



Town of Boone
Sustainability Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 8th, 2022
5:30 P.M.

Members Present: John Prickett, Terry Cirone, Margie Mansure, Jennifer Maxwell, Joan Brook
(arrived at 5:39pm)

Members Absent: Benjamin Scarboro, Jeremy Love, Brian Crutchfield

Staff Present: George Santucci, Sustainability and Special Projects Manager and Laney Pilkington,
Administrative Support Specialist/Communications

Council Liaison: Councilperson Becca Nenow and Councilperson Dalton George

Others Present: Brandon Wise, Bob Cherry, Jodie Feimster, and Nicholas Poggioli

Call To Order:

John Prickett called the meeting to order at 5:33pm

Adoption of Agenda:

Prickett asked if there were any objections to the agenda brought before the Committee. With no objections, the adoption of the December 8th, 2022 Sustainability Committee agenda passed unanimously.

Vote:

Yes: Prickett, Cirone, Mansure, Maxell, Brook

No: None

Absent: Scarboro, Love, Crutchfield

Approval of Minutes:

Prickett asked if there were any comments regarding the draft minutes of the September 8th, 2022 Sustainability Committee. With no comments made, the draft minutes for the September 8th, 2022 Sustainability Committee passed unanimously.

Yes: Prickett, Cirone, Mansure, Maxell, Brook

No: None

Absent: Scarboro, Love, Crutchfield



Old Business: 2022 Year in Review

Prickett began by thanking George Santucci for the work that has been done. Santucci thanked Prickett, then thanked the members of the Committee for their commitment to the Committee. Santucci began the presentation of all that has been accomplished in regards to sustainability in 2022. In 2022, the following achievements were accomplished:

- 100% Renewable Electricity in all municipal operations
- Successful Community Climate Opinion Survey with 327 responses received
- 85% of all municipally-owned/maintained street lights have been replaced with LED bulbs
- 225 trees were planted on the Bolick Property, with numerous shrubs planted as well to help reforest the property
- 6 Level Two electric vehicle chargers have been installed which are free to the public to use. The only cost is paying for parking if applicable
- 6 hybrid police cruisers were ordered
- The Town of Boone, AppalCART, Watauga County, Appalachian State and other partners helped fund the first electric bus in Boone
- Hundreds of "Boone Sustainability" reusable bags were given to local markets, farmers' markets, and to individuals at other outreach events
- A pollinator planting took place at the Jones House
- Stream restoration projects were completed, including the restoration of the South Fork of the New River near the Brookshire Park and at the Bolick Property
- The Boone Sustainability Committee participated in the "Boone Buys Lunch" program at F.A.R.M. Cafe
- A Trash Trout Junior was installed near the Moose Lodge on the Boone Greenway Trail
- 2 Chevy Bolts were ordered for the Town of Boone's Planning and Inspections department and Administration department

Prickett thanked Santucci for the update. Discussion ensued regarding the daylighting of Boone Creek through Appalachian State University's Peacock parking lot, as well as the proposed parking deck for that lot. Joan Brook then asked about who maintained the drinking fountain on the Greenway near the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Santucci said it was town-owned. Brook asked why it was not turned on during the winter months, in which Brandon Wise answered that with the freezing temperatures the town experiences during the winter months, the pipes of the drinking fountain would break. Brook asked if it could be turned on and off sporadically. Santucci said he did not believe so, and Wise agreed. Brook thanked both. Prickett asked if there were any more questions. With no further questions, the Committee moved to the next item on the agenda.

Old Business: GHG Inventory and Community Climate Action Plan - Science Based Targets

Santucci began by reminding the Committee that the Town has been working on the Community Climate Action plan (CCAP), and would begin working on gathering public input in 2023. He added that



the Town was partnering with ICLEI, an organization which provides technical consulting to local governments to meet sustainability objectives. He went on to summarize the ClearPath tool, an online software which provides assistance for greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, forecasts, climate action plans, and monitoring at the government-operations scales. In order to produce a CCAP, an inventory of all emissions must be gathered so that benchmarks may be made. 2020 will be the baseline year. Brook expressed concern that the COVID-19 pandemic may have skewed the numbers. Santucci agreed that that was a concern, however after looking at emission values from 2019, there were virtually no differences. Santucci went on to say that in 2020, 2,671 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from electricity were emitted into the atmosphere from the municipality of Boone, and 1,154 metric tons of CO₂ were emitted from the municipal fleet and mileage from Town of Boone employees. Santucci added that this did not include the citizens of Boone, Appalachian State University, or Watauga County offices located inside the Town of Boone. In order to mitigate this, Santucci offered 5 strategies in which the Town of Boone will follow, and encouraged the citizens of Boone to do the same. The strategies are as follows:

- Change Energy Consumed - move from fossil fuels to renewable sources
- Take Control of Demand - consume energy during off-peak hours
- Reduce Consumption - increase energy efficiency of all facilities
- Generate Locally - increase local solar and geothermal resources
- Purchase Offsets - a last resort

While tackling climate change is a daunting task, the strategies listed above are meant to help simplify the process and provide strategies which all can follow. The Town of Boone has moved from fossil fuel-generated electricity to 100% renewable energy sources because of Appalachian State University's New River Light and Power and Blue Ridge Energy. Santucci went on to list the next steps and main focus points the Town will take to reduce emissions:

- Increase public adoption of Appalachian State University's New River Light and Power Green Power Program
- Continue to explore a potential solar installation on town owned buildings and utility scale ground based installation
- Accelerate EV adoption
- Convert all fuel based heating systems in town facilities to electric
- Promote energy efficiency

Councilperson George thanked the Committee for their time and left at 6:20pm.

Prickett thanked Santucci for the updates, and asked the Committee if they had any questions. Brook asked if there was a required emissions test for vehicles in Boone. Santucci said he did not think so, and Wise said that there was not but there was one in Forsyth County. Terry Cirone added that the Town of Boone was located in an undesignated area for air quality. Jennifer Maxwell asked if Appalachian State University's GHGs would need to be accounted for in the CCAP. Santucci said it would. Brook asked how tourism would affect the CCAP. Santucci answered that the tourist population would affect the infrastructure (i.e. electricity, water, sewer, transportation, etc.), and would be



accounted for there. Brook then asked if the electricity providers in Boone would average bills, and Santucci said that that option exists for both providers. Brook thanked Santucci, and with no further discussion, the Committee moved to the next item on the agenda.

New Business: Sustainability Committee Purpose and Membership

Prickett introduced the next agenda item, and asked who would speak to it. Santucci asked what the Committee thought about the current membership structure and what assets they felt the Committee needed. He went on to ask what the Committee felt was best in terms of meeting dates and meeting length. Santucci felt it was best to always have a member from Appalachian State University's sustainability department on the Committee to represent the university's population. The Committee agreed. Prickett added that he felt technical experts were needed on the Committee as well, however he did not know the best way to recruit said experts. Santucci asked what skill sets they felt were needed. Prickett said he would like to see individuals with a mechanical background, and Brook added that students from the sustainable development department would be helpful as well. Councilperson Nenow added that this discussion was due to the Town Council wanting to learn more about the purpose of all town committees. For example, the Cultural Resources Advisory board would now meet ad hoc when a purpose was given to them. She then asked what the committee members felt the purpose of the Sustainability Committee was. She noted that after hiring Santucci in the position she wanted to learn more about what the Committee would bring to Council. Maxwell suggested that the Committee become an advisory committee to Santucci. Prickett added that the Committee successfully helped with the hiring of a Sustainability director, and Margie Mansure added that the Committee also created the success sustainability toolkit which helped guide the Town. Santucci added that the Committee was not mandated in the Unified Development Ordinance and is meant to be an advisory committee to Council. Brook added that to justify the Committee, that Santucci should not work in isolation and needed to hear input from others. Additionally, community involvement is necessary for new ideas to be heard. Cirone added that the Trash Trout was an idea which came from the Committee. Councilperson Nenow said that recently, the only advice from the Committee was in regards to plastic bags in the Town. Brook said that the Committee was the one which helped set the sustainability goals for Boone. Prickett mentioned that technically, the Town Council did not have any members with technical experience. Cirone asked if the Town Council needed more information from the Committee, and asked if there needed to be delineation from what comes from Santucci and what comes from the Committee. Mansure then asked if meeting quarterly would be best. Wise added that currently the Town of Boone does have boards which meet quarterly. Maxwell added that sustainability is a long term endeavor with long projects, and that meeting quarterly may be ideal in regards to efficiency. She went on to say that in her time in Boone she has been on many boards and found that partnership is key to an effective board, and felt that a partnership with Appalachian State University is beneficial. She also added that she felt it was best for Santucci to "hold the torch" with the Committee backing him up. Brook said she felt it was best to have stakeholder support for sustainability and asked if the Committee needed to workshop an action item during each meeting for Town Council to review like was previously done before Santucci. Councilperson Nenow agreed with Maxwell. Santucci added that Jane Shook, the Director of Planning and Inspections, was helping spearhead the Comprehensive Plan and said that one filter for the plan was sustainability, with the other two being equity and affordable



housing. Santucci then asked the Committee if they felt like an almost ad hoc approach to the sustainability committee was best, with a more flexible meeting schedule where they work on bigger projects like the CCAP. Maxwell agreed that a flexible meeting schedule seemed doable. Brook said she felt it was necessary to hear from all voices, and that representatives must show the voice of the people. She went on to say that while an engineer is helpful, they do not represent the population of Boone. Santucci asked if the Committee would be willing to look into what each member felt was the ideal membership for the committee in terms of qualifications, expertise, and other aspects. Mansure then asked why local food was not discussed more often. Santucci said that he was hired to reduce the GHG in the Town, and that he struggled with how to quantify the emissions for production of local food. Mansure agreed that it was difficult, but that she wanted to see it discussed more and Santucci agreed. Cirone then asked Councilperson Nenow what she needed from the Committee by what time and in what form. Councilperson Nenow said she did not know if there was a pressing timeline and that she just needed information on what the purpose of the Sustainability Committee was that differed from Santucci's role. She added that public input is important, and that she personally would like to see more experts provide input so that they may develop tangible goals for the CCAP. She then went on to say that Councilperson George had mentioned to her that having a public forum, similar to the Annual Police Forum, where individuals come and ask questions and provide input would be helpful. Because the CCAP is a plan which will guide the Town of over 20 years, she felt it was best to have experts provide information and that while interest in sustainability is a must, she felt that having individuals with no technical background would not be beneficial for the technical portions of the plan. Santucci added that the current process for appointing individuals is not the best process in regards to vetting applications. Maxwell then explained what Appalachian State University did when developing APPCAP 1.0, the first Climate Action Plan for the university. She went on to say that they learned from their mistakes, and are now in the process of developing APPCAP 2.0. Brook said that if only experts are leading the development, there is a chance that those with agendas may skew the plan. Maxwell agreed, and added that no matter what plan is being produced there is always a chance that an individual with an agenda for what they want to see will provide input. Brook then said that larger communities are able to appoint individuals with expertise, but she felt it may not be best for a smaller community like Boone. Mansure added that the reason they have a Sustainability Director position is to help mitigate the effect of those with agendas. With Santucci, the plan must follow the Town's goals, not the goals of individuals. Santucci summarized the discussion, and asked if the Committee would develop what they personally felt was the purpose of the sustainability committee and their ideal membership makeup so that he could report it back to the Town Council. The Committee agreed. With no further discussion, Prickett asked for a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment:

Upon the motion made by Prickett, seconded by Ciron, the Sustainability Committee adjourned at 7:46pm.

Vote:

Yes: Prickett, Cirone, Mansure, Maxell, Brook

No: None



Absent: Scarboro, Love, Crutchfield