

**TOWN OF BOONE
SUSTAINABILITY, ECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2018
5:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Chairperson Quint David, John Prickett, Benjamin Scarboro, Nicholas Stover, Lee Ball, Marshall Ashcraft, Sam Furguele, and Vice-Chairperson Harvard Ayers (arrived at 5:33 p.m.)

Staff Members Present: Christy Turner, Senior Planner, Brenda Henson, Administrative Support Specialist, and Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections (arrived at 6:30 p.m.)

Call to Order

Chairperson David called to order the meeting of the Boone Sustainability, Economics and Environment committee, held in the Planning and Inspections Department – Upstairs Conference Room located at 680 W. King Street at 5:30 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Stover made a motion, seconded by Member Scarboro, to adopt the agenda as written.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Member Scarboro made a motion, seconded by Member Prickett, to approve the April 12, 2018 meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Vice Chairperson Ayers arrived at the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

Bee City USA Update

Ms. Turner informed the committee members that the Council approved the action request item for the Staff time to prepare the Bee City, USA application and to work on the Resolution to be approved by Council. She noted that there is another action request on the Council's May 2018

agenda to approve the event date of September 7, 2018 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Ms. Turner said the Staff is working on adding more topics to the event. Ms. Turners said that Ms. Jane Shook, Director of the Town of Boone Planning and Inspections Department suggested including the Tree City event and the Historic Preservation Commission on the same date of September 7, 2018 which is the first Friday in September.

Discussion ensued on the entertainment for the September 7, 2018 event. Ms. Turner said that Mr. Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources informed her that there is no entertainment scheduled for the event. Member Furgiuele suggested asking his daughters' band from Asheville, North Carolina called "Honey Be Nice" to perform at the event. Member Scarboro said he would check on bands that are appropriate to perform for this event. Member Ball suggested the band called the "King Bees".

Discussion ensued on the funds to pay for a musical act. Member Ball said that he has booked the "King Bees" for about \$300.00 to \$500.00. Chairperson David talked about having a band would make the event more memorable. Member Ashcraft suggested talking with Mr. Fotta to see what funds she may have available for the musical act. Member Furgiuele agreed on the amount of funds suggested for the musical act. Chairperson David said if the Town is going spend some funds this is a great way to do it by celebrating the Town. It was noted that the Jones House location is the main venue. It was suggested to spread the entertainment to other places in the Town.

Member Furgiuele talked about the Sustainability, Economics and Environment Committee suggesting an allocation of funds of \$1,000.00 or \$1,500.00 for the event.

Discussion ensued on refreshments. Ms. Turner said she would ask Ms. Fotta about the amount of refreshments that should be purchased. It was noted that attendance on first Friday usually depends on the weather.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chairperson Ayers made a motion, seconded by Member Stover to request \$1,500.00 from Council to help fund the Bee City, USA and Tree City event on September 7, 2018.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Turner noted that she will create the proposed action request for Council.

It was noted that after the Council approval of said event, the Staff will begin coordinating the event with Appalachian State University, Watauga County, the Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture and the bee stakeholders.

Ms. Turner explained that Ms. Fotta has a large blow-up screen that can be used to watch the live bee hive via a camera inside the hive.

Discussion on Green Infrastructure Plan, NC Climate Solutions Coalition Energy Action Plan, and Energy Action Plan

Chairperson David began discussion on these topics by stating that there is a class at Appalachian State University that has been doing research on the STAR community framework which is a sustainable rating system. He said that he would send out the pdf files of the reports of their research for the SEEC to review. Chairperson David said there were only three cities in North Carolina that were certified by green infrastructure and the energy action plan.

Chairperson David suggested next year having some student research projects. He suggested the possibility of having a special meeting to review the student research in the different sustainable areas which includes what other cities are doing for sustainability.

Member Ball talked about the student research. He said the information from the research is an overview of things that can be done. He said there is an opportunity to have the students work on specific topics that would benefit the SEEC.

Vice-Chairperson Ayers noted that the students could also benefit the NC Climate Solutions Coalition Energy Action Plan. Member Ball said the students have previously been involved in doing estimates on roof top solar projects.

Chairperson David said that the students have researched land values in Boone, North Carolina for the energy action plan. He said if the Town is going to do solar land projects, the dollars needed for the land needs to be included in the estimates if they are not already included.

Discussion ensued on funding on sustainable projects. Member Furguele noted that if the students or the community make the connection between the sales tax distribution which was changed and deprived the Town of about \$2 Million dollars per year several years ago by the County Commissioners. He said if there was a collective effort to convince the County to reverse it. He noted that the Town is operating on a tight budget because of this situation. He said this would create an immediate influx of funds. He said potentially there could be a larger amount of money available for sustainability topics such as transportation, bike share and solar.

Chairperson David noted that it is difficult to sell the public on sustainability projects that require a lot of funding. He further noted that an improvement to the community stays with the community.

Chairperson David talked about the Green Infrastructure Plan. He said the more people are walking and biking, they are saving the carbon footprint.

Discussion ensued on the quarterly reports containing the Town's energy usage by department. Chairperson David asked Ms. Turner about the SEEC's request to get the quarterly reports. Ms. Turner explained that right now the departments do not get their actual energy usage by department. Ms. Turner asked the SEEC how they wanted the information reported. Chairperson David said would like to see the dollar amounts and the kilowatts used per hour and gallons of fuel used. He said this information is important for the energy plan and the green infrastructure plan

because it ties back to the carbon and pollution issue. He also said the SEEC had requested that the Town think of ways to reduce the percent of usage over the next two years.

Ms. Turner said at this time only the Finance Department gets the usage information and not the department heads.

Member Ball asked if the fuel usage for mowers was considered in the fuel usage. He said fuel usage is considered at the University when the fleet usage is calculated. He further explained that there are ways to reduce the fuel usage by using electric type equipment. It was noted that using electric is more efficient.

Chairperson David noted that once the SEEC receives the usage information, they can set goals to help reduce usage.

Member Furgiuele noted that at the Police Forum the topic of electric vehicles was discussed and they were reluctant to make the change to electric vehicles. It was noted that almost all of the Police force was at this forum.

Chairperson David talked about the Police officers living in the Town. It was noted that almost every Police officer has a family. Member Furgiuele noted that he feels that the Town should make it part of the Police officers “employee compensation package” to provide them living quarters in the Town which would help reduce the carbon footprint.

Ms. Turner talked about some apartment complexes letting Police officers live at their complex for free for security purposes.

Chairperson David explained that the City of Asheville set a baseline for carbon usage using their quarterly reports.

Ms. Turner explained that the Planning and Inspections department has purchased and is now using glass dishes and silverware rather than paper plates and plastic silverware to help improve sustainability.

Discussion ensued on having a person designated to managing sustainability and public relations for the Town. Chairperson David said this person would do some research and promote Town Sustainability events and what the Town is already doing for improve sustainability. It was noted that the Planning Staff work hours are split between their regular job duties and manning the Town meetings. It was the consensus of the SEEC to suggest a sustainability position in the Town to support the SEEC.

Chairperson David talked about the bike and pedestrian plan action items. He said which Town person is making sure this list of items is being completed.

Vice-Chairperson Ayers asked the SEEC what are the Town’s vehicle fuel costs in kilowatt hours compared to what we use our offices. He said it is 47 percent of the Town’s energy budget. He noted that if the Town could get the Volt electric vehicle, it would start a trend. He said everyone

will want to drive it. He noted that the SEEC has put \$10,000.00 in their budget for this type vehicle.

Chairperson David explained that we are trying to establish a baseline of how much energy and CO2 and how many Town employees that do not live in Town and have to drive into Town. He said once the baseline is set and then a plan needed to be developed to address the issues and then obtain the funding.

It was noted that someone in authority from the Town Manager's office working with the Town departments to get them to cooperate with the approved goals of the SEEC.

Member Furgiuele suggested recommending to Council as soon as possible the need for a sustainability position in the Town because of the upcoming Town budget hearings. Member Prickett talked about breaking out the budget by line item. Ms. Shook noted that there are two separate line items for gas and oil.

Ms. Shook joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Chairperson David noted that the SEEC spending one hour a month to review the energy plan and sustainability projects is not enough time for them. He said it would be very helpful to have an intern or full-time position to handle sustainability for the Town. He mentioned the need to have a greenway coordinator for the Town of Boone for the connecting of the greenway from Blowing Rock to Boone especially since there is private funding for the greenway.

Chairperson David asked Ms. Shook what her thoughts were regarding this topic. She said getting an intern is a great way to begin. It is recommended that they are paid and are at graduate level to move it forward the best. Member Ball suggested 15 to 20 hours per week for a person to work on sustainability. Member Furgiuele asked what other small towns are doing with their sustainability work. Ms. Turner said she would research this topic.

Discussion ensued on green infrastructure. Chairperson David said the green infrastructure plan in regards to transportation. He said that he does not have enough expertise on this topic. He said currently there is a comprehensive planning process going on with Appalcart and they are addressing a lot of the pedestrian issues at the bus stops. He said an analysis has been completed on bus stops and sidewalks at the bus stops. He said the goal is to connect different places in Town with green infrastructure rather than gray asphalt infrastructure. He said there is a lot of work at the Staff level to do these types of things.

Chairperson David said there has been professionals hired by the Middlefork greenway to locate areas for the greenway to go through. He noted that the Town of Boone has not done this. Ms. Shook said the Department of Transportation and the Greenway Committee held several meetings and the Public Works Department has quite a bit of information on the greenway. She said at that time that certain types of infrastructure were wanted along the residential streets.

Member Ball said that the biggest feedback he had received at the University is people want to get to the other side of Hwy 105 via bicycle or walking.

Ms. Shook explained that near Ivy Drive there were some property owners that were not interested in giving the Town connections which made it difficult for the Town. She also mentioned there were some physical encroachments involved that are still there.

Ms. Shook further explained that there was a flexibility study completed Kimberly Horn and also there was funding through NC Department of Transportation to do sidewalks and bike lanes along Meadowview Drive a portion of Leola Street all the way to the Boone Mall. She said at the time the Town was hoping to use enhancement funds from NCDOT along Wilson Drive. She said that the NCDOT's funding has been eliminated. She said to get sidewalk improvement funding it has to be done through the State's Transportation program.

Chairperson David asked for an updated report on these topics to see what improvements can be done today. Ms. Shook talked about the need for funding for improvements to get surveys and acquire right of ways.

Motion and Vote:

Member Scarboro made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Ayers to recommend to Council to create a sustainability position that can work with the various Town departments to help advance the adopted Sustainability goals and work with the community and with the greenways.

Vote:

Aye – (Ayers, Ball, David, Furgiuele, Prickett, Scarboro, Stover)

Nay – None

Abstain – (Ashcraft)

The motion passed.

Member Ashcraft wished to recuse himself from the vote. He said he was not opposed to it. He said he did not feel comfortable voting on this recommendation. Then, perhaps having to vote on it later and perhaps decide that Police officers are more needed.

Member Ball felt the position should report to the Town Manager and thought this should be added to the request. He added that if this position reported to the Town Manager, it would give them credibility to work with all of the department heads.

Member Furgiuele suggested adding to the request that each department appoint within its own ranks a person responsible for sustainability.

Member Furgiuele asked the Planning Staff to let him know if the recommendation from this meeting cannot be added to the Council's May 2018 meeting agenda. He said at the Council meeting, he can move to have this recommendation added to this Council agenda.

Ms. Turner asked if there was an application that will convert different usages to kilowatt hours. Vice-Chairperson Ayers said he would research applications.

Chairperson David talked about following up and giving an update to Council on where the SEEC is in working on the 2017 Sustainability goals.

Ms. Turner asked the SEEC if at their next meeting, if they would want to form a schedule for the implementation of their 2017 goals.

Discussion on Bike Share

Member Ball stated there was not an update on this topic. He suggested this topic be removed from future agendas and he would provide an update when one becomes available.

Discussion on Campus Resiliency Plan

This agenda item was not discussed.

Discussion on Moving the SEEC Meeting Location to Council Chambers

Chairperson David asked if the SEEC wanted to move the meeting time and meeting location to the Council Chambers, Watauga County Library or Jones House. Ms. Turner said she would check on the availability of the library and the Jones House. Member Ashcraft suggested moving the meeting to the fourth Thursday. Member Scarboro said he likes the fourth Thursday. It was the consensus of the SEEC to discuss this topic at the next meeting.

Member Ball left the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Other Matters by Committee Members or Staff

Set agenda for next meeting:

- Discussion of Green Infrastructure Plan
- Review of NC Climate Solutions Coalition Energy Action Plan
- Discussion of the Energy Action Plan
- Discussion of Campus Resiliency Plan
- Discussion to move SEEC Meeting Location to the Council Chambers

Adjournment

Vice-Chairperson Ayers made a motion, seconded by Member Scarboro to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Quint David, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Committee Secretary