



City of Greenfield, Massachusetts
Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee (SGIC)
July 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Hannah Rechtschaffen, Chair
George Touloumtzis, Co Chair, Planning board rep
Mary Chicoine, public member
Nancy Hazard, public member
Jonah Keane, public member
Phil Elmer, City Council representative
Carole Collins, Energy Director

Anna Oltman, Community Development Administrator
Erik Twarog, Planning Director
Kim Boas, public member
Greta Shwachman, Public Schools Food Service Director

Committee Members Absent:

Marlo Warner, Director of Public Works (regrets)

--- George called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm ---

1. Introductions/Updates related to the MP

- **George** – Noted new crosswalk and crossing light near Ames St as well as the reactivated crossing light at Shelburne Falls Coffee; he also noted that the extreme weather events we are now experiencing were anticipated during the master planning process
- **Hannah** – The new economic development director has been hired for Greenfield; she noted there is significant new leadership in Greenfield and FC; she also stated she would share the new discover maps at a future meeting
- **Mary** – No update. Will share findings on agricultural commission research later in meeting
- **Anna** – Announced that Amy Cahillane - Executive Director of the Downtown Northampton Association – has been hired as the new economic development director; CDBG update– closing out three of the four grants including the new downtown revitalization plan (copies shared); West St project has been completed; an architect will assess ADA accessibility in City Hall; there will be a future public hearing to discuss GCET broadband to Leyden Woods and reallocating funds for housing activities
- **Kim** – Highlighted that trails in Temple Woods and Highland have suffered from heavy rains, especially near Bears Den; there has been money allocated via CPA for some trail work, but that will not begin until next year; he stated that SGIC should suggest that DPW address some of the trail issues. This topic will be included on the agenda in a future meeting
- **Jonah** – Acknowledged the severity of recent storms and issues w flooding on Sanderson St – he speculated that green infrastructure could possibly have helped to mitigate this issue if it had been installed as part of the recent construction project
- **Eric** – Wells St sidewalk project is done under Complete Streets funding; Wisdom Way had final walk-through today – some minor erosion issues near the shared use path which will be resolved; He stated that DPW has a very long priority list and trails at Temple Woods and Highland Park would likely not be addressed due to other more pressing needs to keep the city's infrastructure functioning.
- **Phil** – Shared a photo of Lower Road in Deerfield that had collapsed due to the flooding/heavy rain; He has reconnected with the Center of New Urbanism and hopes to secure a speaker; City Council's Economic Development Committee will be addressing the Lunt property and the Aldi proposal, which has some environmental concerns. Note: Eric stated that the Aldi project went through a thorough review by the Conservation Commission and all wetlands issues have been addressed. Eric stated that the project is going to the Planning Board as a "by-right" use – the only thing that could stop it would be a health or safety concern. MEPA was required due to meeting the threshold of 2,000 vehicles per day. Carole agreed Conservation Commission did a thorough job.
- **Carole** – Celebrated the opening of the new library and stated that it is net-zero-energy-ready with connections installed on the roof for PV; She also reported that interconnection has been approved for the DPW building on Wells St; Eversource is lifting limits on the amount of solar that can be developed on the library and other sites.
- **Nancy** – no updates

- Greta – summer feeding program is going well; food truck is widely popular; expanding number of meals; partnering with Just Roots this summer; hopes to use the food truck during the year for other feeding opportunities

2. Approval of June Meeting Minutes

- Carole moved to accept the minutes; Phil seconded the motion; Discussion followed with edits to the meeting minutes requested. Minutes were approved w changes; Kim and Greta abstained

3. Municipal Reforestation Support Letter Request - Mary C.

- Mary C sought support from SGIC on a letter to addressed to Governor Healey. She read the letter in its entirety. See Attachment A
- Nancy moved to support the letter; Eric seconded; unanimously passed; discussion ensued; Eric mentioned the reduction of heat island effect would be good; Carole asked clarifying questions; Hannah will sign on behalf of the committee; Mary will forward the link to SGIC after the meeting

4. Idea regarding SGIC funding source potential - Nancy H.

- Nancy introduced resident, Bram Moreinis, resident of Greenfield, who spoke as follows:
 - is worried about the climate crisis, the release of sewage during heavy rain events, impacts to roads due to recent flooding. Resilience to climate change is essential.
 - Master plan has huge scope; how can a committee (SGIC) that meets once a month implement such a big plan? Is this effort enough particularly given that climate change impacts are accelerating?
 - Could the SGIC have a consultant to help filter through all the available funds and resources?
 - Is SGIC an advisory board, not a working board?
- George asked if Bram was referencing the Inflation Reduction Act when speaking about federal funding – Bram said yes
- Hannah confirmed that we are an advisory board, looking at the big picture to determine what has been done and what is remaining; also whether an updated plan is needed; this committee avoids siloing by having a mix of citizens and municipal staff/department heads
- George agrees that department heads will be paying attention to funding sources including Inflation Reduction Act; we are still grappling with the function of SGIC; we strive to help with connecting entities and identifying items that have been “orphaned”; most of our activities are in an advisory capacity
- Nancy asked the department heads about whether they have the time to look at the Inflation Reduction Act. Carole indicated she has been attending webinars for months – she is keeping tabs on all the pieces that impact her department, plus others. Eric stated that he has been examining the Act as well, especially where infrastructure is concerned; he will also look into whether there is funding for a Master Plan update in this funding. Anna stated her department is receptive to public input; also her contacts at the state level keep Anna informed about opportunities. George also pointed out that Marlo is deeply involved in identifying and matching funding sources to projects.
- Jonah said it’s useful to learn we are an advisory group; he would like to discuss this further and how our role works moving forward as well as whether there are there funding opportunities to implement more elements of the plan.
- Hannah indicated she thinks it’s important to work with the CPC and advise them. Mary asks how SGIC can communicate with CPC in that their public input meeting is happening at the same time as the SGIC meetings. The group agreed that we need to provide input to the CPC by end of September, and should discuss at the next meeting.
- Carole mentioned that CPC is looking for another member; she also stated that one of the roles of our committee is to facilitate the implementation of the master plan; department heads must state how each project is in alignment with the master plan; next update should focus on resilience and climate change; Carole cited Green Worcester as a good example

- Mary suggested that we don't have to update the whole plan – we could do an update just with resilience and climate change
- Bram suggests there will probably be a time where we need to meet more frequently and/or that Carole's department should have more staff
- Phil: Sewage release was shocking. Infiltration and inflow is a known issue – the City of Greenfield is under a consent order with MassDEP and is working on I and I issues.
- Jonah mentioned that green infrastructure could help alleviate the overwhelm of the wastewater treatment plant – and is also called for in the Master Plan.
- Eric says we have addressed green infrastructure in the subdivision regs; he contends it is more difficult to install green infrastructure in existing networks
- Mary added that trees are part of the green infrastructure toolbox. With any street or sidewalk projects, existing trees should be inventoried and assessed; trees should have root zone protection areas established before any construction is conducted; new trees should be installed as part of the project when the site is under construction – not sometime after
- Carole cited Providence, RI as a model for implementing green infrastructure – but it is difficult for a community to implement – however green infrastructure has to become the norm.
- Eric suggested we add the discussion of a master plan update on a future agenda
- Jonah stated that the impetus for suggesting the deep dive is to get a better understanding of what our priorities are. Hannah states that really all items are a priority and asks whether we should shift to whether we are ready to address a plan update.
- Mary suggested a change to how we do updates at the beginning of meetings so that we have more time to do the work of SGIC – how about a “lightning fast” updates – or providing updates in writing ahead of time as part of the agenda. Carole agreed we should shorten the updates.
- Carole stated that our role is dynamic – we highlight what is important. We also spend a lot of time talking about how our committee is functioning and what our role is which is important but detracts from us actually doing the work.
- Hannah suggested we commit to a meeting where we spend the whole time working on the deep dive on priorities and that we table updates and other items. Eric and Carole agreed. Nancy also would like to see us finish the deep dive and have action items that come out of the process.
- Mary reported on what Ag Comms are doing in the area, as requested at previous meeting:
 - - Food assessments / surveys / infographics
 - - Social media - platform for sharing of farm info and events
 - - Assessment of the economic impact of farming in a community as a way to promote farming
 - - Planning for shared facilities and equipment
 - - Help run farmers market in the community
 - - Provide education such as on farm succession plans
- Mary also affirmed that Greenfield's Ag Comm, which was established in the city's charter, currently has no members. Members have to be appointed by the mayor.
- Nancy asked if there is an update from Phil and Carole re the Center for New Urbanism – they will report at a future meeting

5. CONTINUED - Review and Deep Dive on Committee Priorities and Accomplishments

- Hannah suggested tabling this agenda item due to running over on the time spent on the previous agenda item

6. Announcements

- None

--- Phil moved to adjourn; Hannah seconded; George adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm ---

---- NEXT MEETING: Thursday, August 24, 2023 - 5 PM - 6:30 PM ----

Attachment A: Municipal Reforestation Sign-On Letter

June 26, 2023

Dear Governor Healey:

We, the undersigned urban forest and tree advocates, are writing to urge your Administration to incorporate **S.452 / H.869 An Act Establishing the Municipal Reforestation Program** in its entirety as outlined by Senator Creem, Rep. Owens, and Rep. Armini's proposed legislation, into the upcoming Environmental Bond Bill.

It is well established that trees planted in urban and suburban settings provide a myriad of environmental and social benefits, and are critical components of a city's infrastructure. But without adequate funding and technical support, most municipalities in the state are unable to plant and maintain enough trees to keep pace with tree loss and to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The fully funded Municipal Reforestation Program will provide the crucial boost that many municipalities need to be able to establish or improve their urban tree programs, and to plan for, plant and care for trees, especially in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and communities.

The State's Greening the Gateway Cities is an excellent model for planting trees in target neighborhoods to increase tree canopy cover for environmental and energy efficiency benefits. But now is the time for your administration to invest in the Municipal Reforestation Program so that many more municipalities can reap the benefits and achieve the kinds of tree planting goals that Greening the Gateway Cities helped provide to participating cities.

Additionally, adopting the Municipal Reforestation Program would position the State to qualify for the anticipated urban reforestation funding coming from the Federal Inflation Reduction Act. The framework provided by the Municipal Reforestation Program, in conjunction with the funding provided by the Environmental Bond Bill, will perfectly complement the Inflation Reduction Act funding and will result in a once-in-a-generation boost to our urban forests and street trees that will greatly benefit residents, especially in Environmental Justice communities.

We greatly appreciate your Administration's efforts to address the climate emergency. We strongly support writing the S.452 / H.869 Municipal Reforestation Program into the Environmental Bond Bill that you will be submitting to the State Legislature.

Sincerely,

Elders Climate Action, Natural Solutions Workgroup
glenayers@gmail.com

Greenfield Tree Committee
greenfieldtreecommittee@yahoo.com