

Select Board Climate Action Committee Minutes

July 27, 2020, 6 pm.

Meeting held remotely on Zoom due to COVID-19; hosted by Town staff Kara Brewton and Linda Hickey. Meeting chaired by Werner Lohe.

SBCAC Members in attendance: Nancy Heller (co-Chair), Werner Lohe (co-Chair), David Gladstone, David Lescohier, Deborah Rivers, Don Weitzman, Linda Olson Pehlke, Michael Berger, David Pearlman (joined later in the meeting as noted below), James Carr, Dr. Swannie Jett (joined later in the meeting as noted below).

SBCAC Members not in attendance: Alan Leviton, Dan Bennett, Kathleen Scanlon.

Staff: Kara Brewton, Linda Hickey

Guests in attendance included: Diane Sokal & Melissa Goff

After making sure that Committee members could fully participate in the remote meeting, Werner Lohe opened the meeting and welcomed Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator.

Budget process

Melissa is preparing to send out guidance for budget requests, starting with Capital Improvement Plan items. Melissa Goff, Finance Director Jeana Franconi, and Kara Brewton will be reviewing CIP items with each Division/Department. We would like to add a couple of climate-related questions in the guidance we send to employees, and Kara asked whether a couple SBCAC members could work with her as a Subcommittee to make that happen. The timeline is that internal staff discussions regarding CIP requests happen in September/October. In November, Melissa will begin to start balancing requests, and the Town Administrator will be making recommendations for CIP items in mid-December.

Points made during discussion included:

- Staff requests & Advisory discussions already include analyses for payback periods, for example, energy efficiency projects.
- There's a difference between "do no harm" to climate and moving forward with our climate change goals.
- It would be helpful to understand which projects will reduce greenhouse gases, water resources, etc.
- Would like to think about embodied carbon as well, like preserving existing buildings.
- Budget may have to be expanded to deal with important issues related to climate change.
- Deferral of CIP items can also end up costing the Town more.
- Should also look at adaptation costs like heat island concerns, not just climate mitigation.

Melissa Goff noted that many CIP projects were effectively deferred for a year this past Spring to make the anticipated budget work, and that this fall they will be recalibrating the budget – but first need to find out what the state and federal revenues will be. She noted that the Advisory Subcommittee this past spring was able to flag CIP items as "must haves", "could be deferred",

etc. She suggested that maybe the SBCAC and Planning Board could make recommendations using the same methodology. Following additional discussion, David Lescohier & Deborah Rivers agreed to work with Kara as a subcommittee related to issuing guidance questions for staff as they begin to request CIP items, and the SBCAC unanimously agreed. Linda Olson Pehlke also suggested that it may sense to invite Carlos Ridruejo, Chair of the Advisory's Sustainability Subcommittee.

[David Pearlman joined the meeting].

Approve July 27 Meeting Minutes

July 27 minutes, were approved by roll call vote. Those that voted in favor included Don Weitzman, Linda Olson Pehlke, Michael Berger, Deborah Rivers, David Gladstone, Nancy Heller, Werner Lohe, James Carr, Dr. Swannie Jett*. Abstentions included David Lescohier and David Pearlman.

Staff Updates

David Gladstone introduced Anne Sudduth to give an update on the Climate is Everybody's Business program, an initiative by Climate Action Brookline. In last year's work session, they had 60 participants from 39 different organizations. They are now assisting businesses with virtual self-assessments, peer to peer discussions, and creating a recognition program. Right now MassSaves is offering up to 100% rebates for businesses that make upgrades before the end of August.

Kara Brewton asked the SBCAC to review the Black Lives Matter statement vote on by the SBCAC at the last meeting. David Lescohier and Kathleen Scanlon both had similar comments regarding being more specific with a call to action.

The SBCAC took a vote that: "David and Kathleen should merge their comments and then, if there is full consensus once Kara sends the revised statement out, we will post the statement. If any single SBCAC member voices a concern, then we will revisit the statement again at the next SBCAC meeting." Roll call vote in favor: Don Weitzman, Linda Olson Pehlke, David Pearlman, David Gladstone, Michael Berger, Deborah Rivers, Nancy Heller, James Carr, Werner Lohe, Dr. Swannie Jett*. Nobody voted in abstention or against.

[*Dr. Swannie Jett joined the meeting; he added that he was able to listen as a participant for the entire meeting, and that all the votes taken reflect his vote as a positive vote.]

Discussion of Town Meeting Articles

The SBCAC discussed warrant articles that were already filed last Spring that will be taken up this Fall. There was general consensus that the SBCAC should hold public hearings on two articles: the warrant article related to the Community Preservation Act, and the warrant article requiring financial training for all elected officials. These will be scheduled for September.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

