

**TOWN OF EXETER
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
August 27, 2019**

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Chetana Parmar.

Members Present: Niko Papakonstantis, Select Board Representative, Beverly Tappan, Christopher Zigmont, Chetana Parmar, and Kristen Osterwood

Staff Present: Dave Sharples, Town Planner

1. Meeting minutes approval

-Meeting minutes from July 30th: Bev Tappan made motion to Approve, 2nd by Kristen Osterwood, all approved

-Meeting minutes from August 13th: Chris Zigmont made a motion to approve, 2nd by Kristen Osterwood, all approved

2. Discussion of Charge

- A working session of Nina Braun, Bev Tappan and Robin Tyner, which was formed to look at the charge met on the 19th of August and incorporated comments from previous meeting. Chris is all good with the revised. Dave asked about “advising” the sustainability office - Chetana clarified the Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) will act as a resource. Recommended to put the role of the SAC in relation to the Sustainability office in the job description.

- Motion to approved the revised Charge was made by Chris Zigmont, Bev Tappan 2nd, all approved to submit and present to select board

- Action: Chetana Parmar send revised charged to Chairwomen Corson

3. Budget

- Chetana Parmar had a meeting with Russ Dean on how budget is formed. We missed the deadline of the preliminary budget of August 23rd. But will present at the September 23rd Budget Committee Meeting. What will be presented include budget breakdown and job description. SOA did a lot of work on how other towns already pulled much of this together.

- **Public Comment:** Terri Harmon - urged the committee to look at Warrant Article 31 to read it literally to merge it with what the requirements of the position are.

- The original warrant article was for a part time position at \$45,000

- Nikos Papakonstantis- salary range based on research, good to compare based on town size. Suggestion: more information you can bring to budget committee the easier it is the make your case.

4. Statements

- Chetana Parmar read out statements by Jennifer Brackett Piskovitz and Robin Tyner - these statements are attached at the bottom of the minutes.

5. Updates

- Bev Tappan - would like to go to the next Library meeting in Mid September. And curious about what is going on with the Rec improvements. Nikos Papakonstantis responded that there is a meeting tonight to update on the Rec improvements

- Update on Grant application: Chetana Parmar, the amendments were presented to the select board yesterday and it aligned with our mission more effectively. The select board will resubmit the Grant.

- Kristen: the Director of the Library has been connected with Unitil resources for potential funding for energy efficiency upgrades

-There will be an update to the meeting time of this Committee as many people can not make 5 pm - will be scheduled later.

6. Upcoming events

- August 29th at 5 pm at Me and Ollies, a Climate Change Event to include statewide environmental issues and the potential of forming an Exeter Area Climate Change Book Club.

Kristen Osterwood made a motion to adjourn, Chetana Parmar 2nd, all approve. The meeting adjourned at 5:39.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Osterwood

Statements

Dear Chair Parmar;

My apologies for not being able to attend the Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting today. While I won't be there, it is still important to me to communicate that I am fully in support of the new mission and charge as written. I am thankful for the work the subcommittee put in to refine the wording to reflect more accurate goals.

The original mission and charge were crafted by Town officials before critical research had been presented to the Select Board by the Sustainability Office Advocates. The research was important because it showed that, by far, the most effective way to do sustainability is with a sustainability coordinator/office supported by a Committee. While it was a great step to have a charge set in motion so the Committee could be established, the charge did not adequately communicate the most important initial goal of the Committee.

The updates to the charge now more accurately reflect the intention of so many Exeter citizens who believed in, and overwhelmingly passed, Article 31. I know this first hand because I was one of those citizens. The Committee exists in large part because the Sustainability Office Advocates brought together a community of citizens who care about protecting Exeter for future generations and believed this could be achieved through the leadership of Sustainability Office. With support from a majority of the Exeter Select Board, our Town passed Article 31, to establish a Sustainability Office for the Town of Exeter in 2019. For us not to make this action a top priority of this Committee would send a message to voters that we, as a Town, are not prioritizing this mission as our number one goal.

It is not enough to say we want to be more sustainable. It is deliberate action with enough heft to address the scope of the climate and environmental problems we face that will move us to where we need to be. Where we HAVE to be if we are going to take on the intense challenges our fragile ecosystems face. Small volunteer committee actions that support this work, while helpful, are simply not enough to have meaningful impact within the timeframe needed.

As a volunteer committee member who is currently out of pocket for personal reasons, as are other members, this highlights one of the critical reasons why a volunteer committee is not adequate to have the impact we need to have at this point in time. This effort will require a dedicated office to lead our community in this. The voters have mandated this. Our community deserves to be taken seriously in this. Our future depends on it. Therefore, I approve the changes to the charge and hope it can become formalized as quickly as possible so that we can get on with the important tasks at hand.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Brackett Piskovitz
SAC member

Dear SAC members and Exeter citizens,

Sorry to miss tonight's meeting while out of state with family.

For the record, I fully support the revised charge, following the work of a subcommittee, a public committee discussion, and a SAC-working session.

This charter much more accurately reflects the mandate of the Exeter voters, and the thorough research of the many professionals that donated their time (via Sustainability Office Advocates) to investigate numerous ideas and alignments for creating a sustainability office in Exeter. That work, when presented, was very well-received, had no pushback, and revealed the near-unanimous advice and lessons learned from the many northern New England towns and cities that have already established sustainability offices and infrastructure.

I look forward to continued work to get the Sustainability Office in place as per the clear voter mandate, and the issues highlighted in our Master Plan. As a scientist, I understand the criticality of this work; we do not have a year or two to get our act together - decisive action and progress is needed now.

Robin Tyner

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Osterwood