

Environment Committee Meeting, October 6, 2021 (via Zoom)

Present: Barton Rubenstein, David Kathan, Ralph Wooden, Andrew Bartley, Yogesh Rajkotia, Veronique Marier, Donna Harmon, Marnie Shaul, Kabir Kumar, and Robin Barr.

1. Minutes of the June 10 meeting were approved. Donna moved their approval, and Andrew seconded.
2. The Committee reviewed the shredding event. Donna and David summarized the event and stated that it was a wild success. In addition, DEP was very happy with the bulb exchange. The only negative was the traffic jam in the town parking lot, due to the combination of tennis court users, EVs, and cars coming to drop off paper for shredding.
3. Recycling. Barton led a long discussion about recycling options for the Town. Barton reported that Plastic Tree is still interested, especially about being the contractor for the Town's bulk pick-up. Committee members continued to express concerns that Plastic Tree does not have the equipment to do recycling, but are open to seeing a bid from the company. The Committee agreed that a process is needed to review recycling options, including multi-stream recycling. Veronique volunteered to lead this effort, but requested help. Part of this effort will be to get data from the Town on recycling and trash haulage and costs. A recommendation to the Committee needs to be prepared by December.
4. Barton reported that the Mayor signed the Sierra Club clean energy pledge.
5. Barton began a conversation about the possibility of banning the use of natural gas in the Town. After a discussion and disagreement about whether the Town has the capability to develop and enforce the ban, the discussion expanded to discuss other options to reduce carbon emissions and electrify homes in Town. Robin Barr suggested that the Town work with other municipalities to develop a uniform approach and ordinances. Kabir indicated that the Town Council is looking for great ideas that are backed by data and sound analysis. Ralph suggested that educational efforts would help develop support for action in the Town. Barton asked Ralph to develop some ideas. Yogesh suggested a survey and volunteered to develop one. Kabir indicated that a survey would be a great idea.
6. Barton reported that a proposal to accelerate the start of the gas leaf-blower ban to September was introduced at the last Town meeting. Robin indicated that it will be discussed at the next Council working session, and will likely pass at the next Town meeting.
7. Barton introduced an idea to meet more than bi-monthly. Veronique suggested 9 meetings a year, concentrated on the non-summer months. Barton indicated that next meeting will be on December 2. [After the meeting, a November 3 meeting was scheduled.]
8. Meeting adjourned at 9pm.