



GREEN ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

TUESDAY, August 13, 2024 - 6:00 pm

HYBRID MEETING

GAB Members Present: Cameren Cousins, Mary Smith

GAB Members Virtual: Partha Krishnan, Dennis Loria, Peter Berry

Town Staff Present: Lauren West, Andrea Becerra

Mary calls the meeting to order at 6:00pm and reads the hybrid meeting statement. Attendees are advised that the meeting is being recorded.

Business

Resident Concerns

- None

GAB Updates

- Cameren notes studies she has seen recently about measuring carbon sequestration. She intends to do some research on what people are doing for accounting for carbon sequestration.

Sustainability Updates

Nature-Based solutions

- Lauren notes that MAPC had mentioned creating a tool for tracking nature-based solutions but it does not seem to be released yet. Lauren received maps from the GIS Department from the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The GAB takes a look at the maps which show geologic and ecologic resources in Acton.
- Andrea notes the Town GIS page shows wetlands in Acton. Wetlands are defined in Acton's Land Use Department and certain permits look at the perimeter around wetlands in addition to the wetlands themselves. Andrea notes the Conservation Department is involved in confirming wetlands are not impacted negatively by new development in the permitting process.
- Partha asks if there are FEMA maps for identifying wetlands. GAB notes FEMA is more concerned with flood zones rather than wetlands.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Website

- Andrea shows the Town webpage which includes a link to download the draft updated Hazard Mitigation Plan & appendices.
- The Town would love to hear feedback on plan through September 11th, 2024.

- A Webinar will be held on August 29th, Thursday, at 12pm to present the draft plan and collect feedback.
- The Sustainability Office will post a Newsflash on Town website, include it in the Municipal Monthly, post on social media, and post flyers for the webinar and call for feedback. Andrea will share the flyer location list if others have ideas. They will also share with all Boards & Committees and with community groups such as Green Acton and Energize Acton.

Sustainability Initiatives Outreach

- Andrea goes over a website Sustainability Fellow Aidan created with resources for multifamily property electrification & incentives. For both renters and property owners. Also reviews the pamphlet Fellow Sandra created with info on “going green and saving green”.
- The page shows energy efficiency upgrade options for different housing types and other resources. It is currently in draft form, once it is finalized the Town will send a postcard out. Andrea will send a link to the GAB for review.
- Working with Laura, Penny, & Wanjiku (Town staff) on the project.
- Cameren asks if we have the resources to translate the information
 - The Town currently does not have the resources to translate to simplified Chinese, but could look into translating the pamphlet with this information.
 - Cameren suggests clearly distinguishing information for renters vs property owners.
 - Andrea says there could be downloadable flyers for each building type to simplify the information.
 - Mary suggests bringing climate change into the message as hotter temperatures drive the need for AC.
- Andrea mentions that Constellation sent a flyer to every household in Acton advertising cheaper electric rates with misleading information. GAB members share that this happens often, and discuss what can be done to stop it.

Bike Share program

- Lauren shares that the Town received funding for a three-year regional bike share program with the Towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Maynard. It will be along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail with a stop at the South Acton Commuter Rail Station. Adaptive bikes will also be included in the program.
- GAB members mention that Main Street and Route 2 are currently unsafe roads to bike on. Discuss a need for improved bike safety before encouraging biking in those areas. This grant could be a great opportunity to advocate for safer roads.
- Andrea notes the South Acton station will be along the Assabet, providing a good connection for Maynard.
- Cameren mentions in NH a path was added along a busy street for bikes and pedestrians to make a more functional path.

Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Draft Letter

- Letter asks for \$25,000 to improve outreach on programs for saving money with energy efficiency upgrades (brochures, webpage, etc.). Would support hiring two Fellows for four months to table and canvas with these resources.
- Also requesting \$25,000 to assist funding electrification of Town Hall.
- May not get funding for Town Hall but can apply for META grant in September.
- Dennis suggests making more of a case for why we need more funding for the Town Hall design. Also add amounts requested. Cameren suggests swapping two funding opportunities in first paragraph.
- Dennis makes a motion to approve the draft letter. Cameren seconds the motion. All vote in favor, motion passes.

Update on Electrification and Energy Efficiency Programs

- Clean Energy Coaching program is continuing and still successful.
- Dennis notes that coaches are educating people, but it is unclear how many are taking the suggested steps. Some of the changes are expensive and difficult to budget for.
- A mailer will be going to all Acton homes soon to advertise coaching program.
- Making progress and getting people thinking about budgeting.

Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ban

- Mary suggests waiting for Eric to attend to speak on the topic.
- Mary agrees with most of the draft, but thinks both dates should be changed to 2028.
- Cameren asks if everyone watched the discussion at the Select Board meeting.
 - Sounds like a public hearing will occur to gather more public opinions.
 - Cameren wonders if the GAB could get an update from Jim before the next meeting.
 - Select Board is not going to update the draft policy until they receive additional feedback from public.

Cameren makes a motion to close the meeting at 7:04. Dennis seconds the motion. By a unanimous roll call vote; meeting adjourned.