

Sustainability Committee
Minutes of Meeting
March 11, 2015

Present: Lynn Stoddard (chair), Vera Ward, Shawn Santesiere, Kristin Schwab, Paul Shapiro, Rich Miller, Bill Lennon, Susanna Bekman (guest), George & Joyce Rawitscher, Len Clark & Gary Fisher (guests from Stafford Energy Advisory Committee), Virginia Walton (staff)

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Stoddard.

The minutes for the February 18, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as amended on a motion by Ward/Schwab.

Gary Fisher and Len Clark, members of the Stafford Energy Advisory Committee talked about the steps they have taken over the past five years to install 100% renewable energy in their Town. First, Stafford signed an energy saving performance contract with Honeywell. The Town issued a bond to pay for Honeywell's work with a 10 year payback and a projected savings of \$140,000 per year. Through CEFIA, solar hot water systems have been placed on all the schools which supplies 70-80% of the schools hot water needs. They bid into and were awarded ZRECs for 2.8 megawatts of photovoltaic electricity that will be placed at the schools and the landfill. This \$17 million project also includes converting the schools to geothermal heat and is being financed by a tax exempt lease purchase. The project will pay for itself in 15 years but it will be cash positive from day one. The tax exempt lease purchase and Stafford's ownership of the photovoltaic systems makes this project unique and particularly noteworthy.

The committee reviewed their draft comments to the Planning and Zoning Commission about the Mansfield Tomorrow Plan. The memo to Planning and Zoning was accepted on a motion by Schwab/Ward, with Shapiro abstaining.

Schwab discussed having her planting design class, which meets on Tuesdays 1 to 4 pm, facilitate a municipal sustainable land care charrette in the beginning of April. The purpose of the charrette will be to involve key town staff in developing sustainable planting designs around the town hall, community center and new playground area. Members developed a laundry list of ideas to bring to the charrette – no hardscape changes, minimize maintenance, visible solar & cistern systems, alternative storm water management, turf alternatives, organic management, habitat enhancement, native plantings, community garden, edible landscape, improve soil health, add tree cover, importance of plant diversity, include gathering spaces.

Santesiere presented information on the proposed natural gas pipeline expansion that is going through Mansfield. Santesiere's co-worker, Dr. Gary Bent, requested that the committee review the information and take an official stance against pipeline expansion. After some discussion, members were not sure that the Town has any say in the matter since the State energy plan is focused on expanding its natural gas infrastructure and they were not confident that they understood the pipeline issues well enough to take a stance. They requested more information from Dr. Bent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Walton