



Harvard Climate Initiative Committee

Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2023

The meeting convened at 7:35 pm on Zoom

Members: Present: Ellen Sachs Leicher, Sharon McCarthy, Deborah O'Rourke, Jaye Waldron, Lucy Wallace, Stacia Donahue, Christian Turnheim, Rich Marcello, Brian Smith

Other: Kara Minar

Guest: Bruce Ringwall, Walter Eriksen, Juno Construction

1 – 40B Ayer Rd. and Old Mill Rd.

Bruce Ringwall of GPR and Walter Eriksen of (?) presented a plan for a 40B housing development at the corner of Ayer Rd. and Old Mill Rd. The development will be composed of 24 condominium units with 6 being deed restricted in perpetuity as affordable. Each unit will have solar panels that will provide 65% of the electrical demand. No gas or oil heating will be used, and heat pumps will be installed as part of the development for heating and cooling. The entire development will be close to net zero. Each garage will have a charging station for an EV.

Several questions were asked by the Committee including how much clear cutting is planned to build the units to which the presenters responded that trees would need to be cleared around the units, around the stormwater basin, and for the septic system (leach field). Deborah asked whether more trees could be planted to help shade each unit and sequester carbon without blocking the solar panels. Sharon asked if an in-ground sprinkler system was planned (for lawns), and suggested if so, soil moisture reading devices should be installed to automatically control watering. Discussion also revolved around native and drought resistant plantings and the 40B developer was willing to accept recommendations from the Committee which would be forwarded to them.

Another member asked whether exterior lighting would be controlled to prevent glare, to which Walter responded that the development would be Dark Sky compliant.

The Committee stated that overall, the developers truly seemed to keep climate considerations in mind when developing this project and were quite pleased that this was done.

2 – Approval of Minutes

Lucy made 2 motions to approve the July 13 and July 27 minutes; Deborah seconded each motion. Both sets of minutes were approved unanimously.

3 – CAP Implementation Update

This item was passed over.

4- Events/Outreach Updates

The “Going Green” flags have been rolled out with about 40 being distributed across town to residents signing up on the website with affirmations of what they have been doing to reduce their environmental footprint. The group wants to expand awareness of the flags and what they represent. Ellen will be speaking at the NC4 meeting next week about the flags. Other outreach events include a town-wide mailer, an EV petting zoo at the September 16 Lions Fair (at which more volunteers are needed), and a shared booth at the Harvard Annual Flea Market with Arm-In-Arm. The booth will include local farm produce used in international food recipes for salsa/chutneys/pickles contest.

On October 14, there will be a Forest Health Walk event which will include stations along the walking route led by tour guides who will discuss the forest health – both good and bad. Volunteers are needed to assist the event which is from 1 -3. The planning also includes how to reach out to participants afterward to discuss coaching on home yards and gardens.

Bromfield students will be completing the native plants garden this fall at the school.

5. Liaison CAP Updates

Jaye stated that the Conservation Commission will be holding a Strategic Planning Session on August 22nd and will most likely be discussing the Natural Resources aspect of the CAP.

6. Other Items

The MVP Grant was signed on Monday. The Planning Board voted to contract with Bill Scanlon (former Town Planner) to work on the Open Space Residential Development Plan with the intent of amending the town bylaw. Updating the Wetlands Protection Bylaw will be worked on in the October/November timeframe. Additionally, the Erosion Bylaw will be amended to address tree clearing (Planning Board).

The grant requires a 25% match by the town and Ellen is developing a spreadsheet for volunteers to record their time on a monthly basis. Members should provide Ellen with the number of hours they are putting in on the Grant.

Stacy reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee is working on getting “free” shuttle service from Harvard to the Littleton Train Station. Although a central area in town for pickups has not been identified, the hope is to have a 6 month to 1 year trial period for the service. Sharon suggested posting a questionnaire on Next Door or elsewhere to gauge potential demand for the service.

The next HCIC meeting will be held on August 24. Please send Ellen any comments you may have on the proposed development at Ayer and Old Mill Rds.

Adjourned: 9:01 pm