

WEAC MEETING Minutes - May 2023

In person meeting, Thursday - 5/18/23 @ 7:30 PM

Members in attendance: Kate La Croix (chair), Sue McGown (vice chair), Maria Costantini, Julie Gervais, Leslie Greffenius, Stephen Harte, Anne Marie Kline (AMK), Brian Bayer

Others in attendance: John Aram (Fox Hill Sustainability Committee), Phil Stubblefield (Fox Hill Sustainability Committee), Linda Stubblefield (Fox Hill Sustainability Committee), Claire Galkowski (member of the public), Srirup Kumar (member of the public).

Routine business: Approval of the minutes. No action was taken on the minutes of the previous meeting as the file was not uploaded on the shared folder.

Topics discussed w/next steps:

Short presentation from members of Fox Hill Village's Sustainability Committee

- 1) The goal of their participation was to connect with WEAC and find out if the two groups can work together given their similar scope. They reported that the Fox Hill development is very green: there are solar panels and some efforts to use organic gardening practices on some plots, and the kitchen composts all food scraps. Kate provided a brief overview of WEAC's actions and topics of interest.
- 2) **Next Steps:** Kate will set up a follow-up meeting at Fox Hill of some members of the two Committees for the fall.

Composting at some Westwood Schools:

1. Srirup (member of the public) reported that a group of parents is trying to launch a composting program at some schools using Black Earth, but there is no money on the budget. They may ask WEAC for some financial support.
2. **Next steps:** none

WEAC officer positions- terms ending in June

Kate informed the group that the Vice Chair position will be vacant. The Chair and the Secretary positions also are open, but Kate and Maria are willing to stay on if there are no volunteers. Kate encouraged the new members to consider volunteering. The officers will be approved at the next meeting.

Hale

1. Kate met with Karen Manor (president of the Land Trust) to discuss how WEAC can work with and support the Land Trust. She said that the Trustees are taking over the advertising of the campaign to save Hale and the Land Trust is waiting to hear from the Trustees. The campaign will begin on June 5. There will be a public meeting at the Westwood Public Library in June. There is also a suggestion to host small neighborhood gatherings. The current financial proposal is that the towns of Dover and Westwood would each pay \$10 million to buy the conservation

restriction, but this is still under negotiation. It was decided that WEAC's campaign to support the conservation restriction will start in September at Westwood day. There was an idea to purchase and distribute lawn signs.

2. Maria reported that she wrote a letter addressed to the Select Board to support Hale. She collected 40 signatures of people she hiked with during the months of April and delivered in May. She received a written response from one of the Select Board members.
3. **Next Steps:** Maria will find out the cost of lawn signs.

CCE update and discussion of possible opt-up campaign

1. Maria reported the enrollment data as of March 1: 4787 customers are enrolled in the Westwood standard, 73 are enrolled in Westwood Basic, and 31 are enrolled in Westwood Plus. 472 customers opted out. She said that the new Eversource summer rate will come out soon and we should wait to see what it is before taking any actions. Everyone agreed.
2. **Next steps:** none

Electric school buses- initial discussion

1. Julie reported that there are grants to support the conversion the school buses to electric buses and Westwood school officials are pursuing this option. There are also incentives and tax breaks.
2. **Next steps:**
 - WEAC will support any initiative the schools take to replace the current diesel buses, which are polluting not only the ambient air, but also the cabin air.
 - Julie will distribute the 2023 Clean School Bus Grant Program
 - AMK will monitor what actions are taken at the state level.

Plastic bag ban- revisit

1. Steve asked whether WEAC should revisit the plastic ban. He noted that several stores have stopped using plastic bags and opted to use paper bags. Claire (member of the public) presented data on lifetime assessment of paper bags compared to plastic bags: paper bags have a much larger carbon footprint. No actions were proposed.
2. **Next steps:** none

Curb alerts for bulk collection days- initial discussion

1. Steve noted that a lot of the stuff disposed of on bulk collection days could be reused. In Medfield residents use a "curb alert" whereby people post what they have put outside and their address. It turns out that Westwood has a similar alert, but it is not publicized.
2. **Next steps:** Sue will contact DPW to see how easy it would be for them to create an on-line site that would list all the things people will be putting out.

Westwood Day planning

1. Kate reported that she asked the Recreation Department staff if there could be only one central site manned by WEAC members to collect all trash and recycling, but the staff did not give us the approval. Our back-up plan, if we decide to continue to support the recycling efforts, is to have four stations around the food court, each managed by a couple of WEAC members, to collect all the food-related compost, trash and recycling. We would need to find additional volunteers to help out. Sue noted that it is unlikely that Black Earth can send more people.

2. Next steps:

- Kate will continue to work with the Recreation Department staff to iron out all the details.
- Sue will contact Black Earth to negotiate cost and staffing.

Next meeting date: tentatively scheduled for June 15, 2023.