

**TOWN OF BOONE
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2019
5:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Chairperson Quint David, Vice-Chairperson Harvard Ayers, Joan Brook, John Prickett and Lee Ball

Town Council Liaisons Present: Marshall Ashcraft

Staff Members Present: Marty Little- Senior Planner and Marlene Crosby-Committee Secretary

Others Present:

Call to Order

Chairperson Quint David called to order the Boone Sustainability Committee, held in the Planning and Inspections Department – Upstairs Conference Room located at 680 W. King Street at 5:38 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Prickett made a motion, seconded by Member Brook to adopt the agenda as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Vice-Chairperson Ayers made a motion, seconded by Member Prickett to approve the November 14, 2019 meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Toolkit Discussion

Chairperson David explained that included in the meeting packet is an example toolkit section that he has created for the Sustainability Committee members to add their responses for each different Town department for the following categories: built environment, climate and energy, economy and jobs, education, arts, and community, equity and empowerment, health and safety and natural systems. He further explained that he completed the responses for the Police Department.

Chairperson David also noted that Mr. Marty Little, Senior Planner, has included in the meeting packet an outline for the draft Toolkit which includes the following topics: Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Planning and Inspections Department, Town Hall Departments, Cultural Resources Department, Public Works, Police Department, Fire Department, Conclusion and Appendix for the department summary materials and minutes of department meetings (permanently on file).

Chairperson David opened the floor for discussion on the format and content for the Police Department responses and for the draft Toolkit that are outlined in the meeting packet. He noted that the Sustainability Committee may have to meet one more time to discuss the proposed information in the draft Toolkit before presenting their recommendations to Council before the 2020 Budget Hearings takes place with the Council.

Chairperson David talked about reviewing the STAR Community rating system framework found at the following link: <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/news/city-of-asheville-releases-final-report-on-100-renewable-energy-initiative/?fbclid=IwAR1-JkUbmWQWIsZcn9ugbklUIRXSeGqRWcj9ZNqqMIJVLUUvvy7DX-vOWQ> to possibility get some Sustainability ideas that each Town Department may want to address (permanently on file). He asked the Sustainability Committee to write a short summary for discussion that could possibility help create a single document with some bullet-point recommendations.

Discussion ensued on LED lights. Mr. Little noted that the Town does not regulate the types of lights that are used on the outside of buildings but there is a requirement for the lights to be full cutoff and not brighter than the maximum foot candle. Chairperson David said that the Town is allowed to regulate several different parts of commercial buildings as it relates to their appearance, parking and lighting which is above and beyond the State minimums. And, he noted that a lot of residential properties are exempt from it. Chairperson David noted that the NC Energy Code does have a maximum watt size per square foot that development projects have to follow, if the whole building is being lighted.

Member Ball joined the meeting at approximately 5:48 p.m.

Discussion ensued on net positive energy. Member Ball explained the definition of net positive. He said that net positive is when you are generating more energy than you are using at a specific site. He explained that we need to make sure that all future buildings are climate neutral or carbon neutral. He said there are a lot of ways to get to neutrality such as buying carbon offsets or installing solar.

Discussion ensued on electrification. Member Ball talked about the grid eventually becoming clean. Chairperson David said the argument against electrification now is that if you are on a dirty grid, you are not just looking at the cost per kilowatt hour but the carbon emissions cost per kilowatt hour and at some point they cross. Member Ball talked about developing a parallel plan to clean the energy that we are purchasing. He said the Town of Boone is purchasing its energy from Blue Ridge Electric, which means the Town has less choice. He said in January of 2022, there will be more choices with the New River Light & Power Company.

Discussion ensued on net zero buildings. Member Ball said that the maintenance costs will be lower on these buildings as well as utility costs. He noted that the HVAC systems are less complicated and the buildings are better insulated in these type buildings.

Discussion ensued on the new Town Municipal Complex. Mr. Little said this new complex will include five Town departments. He said it is his understanding that the Town will keep the Downtown Boone Post Office and the Town Hall buildings. He talked about some ways to reduce energy such as carpooling on inspections trips and installing LED lights.

Discussion ensued on LED street lights. Member Prickett said the Sustainability Committee does support installing LED street lights for the 20 percent that are not currently installed. He asked if there is any way that we can negotiate with New River Light and Power about getting a credit for the energy that is not being used per light by using the LED lights. He said the Town is being charged for energy they are not using.

Discussion ensued on stop lights. Member Prickett asked if the stop lights are LED. Mr. Little said some of the stop lights are LED, but not all.

Member Brook asked Member Ball why the Appalachian State University stadium lights are on so frequently. He explained that several types of events happen at the stadium at night. Member Ball noted that the stadium lights are not LED's but he is working on a stronger policy for a better LED up-fit in the stadium. He said that the lights in the stadium have been on less at night than they have been in the past.

Discussion ensued on the Police Department section of the draft Toolkit. Member Ball talked about the built environment section and he said he would not support a recommendation to pay for any type of certification for the new building. He said he would prefer to include in the RFP the specific type of building that the Town wants to build, along with the requirement that the developer is experienced in net-zero building construction. He said if this is not done, the Town will have to pay for the developer's learning curve.

Discussion ensued on electric vehicles at the Police Department. Chairperson David talked about continuing to look for electric vehicles as they become available with future technology. Member Brook suggested making the long-term goal of continuing to look for electric vehicles as a recommendation. Vice-Chairperson Ayers noted that the Ford Fusion hybrid will no longer be made. Mr. Little said that the Police officers like the Ford Fusion as a patrol car.

Discussion ensued on the greenhouse gas inventory. Chairperson David talked about having affordable housing options close to Town which would help reduce the greenhouse gas impact. He suggested adding more electric bicycles as a recommendation because the use of this type of bicycle would also reduce the greenhouse gas impact as well as help to alleviate some of the parking issues.

Discussion ensued on natural systems at the Police Department. Chairperson David talked about trying to find a way to reduce the flooding issues in the Town, he said this would possibly reduce the amount of training time and greenhouse gas emissions for the Police and Fire Departments.

Member Brook suggested a staggered work week for employees that would include a four-day work week to help reduce the impact on green-house gas emissions. Member Prickett said that he had read that another area had tried this concept and as a result the employees were more productive.

Discussion ensued on Health and Safety. Member Ball talked about finding ways to support employees by helping them with food and clothing, if needed, and also allowing for them to exercise for 30 minutes each day along with them also taking a lunch hour to help them be healthier and more productive.

Mr. Little noted that if the Sustainability Committee feels that they need to talk to any of the Town department heads for more information just let him know so he can coordinate it.

Chairperson David encouraged the Sustainability Committee members to review the STAR Community Rating system for their recommendations. Council Liaison Ashcraft said that he felt that the built environment and the climate and energy sections should be the highest priorities for the Sustainability Committee to be focusing on at this time.

Member Ball said if we are going to consider climate action, we need to target the carbon usage and the different ways it impacts our daily lives.

Discussion ensued on vehicle replacement in the Town. Council Liaison Ashcraft talked about hybrid vehicles that have been purchased by the Town. He said the Police Department replaces about four vehicles per year.

Other Matters by Committee Members or Staff

Chairperson David noted that the next Sustainability Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Planning and Inspections Department – Upstairs Conference located at 680 W. King Street.

Adjournment

Member Ball made a motion, seconded by Member Prickett to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Quint David, Sustainability Committee Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Committee Secretary

Draft Toolkit

Town of Boone

Sustainability Committee

December 12, 2019

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Planning & Inspections

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[Town Hall](#) (Administration, Finance, Utility Billing, Human Resources, Downtown Coordinator, Downtown Police, & Parking)

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Police

Summary

Built Environment: Getting a new net-zero building so n/a for now

Climate and energy: Add actual employee miles to GHG inventory. What emissions from the GHG inventory can't be offset due to safety issues, so we can address those separately, i.e. police cruisers etc. If electric bikes work well, we should get more.

Economy and Jobs: Job retention strategy and living wage update.

Education/Arts/Community: Updated community event budget and free tickets for employees/families to town events.

Equity and Empowerment: Ensure poverty/civil rights/human services training avail for officers.

Health and Safety: Big one for this dept. Resilience plan issues- top 10 issues department notes i.e. dangerous intersection needs improvement, drug use going up, elderly & accessibility around town etc. etc.

Natural Systems: Any storm-water or other issues the town needs to address, since this dept sees them first?

Discussion

Built Environment:

Looks like they have done some energy efficiency upgrades, and the new building will be net zero. New heat pumps are much better than older ones, so I always advise folks to price that out. In a building they may not be in soon likely not worth worrying too much over.

Climate and energy:

Already going paperless where possible, not sure what other 'waste' the dept might make. I will always recommend more digital when possible. Have some data on greenhouse emissions, most cities also keep up with employee travel emissions separately. Maybe come up with a mitigation plan for the emissions we can't get rid of, i.e. extra renewable or trees, offsets etc. Frankly the current police office is a great place to showcase some solar, but if we are leaving the building hopefully the new one will have some as well. If they are excited about electric bikes, then get them all one. For many departments their largest emissions source might actually be their employees driving into work- recording this even if just a guesstimate in miles driven each day would be a good start as part of reporting. We see it for the PD because they let folks take cars home, but every department likely has this same issue.

Economy and Jobs:

We did seem to have some employee retention issues. Maybe looking at workload, pay scale/studies, and exit interviews of why folks leave. For example, if they can't find affordable family housing nearby, we need to look into it and do something about it. If they are underpaid and always leave for a pay bump we

need to look into it. Having a reliable and sustainable police dept needs reliable and sustainable employees as well.

Education/Arts/Community:

Diversity, Community cohesion, historic preservation. Officers are present at many local events, so maybe a program to not only allow them to attend for work but also tickets/passes for them and their families as well. Coffee with a cop events are going well but maybe some extra budget for more community-cohesion type events for them to attend?

Equity and Empowerment:

Not sure what poverty and civil rights training our officers go through, but they are the front lines for a lot of this stuff on the street so it is extremely important they are trained and know what they represent when dealing with these issues every day. We sort of glanced off this but poverty and inequality issues are a big deal in this community.

Health and Safety:

This is a big one for this dept as well as the fire dept. Safe communities, emergency management, hazard mitigation, and preparedness for weather are issues our community needs to have a plan for in order to be resilient and sustainable. What might be interesting here is a yearly review of issues the dept is noticing increasing or decreasing in the community, and making sure the council is aware of it. Years back we had a town/gown committee talk about suicide and drug use and it was very eye-opening, but what changes did we actually make to deal with those changing issues? What is the #1 safety issue in Boone? Traffic? Heroin? High blood pressure? This department has the ability to make a big impact in this category of community sustainability, if we give them the chance. What are the top 5 intersections that could use safety improvement?

Natural Systems:

Green infrastructure and water come up here in relation to public safety. I know some of our folks are swift-water certified due to the flooding that happens in our area. Focusing on safety issues since this is the police dept, what areas would they recommend improvements being made if there is a spot where folks are getting flooded too often? An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure etc. etc.

Fire

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Department summary materials and minutes of department meetings