



GREEN ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

TUESDAY, January 16, 2024 - 6:00 pm

VIRTUAL MEETING

GAB Members Virtual: Erik Larson, Cameren Cousins, Eric Hudson, Mary Smith, Peter Berry, Partha Krishnan

Town Staff Virtual: Andrea Becerra, Lauren West, David Martin

Guests Virtual: Carolyn Davis, Paul Kampas, Leo Hill

Mary calls the meeting to order at 6:00pm and reads the virtual meeting statement. She notes that tonight's meeting was originally intended to be hybrid, but it was moved to only virtual due to weather. Attendees are advised that the meeting is being recorded.

I. Business

1. Resident Concerns

- Mary notes that resident comments will be limited to two minutes for this meeting.
- Paul Kampas mentions there will be a meeting happening Friday (1/19) at 10am in Acton to discuss bill H.765 that would provide rebates to Towns and landscapers for electric lawn equipment.

2. GAB/Sustainability updates

- Greenhouse Gas Inventory Updates
 - The Greenhouse Gas Inventory has been published and is available in the GAB Documents.
 - The Sustainability Office is working on creating a series of graphics to summarize and highlight results from the GHG Inventory Report.
- Acton's Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw will take effect in March 2024.
 - The Sustainability Office collaborated with the Towns of Arlington and Lexington to create a website with information on the Fossil Fuel Free bylaw and the Opt-In Specialized Stretch Code.
 - The page can be reached at <http://www.bit.ly/fffenergy>.
 - Andrea will most likely be presenting on the bylaw at the next Select Board Meeting.
 - Mary asks if a list of approved contractors who are available to complete work under the bylaw is available.
 - Lauren replies that the Town cannot provide recommendations for contractors, but Acton recently sponsored a building energy

training with the Town of Lexington and the Town of Concord to explain the details of the updated Stretch Code and Bylaw. The building department is also available for any questions regarding the code and demonstration program.

3. Extended Producer Responsibility

- Mary comments that next steps regarding this bill will be discussed in the following GAB meeting.

4. Solar Battery Storage at the Douglas and Gates Schools

- Peter comments that the GAB has drafted a letter to send the Board of Health. Mary will check with Andrea on the status of the letter to get it signed.

5. Carbon Sequestration

- The GAB discussed options for calculating carbon sequestration at previous meetings.
- The GAB could get a speaker to come in and discuss options for calculating emissions from removal of plants or sequestration from vegetation.
 - Options are to bring in someone from ICLEI, someone from I Tree, or someone from the nature conservancy.
 - Cameren mentions that ICLEI would be great to work with because they are already doing carbon accounting. Also asking someone from our conservation or GIS teams would be great to look at our internal options.
- Eric Hudson has a contact at Climate Partners. They are more focused on business consulting but he can reach out to see if they have some useful information on sequestration.
 - Mary refers to previous presentation from Climate Partners and suggests hosting another meeting on carbon sequestration.

6. Invitation to appoint someone to the “Habitat for All” committee

- Peter mentions an invitation from the planning department to join an initiative by appointing someone to a committee on “Habitat for All” clustered zoning.
- Andrea will forward call for applications to all committee members. Mary notes that those interested can reach out to her or discuss in the following meeting.

7. GAB Charter

- The existing charter is currently in the GAB documents. Andrea will adjust the GAB charter document formatting and circulate it to GAB members.
- Eric Hudson suggests Andrea adjust the charter and send edited version out for additional edits from board members.
 - Andrea will align Climate Action Plan actions with the GAB charter and send out a drafted version to the GAB for edits.
 - Peter mentions Green Advisory Board lacks a letterhead, Andrea offers to share a drafted letterhead to go out with letter for the Board of Health.

8. Red House Renovation

- The Sustainability Office received a grant for \$37,000 to do renovations to the Red House’s exterior space. The Sustainability Office is working with Land Use, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Municipal Properties, and The Acton Water

District to develop the project. The goal is to make the Red House a living example of building climate resilience in our own backyards.

- Renovations will include a water wise garden, pollinator gardens, and educational panels. The interior renovation of the Red House will include replacing all home energy systems with electric technology.
- So far, the Sustainability Office has met with the Historic Commission to review design. A survey is being drafted for public input. A charrette is being organized to invite members of the public to offer input on the Red House design.
- Eric Hudson suggests including examples of teeny forests in the design.

9. Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ordinance

- Select Board Member David Martin recaps that at the last Select Board meeting he was assigned to take the topic offline before bringing it back to the Board. He would like to hear input from the GAB on the proposal.
 - The Select Board is interested in moving the proposal forward. Questions that have come up are when the bylaw should take effect and how to ensure phasing is not confusing.
 - The Board expressed a general desire to make it less punitive and more educational. They are interested in hearing if there should be a difference between residential and commercial restrictions.
- Eric Hudson asks for clarification for what should be delivered back to the Select Board by 2/22/24.
 - David Martin indicates that he would like input on the development of bylaw language to submit to the Select Board as a draft by 2/22/24.
 - David will bring forward a draft for discussion. He will apply legal language that will work for the Town, but particulars may change upon review of the Select Board.
 - It is unlikely that the GAB will have time to meet and review the draft before it goes to the Select Board, but it will be published in the Select Board packet and GAB members can offer feedback.
 - Eric Hudson clarifies that the GAB has proposed two letter both supporting the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers however there are differences regarding the timeline.
 - David comments that the Select Board is unlikely to know the timeline by Town meeting this year.
 - Mary asks what type of educational opportunities there are for this bylaw. David clarifies that the Select Board mentioned providing resources such as economic and technical information to assist residents and commercial groups.

- Resident Carolyn mentions she has moved to Acton recently and knows about Acton's climate emergency declaration. She sees this ban as a way to reduce carbon emissions. She urges the GAB to support the ban.
- David Martin asks if the GAB has any recommendations for the Select Board regarding the ban. Andrea will send the Select Board's questions on the ban to the GAB and members are able to share their opinions individually to David.
- Mary expresses concern over timeline. Cameren raises concern that if the dates move too fast, it will be difficult to enforce it.
- Paul clarifies that the purpose of the phase in is to give residents & landscapers time to get used to the bylaw. It brings up questions and issues before it is in full effect.

10. Approve Minutes: November, December

- December minutes are not yet posted.
- November minutes have been posted.
 - Eric Hudson has requests for edits to minutes.
 - On page two after Eric's name, the word "date" should say "day".
 - Under the GLB discussion, a letter is referenced. Should be changed to two letters that were brought forward and only one was voted on.
 - Eric Hudson makes a motion to accept the minutes with the proposed edits.
 - Cameren seconds seconds the motion
 - Eric, Cameren, Mary, and Partha vote to accept the minutes. The motion passes.

Cameren makes a motion to close the meeting at 7:02pm. Eric seconds the motion. By a unanimous roll call vote; meeting adjourned.