Weston Sustainability Committee

Meeting Minutes: June 9, 2020 by Chris Jylkka

All present with the exception of David Ayer.

A meeting of the Weston Sustainability Committee was held utilizing Zoom video as duly posted and called to order at 7:04 PM. KW read Opening Meeting directive as per guidelines.

1. Resident Comments:
Leslie Glynn comments on her reading of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

   1. Page 106: She wanted to push for the positive effect trees bring to Weston because of some of the current street trees are not happy.
   2. Wanted the distinction of “Planning Board vs Town Planner”.
   3. Number of 40 Bs coming. She wanted a note in the report about a potentially new type of population in town.

2. Meeting Minutes of May 6th, 2020 passed by roll call vote.

3. Weston Power Choice update (KW): Weston Power Choice Aggregation Plan presentation coming up on Thursday, June 11. Event was/is publicized on town website, several town newsletters, and via article in Town Crier. Comment period on the draft plan will be open until July 3, and be publicized similarly. She stressed the necessity of the message that lower rates cannot be guaranteed, even though they have often been realized in other towns. Went over high-level timeline of program.

4. Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) action grant update (PB): Logo was displayed and community outreach process with KLA was described by PB. PB asks the group if there were any other stakeholder types that should be targeted in outreach. Leslie to ask Planning Board if they would like to be a focus group. PB then presented slides (see attached).

5. Energy Manager/Sustainability Coordinator position (KW). She states that current budget is going month-to-month, being pushed out in time because of COVID-19 situation. Support is there by Select Board and Town Manager, but uncertainty around overall budget and pandemic/economic crisis makes outlook uncertain.

6. MA Area Planning Council grant (Accelerated Climate Resiliency Grants Program) – near-future relevant grant opportunity. Grant submission window will open in July 2020, per MAPC. Members of Sustainability Committee did not suggest a project of our own, nor is there bandwidth besides ongoing work on CARP. Weston Plant Pollinator Alliance was contacted, who are not ready for a 2020 grants submission. Land Sake has expressed interest and commitment to doing the ‘heavy lifting’ for a grant submission of their own, with support from town/Sustainability Committee as necessary per grant guidelines.

7. Future action items discussion:
- Pollinator citizens group was discussed. PB would like an update from that group. KW stated that they have been invited prior, but will reach out again.
- Another topic was that an update of town water and energy use would be prudent and welcome in July. The pandemic provides a window of opportunity to gather types of data that are not always accessible, such as energy consumption in empty buildings. PB to coordinate with Facilities/PBC.

- PB brings up that when the municipal buildings/schools open up she would like to see that there is plan to initiate in the safest, most sustainable manner. RS and PB agree to coordinate communication with School committee on this topic.

8. **Weston Energy Analysis MAPC grant update (KW).** Should be giving us analysis on municipal energy use. Talk of MEI database/tool. MAPC is working with Charlie on this.

9. **Date of next Sustainability Committee** – July 8th, 2020, 7pm
Weston Climate Action & Resilience Plan Update
Projects Underway

- Branding
  - Messaging
  - Logo

- Plan Elements
  - Main categories
  - Guiding principles

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

- Community Engagement
  - Video
  - Plan for outreach & engagement
Plan Elements - *DRAFT*

- **Healthy Natural Ecosystems**
  - Tree canopy/Forest management
  - Water resource protection (water quality)
  - Biodiversity, pollinator protection, etc
  - Green/open space

- **Safe and Connected Mobility**
  - Vehicle efficiency and VMT reduction
  - Alt fuel vehicles
  - Transit
  - Land use decisions impacting transportation

- **Smart and Efficient Buildings**
  - Energy efficiency
  - On-site renewable energy
  - Green/sustainable/resilient buildings
  - Smart meters/equipment

- **Resilient Infrastructure and Services**
  - Resilient design/improvements for transportation infrastructure
  - Stormwater management/LID/green infrastructure
  - Clean, efficient, reliable energy systems (community/grid scale)

- **Sustainable Resource Consumption**
  - Waste reduction
  - Waste management and diversion
  - Water consumption/reduction/efficiency
  - Procurement practices/purchasing behavior (buy local, etc)
Guiding Principles - DRAFT

Guiding principles help set the foundation for how planning elements and their goals and actions are selected and developed, as well as set the tone for what is important to the community. Guiding principles are integrated into the overall framework to ensure that actions incorporated into the plan align with these priorities. Greenhouse gas emissions reduction and resilience are typical inclusions.

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions
- Educational or Community enhancement
- Good governance - financially sound for muni and local economy
- Regeneration
- Regional collaboration and resilience
OVERVIEW

Like most Massachusetts communities, Weston has seen an increase in the frequency and severity of drought, flooding, heat waves, and intense storms. After completing the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program in 2019, Weston is taking the next step towards meeting its climate goals with a climate action and resilience plan.

The Town has committed to an inclusive engagement process that will establish a vision for a resilient future and create an actionable plan for how to get there.

This strategy maps out how Weston, in partnership with Kim Lundgren Associates, Inc., will use various techniques to engage the entire community in the Weston Ahead planning process.

GOALS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Deliver an Equitable Process that reaches Weston residents of diverse backgrounds

Build Local Capacity by working with partner organizations, community leaders, and other citizens to better understand the impacts of climate change and the opportunities to reduce GHGs

Spark an Ongoing Climate Conversation by meeting people where they work, play and learn
ENGAGEMENT SCOPE AND TIMELINE

**Baseline Assessment and Goal Setting**
- Mar to Sept 2020
  - Background Assessment
  - Branding
  - Community Engagement Strategy
  - CRWG Meeting #1
  - Set Goals
  - Ongoing Social Media
  - Evaluation Process

**Action Identification**
- Mar to Sept 2020
  - Provide Sample Actions
  - Community Engagement Activities
  - CRWG Meeting #2
  - Refine Actions for Evaluation and Prioritization

**Action Prioritization**
- Sept to Dec 2020
  - CRWG Meeting #3
  - Community Engagement Activities
  - Prioritize and Evaluate Actions
  - Finalize Actions

**Implementation Strategy Development**
- Apr 2020 to Mar 2021
  - Blueprints
  - Climate Action Toolkit
  - Monitoring/Evaluation System and Reporting
  - Dashboard Development

**Final Plan Development**
- Feb to Apr 2021
  - CRWG Meeting #4
  - Public Comment Period for Plan
  - Finalize Plan
EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT

An equitable community engagement strategy ensures that the people most affected by an issue (in this case climate change)—especially those who have been historically left out of planning processes—have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Effective community engagement gives people more control over community decisions and helps drive positive outcomes for all residents.

The populations that we are most mindful of in this planning process include:
- Local businesses
- Seniors
- Those living at a low or fixed income
- Youth (Under 18)
- Young Families

To achieve equitable engagement, the Consultant Team will employ an assortment of tactics, such as interviews, lunch and learns, community workshops, attendance at existing community events, social media posts, and newsletter articles. Below is a public participation spectrum the team will use as a lens for these tactics, aiming for engagement across the entire spectrum.

**INFORM**
Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them with understanding the problem.

Examples:
- Fact sheets
- Websites
- Open houses

**CONSULT**
To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Examples:
- Public comment
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Public meetings

**INVOLVE**
To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Examples:
- Workshops
- Deliberative polling

**COLLABORATE**
To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Examples:
- Citizen advisory committees
- Participatory decision making

**EMPOWER**
To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Examples:
- Citizen juries
- Ballots
- Delegated decision making
Due to COVID-19, all public engagement will be held virtually until further notice.

**Community Events**
At least 2 community events will be organized. These events are intended to be interactive and educational and provide an opportunity for the community to offer feedback and ideas on which actions they believe will be most effective in moving the Town of Weston closer to its GHG reduction goals. The Town and Consultant Team will hold these events virtually, and will utilize strategies such as live streams, virtual focus groups, virtual roundtables, social media, and more. When possible, community events will be held in-person.

**Interviews**
The Town of Weston and Consultant Team will interview 8-10 key stakeholders such as municipal staff and community leaders in the business, non-profit, and institutional sectors. These interviews will help us fully understand the community’s climate impacts, vulnerabilities, and strengths.
**Public Engagement**

**Collaborate** Community Resiliency Working Group (CRWG)
The Town and Consultant Team will work closely with the Community Resiliency Working Group (CRWG) throughout the entire planning process to ensure alignment with current town initiatives and goals. The team will hold 4 meetings with the group, ranging from gathering feedback on proposed actions to collaboration on the final plan.

**Involve** Street Teams
A street team—made up of 4-6 interested youth (age 16-24) and/or seniors—will be created to deliver on-the-ground support for the project at local events and activities. The team will spark conversations on climate change, collect survey responses, and build momentum for Weston Ahead. Activities, such as chatting with parents at a sports game or connecting with people at the commuter rail stations, allow the team to meet people where they are. This in-person engagement strategy is dependent on the development of COVID-19 conditions.
Various tools will be leveraged throughout and beyond the planning process to supplement the public engagement activities and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the community.

**TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT**

**Surveys**
The Consultant Team will work with the Town to review results from previous survey efforts and identify ways to incorporate those findings into the plan. KLA will create two additional surveys, one to gather feedback on actions and one to refine the final list for the plan. Surveys will be distributed through email, social media, and at in-person events. MetroQuest, an online engagement tool, will be discussed as an option for one of the survey formats.

**Social Media, Blogs, and Newsletter Articles**
The KLA team will generate social media posts each week that highlight why Weston needs to take action on climate change and how community members can participate.

**Sustainability Dashboard**
KLA will develop a website to house information about *Weston Ahead* and how to get involved. Once the final plan is developed, the dashboard will track Weston’s progress toward meeting their plan goals and accomplishing actions.

The following communications materials will also help support engagement activities:
A project one-pager and fact sheets for each plan element will be developed to educate community members about the components of the project and about climate change and resilience.
EVALUATING ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that the planning process is in fact delivering an equitable process, building local capacity, and sparking an ongoing climate conversation, the Consultant Team will provide Weston with quarterly evaluations. These reports will include the demographics of survey respondents, milestone reports on survey results, and feedback from other engagement activities. Through this process, we will assess our progress in reaching the target populations and assess what (if any) adjustments need to be made to meet the engagement goals. Specific metrics of success can be found on the following page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Number*</th>
<th>Value Proposition</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Specific Tactic(s)</th>
<th>Metrics of Success</th>
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<tr>
<td>Local businesses</td>
<td>1523 (2012)</td>
<td>Being able to prepare and recover from the impacts of climate change will protect your bottom line, as will embracing energy efficiency and alternative energy sources.</td>
<td>• Weston &amp; Wayland Rotary Club</td>
<td>• Attendance at an event (online or in person)</td>
<td>1 Community event 20% of businesses reached</td>
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<td>Low-Income/Fixed-income</td>
<td>849 (2018)</td>
<td>Your experience making ends meet in difficult times gives insight into focusing on necessities during a challenging time. You may also have insights about how meaningful employment opportunities and public transportation options affect a community.</td>
<td>• Weston Council on Aging Food Pantry • Regional Housing Services Office • Brook School Apartments</td>
<td>• Pop-up at events or at local institutions (town dump, local businesses)</td>
<td>1 small targeted event or activity</td>
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<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2475 (2018)</td>
<td>You have a greater depth of experience and knowledge of how the climate has changed than other community members. You also may have more knowledge about the community and opportunities to prepare for climate change.</td>
<td>• Weston Council on Aging &amp; Senior Center • Friends of the Council on Aging • Merriam Village • Weston Public Library • Brook School Apartments</td>
<td>• Pop-up at events or local institutions (town dump, local businesses) • Preparedness training/drive • Interviews with key leaders at local senior housing complexes</td>
<td>1 small targeted event or activity 15% of survey respondents 65 or older</td>
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<td>Youth (Under 18)</td>
<td>3264 (2018)</td>
<td>Climate change will fall on your shoulders in the coming years. Your input is crucial as we shape the vision for Weston in the coming years. You will bring fresh perspectives with your young, creative minds to prepare for a changing climate.</td>
<td>• Schools • Weston Public Library • WHS Students for Environmental Action • WMS STEM group • Cambridge School of Weston sustainability group</td>
<td>• Presentation at related classes or clubs • Pop-up at events</td>
<td>2 small targeted events or activities</td>
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*Numbers based US Census data
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| Young Families (households with children under 18) | Not available | Your children will face the climate change challenges for their whole lives. Your connection to the younger generation, investment in our schools, and involvement in community events gives you valuable insight into pathways for progress. | • Weston Public Library/board  
• School PTOs  
• Weston Children’s Community Association  
• Weston Library | • Pop-up at events  
• Preparedness training/drive | 1 community event |
| Other | N/A | This planning process will be successful if everyone is involved. Even if you do not fall into one of the above groups, *Weston Ahead* will be strengthened by your voice and knowledge. | • Education: Regis College, Rivers School, Cambridge School of Weston  
• Faith organizations  
• Rotary Club of Weston and Wayland  
• Historical: Weston Historical Society, Friends of the Josiah Smith Tavern  
• Conservation: Weston Forest and Trails, Lands Sake Farm  
• Civic & community: Arts & Innovation Center, garden club, Friends of the Library, League of Women Voters  
• Sustainable Weston Action Group  
• Homeowners  
• Neighboring communities: Waltham, Concord, Wayland, Wellesley, Lincoln  
• Weston Emergency Reserve Corps  
• Town boards and committees | • Interviews  
• Inclusion in stakeholder group conversations  
• Survey feedback | Attendance at stakeholder meetings, # of organizations represented or involved in the CARP process |

*Numbers based US Census data*
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