

Climate Action Task Force
Minutes of Meeting
September 22, 2015

Present: Greg Anderson, Margaret Rubega, Tim Vadas, Laura Cisneros, Chad Rittenhouse, Lyle Scruggs, Don Hoyle, Julianna Barrett, George Rawitscher, Joyce Rawitscher (guest), Virginia Walton (staff)

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Walton.

Introductions were made.

On a motion by Rubega/Cisneros, the task force elected Chad Rittenhouse to serve as the chairperson and George Rawitscher to serve as both the vice chairperson and representative to the sustainability committee.

Each member present summarized one chapter from the Mansfield Tomorrow Plan.

Chapter 1, *Mansfield Today*, (Don Hoyle) - seven principles introduced: 1. preserve natural systems, 2. value community context, 3. promote resource efficiency, 4. adapt to a changing climate, 5. promote connectivity, 6. direct compact and efficient development, 7. encourage sustainable design practices.

Chapter 2, *Natural Systems*, (Margaret Rubega) - focuses on water, soil, wildlife and plants. The emphasis of this chapter is on managing storm water runoff. The plan has designated a number of flood hazard zones. It is unclear if the recommendations in this chapter use updated data that accounts for climate change. The committee probably needs to address this. The chapter also addresses using forests as carbon sinks, managing power lines/trees, updating the town's engineering standards, preventing heat island, managing invasive plant and managing dams. There is very little mention of coping with drought conditions and no mention of the maple syrup industry vanishing or planting trees that can cope with warmer weather.

Chapter 3, *Open Space, Parks and Agricultural Lands*, (Chad Rittenhouse) - maintaining rural character is highly valued by the community. Actions focus on protection and preservation of open space, parks, agricultural land, and view sheds. Little is mentioned about change of behavior or restoration. How climate change may affect soils and farming is not addressed. There is opportunity to include climate change in the management plans of open space as well as introduce climate preparedness practices for flood hazard areas.

Chapter 4, *Community Heritage and Sense of Place*, (Greg Anderson) - in order to keep historic and sensitive areas along rivers intact, this chapter focuses on targeting compact development in certain areas with access to sewer and water. Zoning regulations need to be revised to promote smart growth, including cluster housing. This chapter does not directly touch on climate change

Chapter 5, *Community Life*, (Juliana Barrett) - community services provided by the Town is highly valued, but there is concern about the Town's ability to continue to do so. Topics covered in this chapter include education, town facilities, a changing population, elderly services, emergency management and health and wellness. There is a lot of opportunity in this chapter to provide input into actions/policies that help create a resilient and more self-reliant population.

Chapter 7, *Housing*, (Lyle Scruggs) - new housing in walkable areas is particularly emphasized. This chapter does not mention the use of renewable energy or energy efficiency. There is a need to address

rental housing energy efficiency and creating programs where energy efficiency is the default. Focus on behavior change.

Chapter 8, *Future Land Use and Community Design*, (Laura Cisneros) - emphasis is placed on protecting the character of Mansfield which includes agricultural land and vistas. Make Mansfield more walkable, concentrate development and develop in underutilized areas like the Depot Campus. Incorporate green infrastructure and alternative energy in land development.

Chapter 9, *Infrastructure*, (Tim Vadas) – focuses on multimodal transportation, waste water management, energy systems, solid waste management and water delivery. Mentions micro-grids, waste prevention, recycling, and carbon neutrality. Does not address variability in the supply of utilities or the increasing use of natural gas. There is some mention of drought management and reducing water use.

Chapter 10, *Stewardship and Implementation*, (George Rawitscher) – this chapter is devoted to securing funds to implement projects. Examples include the need to improve the Town’s bond rating and tax base and working with the Government Finance Officer Association to assist with finding grants.

Walton will ask Gary Bent if he will summarize Chapter 6, *Diversifying the Economy*.

For the October meeting, each member was asked to bring a list of the items in the chapter he/she read that most directly tie to climate change. The task force should begin thinking about thematic groups as a way to organize the list. New opportunities should also be identified. The task force will need to decide on the criteria for prioritization.

The task force will meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month for an hour and a half. The December meeting may be cancelled since it is close to Christmas. Walton will put together a meeting schedule. The next meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2015 at 7 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Walton