



Town of Boone
Sustainability Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 9th, 2021
5:30 P.M.

Members Present: Vice-Chairperson John Pickett (Arrived at 6:07), Benjamin Scarboro, Lee Ball, Terry Cirone, Jeremy Love, Margie Mansure, and Joan Brook

Members Absent: Luanna Nesbit, Danielle Stockman, and Brian Crutchfield

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

Council Liaison: Councilperson Jon Dalton George

Others Present: Jodie Feimster and Karina 'R.',

Call To Order:

Benjamin Scarboro, acting as Chairperson in lieu of Vice-Chairperson John Prickett, called the December 9th, 2021 meeting of the Sustainability Committee at 5:45pm via Webex. Lee Ball mentioned that he will have to leave the meeting early due to prior commitments around 6:30pm.

Adoption of Agenda:

Scarboro asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Upon the motion made by Lee Ball, seconded by Jeremy Love, the agenda for the December 9th, 2021 Sustainability Committee meeting was adopted.

Vote:

Yes: Love, Cirone, Ball, Mansure, Brook

No: None

Absent: Nesbit, Stockman, Crutchfield

Approval of Minutes:

Scarboro asked the committee if the minutes for the October 14th, 2021 Sustainability Committee meeting needed to be changed. Terry Cirone asked that the minutes reflect her attendance at the previous meeting. Santucci explained that it did show Cirone in attendance under 'Members'. Cirone agreed. Upon the motion made by Scarboro to approve the minutes as recorded, seconded by Love, the minutes for the October 14th, 2021 Sustainability Committee meeting were approved.



Vote:

Yes: Love, Cirone, Ball, Mansure, Brook

No: None

Absent: Nesbit, Stockman, Crutchfield

Old Business: Community Climate Action Survey:

Scarboro introduced the next agenda item and asked Santucci to share his screen regarding the Community Climate Action Survey.

Councilperson George arrived at 5:49pm.

Santucci began by updating the committee on the changes made to the survey, based on their recommendations from the previous Sustainability Committee meeting. Santucci asked how the committee wanted to go through the survey. Santucci asked Cirone if she had any recommendations for the survey. Cirone explained that she was able to review the survey and was happy with the changes made. Scarboro commented that for question #12, which states, "What is the first action you would take if you had the necessary incentive?", he believed that adding a park and ride option would improve the question. He explained that an easy way for the Town to impact the sustainability efforts of the County would be to add a park and ride option which would reduce the amount of cars in Boone and would allow others to feel safer when biking and walking. Santucci asked if Scarboro was suggesting two separate items. Scarboro clarified and explained a park and ride area in Boone would be beneficial, due to the small size of Boone. Santucci agreed to add that option to question #12, and asked if this would potentially be used as a free parking area where people could use the AppalCART or bike/walk to where they wanted to go. Scarboro agreed and mentioned an area near Hwy 105, explaining that it could be used for students and non-students and would lead to less cars on the road in Boone. Santucci agreed and asked if there were any other suggestions. After hearing none, Santucci explained that he would bring the survey to John Ward, Town Manager, and potentially Town Council if needed, before sending the survey out to the Town's social media sites, the Town website as well as asking the Committee to help promote the survey as well. Santucci asked for a motion of approval to take the Community Climate Action Survey to the Town Council. Upon the motion made by Scarboro, seconded by Ball, the Community Climate Action Survey was approved to go to the Town Council.

Vote:

Yes: Love, Cirone, Ball, Mansure, Brook, Scarboro

No: None

Absent: Nesbit, Stockman, Crutchfield, Pri

Old Business: Project Update for Bolick Tree Planting:



Scarboro introduced the next agenda item, and asked for Santucci to elaborate more on the Bolick Tree Planting Project. Santucci began by explaining that over 30 volunteers came to plant over 170 trees. He thanked Margie Mansure for her help with shuttling volunteers and planting trees. Santucci explained that the Town had dedicated 30 of the 54 acres of the Bolick Property for conservation purposes, and that this project was meant to help reforest that land. He went on to thank members of the Public Works department for their help in placing trees and digging holes for the 15-20 gallon trees days before the volunteer event. Members of the High Country Audubon Society, student volunteers, New River Conservancy, New River State Park, the incoming Town of Boone Mayor Tim Futrelle and others came out to help plant. Santucci explained that after the volunteer event, he and Chelsea Blout from New River Conservancy gave a tour of the completed restoration of the South Fork of the New River at the Bolick Property. Santucci explained that there were over 1,500 trees, shrubs, and live stakes planted alongside the river for the restoration project.

Vice-Chairperson Jon Prickett arrived at 6:07pm.

Scarboro asked if Prickett would like to take over the meeting, in which he agreed. Prickett went on to say that he was interested in seeing the completed project and knew that it had taken a lot of work.

New Business: Community Climate Action Plan:

Prickett began by introducing the Community Climate Action Plan and asked Santucci to explain. Santucci began by explaining that this is the first phase of the plan, and asked for suggestions regarding additions of additional chapters or suggestions for any changes needed so far. Prickett noted that it looked good to him. Ball asked that chapter heading 3, 'Supporting Equity in a Sustainable Boone', include the terms 'Justice', 'Inclusion', and 'Diversity'. He went on to say that J.E.D.I. (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) all mean different things and asked for all terms to be included. Ball went on to suggest adding benchmark data in the executive summary. Santucci asked if adding some data to the executive summary and then pointing readers to chapter heading 1, 'Introduction'. Ball agreed and also added that charts and infographics would also be helpful. Prickett asked if there were additional comments. Santucci mentioned that he had not added a 'Food' chapter heading, and asked the committee if they felt it was necessary as a resiliency issue or if it deserved its own chapter heading. Cirone mentioned that 'Water' also wasn't included. Santucci asked if both those items deserved their own chapters, and Prickett agreed. Ball suggested adding an 'Additional Strategies and Solutions' chapter for food, water, etc. due to this being a climate action plan focussed on decarbonization. Joan Brook asked if they could add 'Food' as a section under 'Transportation' and support buying and supporting local food. Cirone asked how equity is weaved into the climate action plan. Ball explained that with every plan implemented, people and places shouldn't be affected negatively. Meaning either people in the community or people along the supply chain shouldn't be affected negatively. Ball went on to ask if a resource library could be created for committee members to add resources regarding these topics. Santucci asked if using the Sustainability



Committee Google Drive would be a good tool to use to upload resources for the committee. Cirone made the point that before taking away energy sources, you have to make sure that you have plenty of renewables to replace them unless it won't work. Santucci agreed and asked if there were any other suggestions for the Community Climate Action Plan. Prickett said that it looked good. Santucci then went on to explain that the Green Power Program from New River Light and Power is being dismissed throughout the town, due to it being fueled by hydropower. However, Santucci clarified that the main alternatives currently available to the public are natural gas and coal. Santucci went on to say that while the Town is striving for more solar power, it is a long-term goal and it can't happen in the next few years. Currently, New River Light and Power is on a 1 year contract with the provider for hydropower, which means when a greener alternative, such as solar power, becomes more available they are able to switch over within a year. The committee discussed the difference between nuclear energy and hydroelectric energy, and how they are both carbon neutral energy sources and then moved onto the next agenda item.

Lee Ball left the meeting at 6:45pm.

New Business: 2022 Budget Items:

Santucci introduced the proposed 2022 Sustainability budget and asked for the committee's comments and feedback. He reminded the committee that sustainability isn't the responsibility of a single department, it's the responsibility of all departments. He asked the committee to help formulate a budget for sustainability projects, and then asked for recommendations for other department's sustainability efforts, such as replacing current vehicles from the Town's fleet with hybrid or electric alternatives. Cirone asked Santucci where he found someone to do water quality monitoring for \$2,500. Santucci explained that the Town of Boone has a great relationship with Mountaintrue and the Watauga Riverkeeper and this could be a potential contract with them. While it would not be done in a big lab, it would help give guidance towards water quality issues in Boone, Santucci explained. The committee agreed. Prickett mentioned creating a volunteer program for volunteers to monitor water quality in Boone, and Santucci agreed that it was an interesting concept and he would look more into it as a way for volunteers to get involved. Cirone asked Santucci to elaborate on the Stormwater Utility Study and Impervious Analysis item on the proposed budget. Santucci explained that the Town will soon receive notice from the DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) and DWR (Division of Water Resources) that the Town of Boone will soon be a mandated MS4 community. Prickett asked for clarification on what a MS4 community is and Santucci explained that it is a mechanism in the clean water act which says that if a community tips a certain threshold of population/population density, we must have a NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit for stormwater. Boone will have to implement a stormwater utility and citizens will have to pay some sort of fee for this implementation, however the details of that are unknown right now. Santucci reiterated that this isn't a choice, it's a mandate from the state and federal government, and it can either be forced on the Town or the Town could get ahead of it. The committee agreed. Cirone asked if the Town will be getting a consultant to do this study, which



Santucci affirmed. Cirone asked that more money be put towards this study, and Santucci explained that he is prepared to tap into other department's budgets to do that. Mansure asked when other departments need to have their budgets completed with sustainability concerns in mind. Santucci said that all other departments are working on the same schedule as he is, so any recommendations for their budgets regarding sustainability are welcome. He explained that April-May is when Council starts looking at the budgets, but he would prefer March to be safe. Mansure clarified that recommendations aren't needed today, which Santucci agreed with. Prickett asked if there were any more recommendations. Santucci asked for the committee to email him if they think of any more recommendations for the budget. After listening to a quick overview of how the Town of Boone's budget works from Santucci, the Sustainability Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

New Business: New Officer Nomination(s):

Prickett introduced the next agenda item regarding new officer nominations. He asked for nominations and comments. Mansure asked if Prickett was just nominated into this position, in which Santucci clarified that Prickett is currently the vice-chair and is serving as chair in place of the vacant position. Mansure nominated Prickett for the seat of chair, and Brook seconded the nomination. Prickett asked for additional nominations. There were no additional nominations. Brook asked if the position of vice-chair would become available if Prickett became chair. Santucci said yes, which in turn led to Brook nominating Scarboro for the position of vice chair. Prickett asked if Scarboro had any thoughts on the position. Scarboro answered that he can do vice chair, just not chair due to time constraints. Prickett asked for any additional nominations. Santucci asked for a motion to be made for these nominations. Upon the motion made by Brook, seconded by Mansure, the motion for John Prickett to be nominated as chair and Benjamin Scarboro be nominated as Vice-chair was passed unanimously.

Vote:

Yes: Love, Cirone, Mansure, Brook, Prickett, Scarboro

No: None

Absent: Nesbit, Stockman, Crutchfield, Ball

Other Matters:

Prickett introduced the next agenda item, Other Matters, by explaining how other communities are concerned with electric skateboards, scooters, and bicycles and the safety of these machines. Prickett asked if there were any complaints regarding these vehicles. Santucci explained that it currently isn't a problem in Boone. Prickett agreed, but wanted the committee to be aware and asked if there were any other comments. Scarboro asked if there was a reason police officers were opposed to being told not to idle their cars. Santucci answered that Boone Police Department has bought 3 new hybrid police vehicles with additional plans to add 7 more hybrid vehicles. He went on to explain that hybrid vehicles when idling will shut off the engine so that gas isn't being used when idling. Scarboro clarified by stating that even when the hybrid is not running the engine at idle, from his understanding, the heater in the car operates using the gasoline. When the car is idling on electricity only, the heat would not run which



could be harmful to the police officers. He proposed that the Town potentially leverage the technology from RVs with their heating system. Santucci said that that was an interesting notion and he will look into it more. Prickett asked if there were any additional matters. With no additional comments, the Sustainability Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

Public Comment:

Prickett asked if there was any public comment. With no comments, Prickett asked for a motion for adjournment.

Adjournment:

On a motion made by Scarboro, seconded by Cirone, the Town of Boone's Sustainability Committee was adjourned at 7:20pm.