



# Sustainability Oversight Committee

Secretary – Mike Guyon

Due to the public gathering restrictions and executive orders in place because of COVID-19, this Sustainability Oversight Committee meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom. Members of the public can participate during the open forum via Zoom. For Zoom meeting information, please reference the Town's Live Streaming webpage at:

<https://www.townofbrighton.org/499/Streaming-Video>

## **Sustainability Oversight Committee September 2, 2020**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Attendance:**

Erinn Ryen, Mitch Nellis, Nate Gibbs, Paul Tankel, Shubhangi Gandhi, Steve Kittelberger, Brian Lynch, Robin Wilt, Evert Garcia

#### **Open Forum:**

#### **Minutes:**

The August 2020 meeting minutes were approved with no revisions.

#### **Announcements:**

#### **New Business**

- **Tom Snyder-Director of Program and Conservation Action, Seneca Park Zoo Society**
  - Tom presented information to the SOC regarding the efforts by the Seneca Park Zoo Society to develop and conserve pollinator habitats in the area.
    - These efforts stem from the 2003 Butterfly Beltway project which started off as a way to create monarch butterfly gardens in the Rochester area.
    - In 2015, the mission of the project re-centered to the conservation of all native pollinators and insects, not just butterflies.
    - In 2017, the Zoo Society partnered with NYS DOT Region 4 to evaluate right of way mowing operations along a six-mile section of I-390. They found that the development of this area to a pollinator habitat resulted in a budget neutral operation. This area is now home to more than 18 species of naturally regenerating wildflowers and grasses providing food and habitat for pollinators. Bees and butterflies are now able to successfully complete their life cycle without being disrupted or damaged by mowing. Conversely, this resulted in reduced mowing efforts/requirements for this stretch of I-390. This innovative effort was the recipient a NYS DEC Environmental Excellence Award.
    - Tom indicated that in some instances, native grasses and wildflowers can even be used to mitigate brownfields, as the robust plants remove the heavy metals from the soils.
    - As part of their efforts, Tom indicated that the Zoo Society is working with corporations

such as GM, and colleges like RIT on various projects to bring back open areas with native/wild grasses and native species.

- Tom indicated that the Zoo Society can provide the Town with consultation for selection of appropriate areas and seed mixes. Additionally, Tom indicated that grants might be available for these types of projects for Towns. The Zoo Society would not charge for consultation services.
- The SOC inquired about the next steps in the process should the Town decide to pursue the installation of pollinator habitats throughout the Town.
- Tom indicated that the first step would be to identify areas that are considered high risk for Town staff, such as steep slopes, or other areas that are difficult to mow as these areas are the low hanging fruit to convert to pollinator habitats.
- Tom indicated that the Monarch has not currently been listed as an endangered species, however, final determination will be made by US Fish and Wildlife Service in December.
- The key to a successful installation of pollinator habitat is the educational component. Signs should be included with any installation of pollinator habitats to inform residents about their purpose.
- Town staff indicated that they have been informed by various department of transportation agencies indicating that regulation regarding municipal operations in the right of way with regards to the monarch butterfly is forthcoming.
- Town staff will work on developing a map/list of areas that are currently mowed so that the committee may review potential candidates for the installation of pollinator habitats.
- Robin inquired about potential issues with existing zoning codes which generally require residents to maintain well-kept lawns and the promotion of pollinator habitats at private residences. Tom is not aware of this issue coming up before but can see how this can be an issue in a more urban setting such as the Town of Brighton.
- A subset of the committee will setup a meeting with the Town's commissioner of public works and the parks department to develop a path forward for this initiative.
- **Tree Inventory Update and App Development**
  - Members of the Conservation Board and Town staff are working on the development of a GIS collection app which will be used to update the existing Tree Inventory for the Town.
  - George Smith and his team hope to start testing out the application this fall with completion of the inventory by the spring of 2021.

## **Old Business**

- **Virtual Meeting Protocols**
  - The committee discussed the processes and procedure which will guide all Zoom/virtual meetings. Specifically, the committee discussed the process for ending the meeting should unwanted or disruptive intrusion occur at a meeting. If this occurs, Town staff will end the meeting, without warning, and follow up with members of the committee later to explain why the virtual meeting was ended.
  - As part of the meeting protocols, members of the public who attend virtual SOC meetings will be asked to state their name and provide a brief introduction about themselves.
- **Benchmarking and Annual Report**
  - Town staff will start working on the Benchmarking Report and Annual Report that are usually developed by the SOC every year.
  - The Annual Report is generally developed to summarize the committee's activities and work for the previous year. Meanwhile, the Benchmarking Report is developed to report the energy consumption of covered municipal buildings.
  - Drafts of the reports will be shared with the committee via email for review and comment when

available.

- **Climate Action Plan (CAP) Grant-Update**
  - The Town of Brighton was selected to receive a CSC grant in the amount of \$40,000 to fund the Climate Action Plan.
  - Town staff has completed all outstanding items and questions to finalize the Grant Work Plan and Grant Budget. The grant documents are currently under review by the Contract Manger.
- **Community Choice Aggregation-Update**
  - Initial bids received for a green energy service provider did not meet the pricing requirements outlined in the bid documents. The various municipalities which make up the Monroe Community Power CCA will revise the pricing requirements to allow for a fairer pricing benchmark to the bidders. The updated requirement will compare the bid pricing to the lowest available consumer rates on 100% renewable energy.
  - It is anticipated that a bidder will be selected subsequent to the revisions of the pricing benchmark requirements and re-issuance of bids.
- **Development Project Updates**
  - Updates to development projects within the Town were briefly discussed.

**Adjournment**

**Next Meeting:**

- The next meeting is scheduled for **October 7, 2020**, at 7:00 PM via Zoom.