that he recently changed out light bulbs with LEDs and he's noticed a significant difference in his bill.

George comment that EPA tool was nice because it offered suggested changes that you could make and what that impact would be. He also noted that carbonfootprint.com weighted the insurance heavily.

George mentioned Boone is planning to redo the website. We can put links to these tools on the new website.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

New Meeting Schedule

George presented as requested a new every other month meeting schedule, February, April, June, August, October, and December. The schedule would also reserve March and May for as needed meetings during the budget negotiations.

Lee Ball said that this accurately represents the conversation at the March meeting. He move that the committee adopt this new meeting schedule. Terry Cirone seconded.

New Business

Google Docs

In response to a request at the last meeting, George created a Sustainability Google account. He will place meeting related documents in the Google folder and share them with the committee.

Boone Resiliency Plan

George introduced Cory Osborne, Planner with the High Country Council of Governments. He spoke to the alignment between resiliency and sustainability.

Cory Osborne provided an overview of the High Country COG. He then shared a presentation that covered the resiliency planning effort that he is leading.

The primary purpose of the plan is to create a practical list of recommendations designed to increase financial sustainability, environmental sustainability, and economic resiliency. The plan will focus on things that are within the Town' control.

The plan will focus on:

Physical Infrastructure – roads, sidewalks, public transit, water & wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications, electricity, and accessibility.

Development Regulations and Housing Affordability – zoning, subdivision regulation, steep slope, floodplain development, affordability, environmental sustainability

Business Support and Development – trends, leakage, industrial analysis, supply chain, diversification, clusters, small business resources, business associations, business continuity planning

Social Safety Net – DSS, homelessness, day care, substance abuse

Local Government –partnerships, communication, IT, employee retention and compensation, fiscal policy, facilities, equipment CIP, sustainability practices

Cory then requested feedback and input from the committee:

Lee Ball said the he looks forward to marry the town's plan with the university's plan to maximize the potential to serve the community. He mentioned the App state have a micro grid that can keep power up if there is a town wide power outage.

Council member Nancy LaPlaca brought up that distributed solar can plan an important role in providing a resilient energy capacity that would provide power in a crisis situation. She reiterated the need to remove barriers to enabling distributed solar.

Terry then mentioned that medical services were not included in the presentation. Cory mentioned that this was considered but that the HC COG determined that they lacked the resources and expertise to address this with the quality it deserved. He suggested that we look to those in the health care sector for an analysis of the COVID response and recommendations moving forward.

Vice-Chair Prickett than brought up affordable housing. He mentioned the trend in both housing and rental costs rising significantly during the last few years. He hoped we put a significant emphasis on this topic.

Ben Scarboro echoed the previous sentiment regarding housing. He mentioned the he has been forced to move to Zionville because he can't afford Boone. He suggested that we should consider artificially reducing property values. With regards to social safety net, he suggest that a tactic to consider is more micro community engagement. Helping people feel safe and supported knowing that their neighbors to support each other.

Vice-Chair Prickett said that he experienced this by getting out an walking his neighborhood lot more during the pandemic and getting to know his neighbors better.

Joan Brook then thanked Cory for the presentation. She thought it was very comprehensive. She hoped that homelessness would be discussed at length as part of the plan. She said that she see students homelessness as a growing problem. She suggested that the town could provide more incentives to help people purchase energy star appliances. She also would like to see a group of handy men and women who could help with home repairs for those who can afford it.

Lee Ball mentioned that habitat is offering to help people with home repairs.

Margie Mansure then mentioned the continuous growth at App State. This constant growth is putting pressure on all of Boone's resources.

Lee Ball mention that App State has hit a plateau with enrollment. There is not a substantial push to grow beyond the current 20,000 students.

LuAnna Nesbitt expressed that she didn't know what the town could do to address the growth of the university. She wondered if there could be a more comprehensive agreement between the town and university.

Lee Ball suggested that this resiliency plan could be the impetus for a larger collaborative planning effort between the town and university.

Ben Scarboro also acknowledged that the university is in tough spot balancing demand for growth and revenue with being a good neighbor to Boone.

Joan Brook suggested that Boone and App State create a committee that comprehensively looked at all the projects and partnerships between the two. George Santucci brought up that there is/was a committee that met to discuss this. Lee Ball said that it is referred to as the Town Gown Committee. He said the Matthew Docum is the chair of the committee. He is App State local government liason. George offered to look into the Town Gown committee and report back at the next meeting.

George asked Margie Mansure to comment of food security. Margie said she was impressed that the food system held up better than she expected. Having said that she hope we could emphasize support for the local food system.

Ben Scarboro reminded us that Boone committed to purchase locally. Margie Mansure suggested that composting should be added.

Lee Ball talked about the university's offer to provide food services to emergency responders in a disaster.

Ben mention Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture as a resource. Margie Mansure reminded us about Caldwell Community college's food services program as well.

Public Comment

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

Adjournment

Ben Scarboro 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