

Task Force on the Climate Emergency
Minutes for meeting 4/12/2021, 3:30 PM.

1. Call to order: Jen Crandall, Ruth Poland, Brian Booher, Jill Goldthwaite, Margaret Jeffry, Tobin Peacock, Cornell Knight, Sirohi Kumar and Norm Burdzel both have conflicts and may not attend. No word from Millar Dority. Kristin Murphy arrived late.
2. Approval of Minutes: Ruth moves to approve, Jill seconds. Ruth, yes, Jill, yes, Jen, yes, Tobin and Margaret all approve minutes.
3. Adoption of Agenda: Jill has 3 additions to the agenda that will take 5-10 minutes. Ruth also has an amendment to the agenda. Jen moves to approve the amended agenda. Jill seconds. Ruth:yes, Jill: yes; Jen: yes, Tobin: yes, Margaret: yes, Kristin: yes. Brian: yes.
4. Public Comment. 2 people attending. No comment.
5. Regular Business
 - A. Continuing work on Climate Action Plan--Ruth sees doc as a to do list for ourselves and anyone we might want to hire. She would really like us to define the job so we can make it happen. Identify our priorities and what we can do that are financially viable etc. Tobin: we've got a rough draft going. Can we share this with a small group of people and get outside input? Ruth: great idea. Can we both refine it and pick off pieces to do at the same time? Jen says since we are a public meeting then there shouldn't be a reason not to have it available to the public for comment. It is on the Town website. Jill says we will need to eventually put it together as a proposal to the Council. How do we welcome public input without getting more than we need/want/can handle? How do we manage expectations? Tobin: can we share it with people we know might be knowledgeable about the topic, rather than the whole public right off the bat. We could also ask for input with the caveat that some issues might be beyond our purview. Brian: coming around to the idea that we need a sustainability coordinator. There is so much that needs to be done that a point person could take care of. We need to get the whole community going in the same direction and the task force could be the leaders of the effort rather than the doers. Tobin: there might be a lot to go through for the Town to hire someone and have a position created. This (sust. coordinator) might not be someone we could have as a resource anytime soon. Jill: Maine Climate Council having webinars explaining their plan. They want to know what they can do to help communities? Jill says money /resources is what we need. Perennial problem, however Hancock County Planning Commission has 2 new people that could be helpful. Jen: what about using the \$ to hire a consultant to look at the plan and prioritize it? Ruth: Don't want to see money spent on planning but on doing. What about having an open workshop to gather feedback? She is willing to host that online with an agenda. Can we instead hire someone to tackle some projects that will help the Town save money? Then we can show the Town that it is financially viable and beneficial to have a sustainability coordinator. Jill: A consultant is easier than a hire and not out of the question. Laura Berry is a COA graduate who has a consulting business in Bar Harbor on sustainability planning. We could put it out to bid or ask for her services. Also, we might need to spend some money on the planning. Brian: we need more resources and someone who can do stuff on a regular basis because we are volunteers and can't

do it all. Tobin: breaking down into smaller groups to work on parts of the plan has worked well. We could do that more and people could work on different sections to edit and polish. Clean up what we've got. Is there a middle ground? Someone who could help us finish up the document that we can submit and get the ball rolling with projects. Ruth: Let's tackle this document> we need an introduction, lay out so that task force to-dos are one list and sustainability consultant's tasks would be another long list. How do we hire a consultant? Cornell: RFP is needed to hire a consultant. Do some interviews and hire them. Put an ad on the MMA website and you will get a lot of viewers. We have about 15K available for this year and 15K more in next year's budget. Cornell: Southern Maine has hired a coordinator for a bunch of towns. Maybe we can use their RFP as a template. Jill: maybe we can investigate the Hancock County Planning Commission and see if they can help. Brian: Jill, have you talked to the other towns? Jill: yes, the 4 island towns, Swan's, and someone from Lamoine and someone from Tremont. Best meeting in awhile. Unanimity that you need to start with small, no cost, obvious results projects. Not sure if there is demand yet from those communities for a sustainability coordinator. Sharing one among the communities is still on the table for further conversation. Brian: how do we move forward?

Jen: will look into RFPs; Jill: will contact HCPC and see what they can do for us. Brian: will call southern Maine communities to see why they hired a sustainability coordinator and what they will do. Ruth will write up an introduction to plan and organize what we can do and what a coordinator can do. Brian: let's identify what other committees are there and what can we send their way. Jill: how do we know that we are doing the right thing? What is good to do and what is climate-hype? Ruth: you raise a valid point: it's called green-washing. There are good data resources out there that we can look to when we do start making decisions. All we can do is the best that science can explain to us. Topic by topic. Jen: can we write up a memo to the other committees and task forces of the town and remind them that we have declared a climate emergency and can they keep that in mind as they make proposals and decisions?

- B. GHG Audit – where to next? (recommendation to council? ongoing data tracking) Now what? How do we keep the data current? Who is going to do that? Spencer made some recommendations. We need to look at those and go forward or not. Ruth: these recs are solely made on a carbon reduction goal, not prioritized by financial savings. That might be the way to go first to gain trust and support from community. Brian: switching to no ghg emissions electricity supplier is low hanging fruit. All green electricity from the grid. Jen: what needs to happen to make this happen now? **Brian: I move that task force recommends the Council investigates and switches to a short term, zero ghg emissions electricity source with scope to reduce the town's emissions to zero and possibly saving the town money.** Jen seconds. Discussion: Cornell suggests we wait until we get the analysis from ACTT for the Higgins Pit. He is afraid we may lock ourselves into a contract that would impact our ability to pursue the Higgins Pit route. The report

should be ready for Council's May 18 meeting. Brian: saw this as a stop gap and wouldn't recommend a contract that locks the Town in to a long term agreement. Ruth: Norm had been talking about 1 year contracts available. Beth Woolfolk says that long term is better to invest in local farm. Jill: the solar farm will take a while to build if it is approved, so maybe we need to switch for the short term. Brian: CN Brown has a program. It is a zero sum gain, no savings but no lock in either. 100% renewable. Jill: maybe while we wait for the report we can nail down some of these other possibilities. Dec 2022 is the earliest that the solar farm could be up and running. **Vote: Ruth, Jill, Jen, Tobin, Kristin, Margaret, Brian all approve the motion. Brian will write up explanation of recommendation for Council.**

B. Jill: will ask the Council to refer to us to give testimony on this proposed bill which is an act to promote community sustainability and climate issues.

B. Jill: Ann Kozack's class likes the idea of useful info that would go out to the lay public on various climate related issues with answers and resources. The islands group that Jill met with would love to get a hold of whatever that class comes up with.

B. Ruth: LD 99 a piece of legislation that is currently in committee to divest MePERS of fossil fuel investments. Will be financially beneficial (see info at 350maine.org). Ruth wrote an op-ed in Bangor Daily News and MDIslander. This impacts anyone who receives Maine State Retirement (teachers, town employees).

B. Ruth: Eco Team presenting tonight to school board asking them to commit to carbon neutrality by 2030. Project Legacy. Student driven and written

B. Coastal grant: Bar Harbor is not eligible because we do not have a town plan with a contingency plan at the State level. Ruth talked with Michelle Gagnon who has it on her pile of things to do. We should keep our eyes on it because it is a good potential source of \$\$

6. Items for next meeting. Jill will be able to report back with draft of testimony for the bill she spoke about. Report out on COA class, report back on homework for Climate Action Plan, GHG audit--more info to be added for the high school. What kind of software do we want to use to contain the data? Ruth: We need to divide up the climate action plan into new pairs for reviewing. Can we each take a new section that we haven't looked at before and edit.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12OLFX1vd9f_9pGXP2HB7IBCm54f_6SwkZiRaN-MbLv8/edit?usp=sharing

7. Task Force Comments. Jen: how does the recommendation happen? Cornell: **Brian** needs to write up a brief introduction of the motion so Cornell can put it on the Town Council agenda for May meeting. It would be great if someone (**Norm?**) could attend the council meeting to answer any questions. Brian: MDES needs new boiler and have already accepted a new bid. CES will need to replace their heating system soon. Can we somehow get them to get an electric option? It would be substantially more expensive to switch over to heat pumps, but if not now, when? Brian encouraged the BH school board to have a plan for when the boiler goes so that climate is in the decision making. Ruth says that Project Legacy has that very thing in the plan. Every school should keep climate in the decision making. Margaret: electric grid can be problematic and having an overlap of boiler/furnace could be helpful for longevity and

backup. Jill: what does the Maine Climate Council say to this problem. Brian: has asked them and many contractors and has come up short.

7. Adjournment: Jill moves, Jen seconds. Margaret, Jill, Jen, Tobin, Kristin, Brian all approve.

Future Work:

- A. Tourism carbon impact
- i. Cruise ships
- B. Climate Justice-- acknowledge impact of climate change and its disproportionate impact on lower socio-economic groups and the intersectionality with other crises like racial equity. Climate change impacts developing countries exponentially more than developed countries and the developing countries are not the ones benefiting from the use of fossil fuels etc.
- C. Ground mounted solar array.
- D. Community composting.
- E. EV chargers
- F. Town based incentives for new buildings or renovations to exceed code requirements for efficiency, build electric and/or incorporating solar into design. Tax break? Cash back? What could the town actually do to incentivize? Could you forgive the first year of property taxes on a new build if there is a solar array of a certain size or all electric house or passive house level insulation? A few thousand dollars might be enough to encourage some best practices.
- G. Public Outreach
- i. Engage the BH Chamber of Commerce

Parking Lot: Jill: why solar farm at Higgins Pit and not at the public works site? Are there other options? Ruth: ACTT has been looking around at various options for a number of years and found this to be the best option. It would be good to hear why.

Me to Panelists (3:38 PM)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12OLF1vd9f_9pGXP2HB7IBCm54f_6SwkZiRaN-MbLv8/edit#

Me to Panelists (4:23 PM)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12OLF1vd9f_9pGXP2HB7IBCm54f_6SwkZiRaN-MbLv8/edit#

Tobin Peacock to Panelists (4:26 PM)

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1rH7gr6R4ab7pQCJ2oyicjkbpx_8MgpU6AbhEMR9Bs0/edit#slide=id.p

Beth Woolfolk (she, her, hers) to Panelists (4:34 PM)

long term it saves the town far more money to invest in its own solar farm

December 2022 is the earliest the solar farm could be up and running

Ruth Poland (she/her) to Panelists (4:50 PM)

350maine.org

Project

Legacy: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/12vzuceuLu455v7pRxx92O7zZeZvJrbEhBT9hDDfLZww/edit>

Tobin Peacock to Beth Woolfolk (she, her, hers), Panelists (5:00 PM)

CETF - Working Climate Action Plan Framework

Ruth Poland (she/her) to Panelists (5:06 PM)