

Sustainable Frenchtown

June 21, 2016

7:00 - 8:30 PM

In attendance:

Holly Low, Co-Chair

Margaret Waldock, Co-Chair

Laura Pointon

Lacey Phelps

Leigh Marino

Mike Reino

Jim Meade

Bill O'Brien

Nathan Charron

Joel Boriek

Tom Woodruff

7:00 Meeting called to order

Introductions-- everyone asked to introduce themselves and share what interests them about participating in SF, any involvement they had in past Green Team activities

--Leigh Marino, helped start and implement the new school garden. Knew about the green team in the past but not involved

--Laura Pointon, used to live in Frenchtown, now lives in Flemington, works in Frenchtown and feels strong connection to the community; Was active member of the green team, helped with website and facebook page-- still administrator of those sites, and remarked that they still get "likes", despite having no recent activity (!). Green Team is also a page on the Borough website, Rivernet manages the site, but Laura is an administrator.

--Margaret Waldock, Environmental Commission, has wanted to engage on sustainability initiatives in the past but was not involved in Green Team, former Planning Board member, works for a charitable foundation, and interested in recertification as well as long term initiatives to advance sustainability

--Nathan Charon -- works for HART (Hunterdon Area Rural Transit), supports all county green teams, helps them navigate through the program, happy to see Frenchtown reinvigorate the effort

--Jim Meade -- member of the Environmental Commission, likes to work outside, build things, parks and green space a priority for him

--Joel Boriek -- Chair of the Environmental Commission, retired surveyor, enviro wetlands delineator, interested in trail work, outside work, photography, knows plants, etc. was not involved with the past green team

-- Bill O'Brien -- Environmental Commission, professionally an environmental scientist

--Mike Reino -- Frenchtown's DPW superintendent, wants to help facilitate green team actions; can help us gather data and understanding of expenses and how to economize, was

involved in recycling as a business, has a financial understanding of recycling; current Mayor of Lebanon Borough (Fun fact: Frenchtown and Lebanon lead county as tonnage recycled); worked with Jerry St. Onge on previous Borough Council/Green Team recycling program improvements

--Holly Low, Environmental Commission; moved to Frenchtown with her family 6 years ago, background in non-profit fundraising; recruited by Sarah Rupert to assist with planning for green fair, co-chaired. Grant writing experience.

--Lacy Phelps: passionate about Frenchtown and sustainability, wants to start a local business, background in business and finance. Financial advisory services

--Tom Woodruff: Environmental Commission longest Frenchtownian on the committee (moved here in 1982), "nuts and bolts kind of guy",

Holly then spoke about the origins of Sustainable Frenchtown, the recently passed Borough Council resolution re-constituting the "green team" as a subcommittee of the Environmental Commission and renamed, Sustainable Frenchtown.

Margaret and Holly led group through brief brainstorming exercise of the "ground rules" as to how we engage as members of SF. We agreed this would be an evolving list that we would revisit as needed, and want to be up front and clear about expectations and core values of the group. List of what we value include:

--Punctuality and keep to schedule

-- Stick to the meeting agenda, get to the point, respect each other's time

--Preparation

--NO DRAMA

--Inclusion, respect, gratitude, accountability

--Establish clear priorities

--Find and follow your passion to participate

Margaret then led group through a description of the Sustainable Jersey program, past Frenchtown participation/certification, and update as to current bronze level certification status.

Group also discussed the benefits of certification:

--Sustainability, yay!

--Grant opportunities

--Small scale of our town means small acts/investments can yield big results

-- Sustainable Jersey provides framework to which all borough activities/decisions can be tied to yield triple bottom line benefits to people, economy, and environment

Holly and Margaret shared the status of our pending application for recertification, and that we agreed to document actions we deemed "complete" by the program deadlines -- September 11 early deadline for recognition at annual meeting, or November 20, last deadline for recertification decision in 2016. Worst case scenario also discussed, that if we cannot meet these deadlines, we will be well positioned for recertification in 2017. We start the process with

50 points for our energy audit, but need to get approved for additional 100 points for recertification. Holly and Margaret used the recertification report provided by SJ that identified the best course forward, and committed to actions that if sufficiently documented to meet SJ standards could earn us an additional 135 points.

Group then discussed the action items we committed to completing this year, and individuals agreed to take the lead on actions as follows:

Creative Team: Leigh Marino -- will lead creation of creativity team, and will pursue a combining with the Hunterdon County HUB creativity committee, led by Val Sivilli, so we may not need to create a whole separate creative team. Leigh will reach out to Val as a first step. Possible that first act of creative team might be to create a logo/brand for Sustainable Frenchtown. ArtYard could be potential partner in Creative Team.

Community/School Garden: Leigh Marino will provide documentation for the recently constructed school garden, including any meeting minutes from school board, descriptive write ups of goals and implementation process, and photos. Holly and Margaret will work with John Mizin to update info in application regarding the community garden.

Waste: Mike Reino-- committed to help with promoting **recycling**, specifically clarifying and communicating rules for broader participation, he will work with Laura Pointon on how best to communicate this through website and Facebook pages. Mike will also look into logistics for **community paper shredding day**, securing a site and a contractor, the aim would be to do this as part of Riverfest. (Maybe get Hardware store Mike to coordinate with Mike R on this?)

Mike asked if **new DPW building and sewer plant in the energy audit**? Both these buildings have solar panels. Could earn us 10-40 points? We need to look at this longer term to see if we can get points. Mike is wondering if this is going back into the grid and what the agreement is with the Borough and the power company. Mike's phone number 908-246-8651.

Complete Streets: Tom Woodruff agreed to take lead on gathering info and documentation on status of Frenchtown borough council implementation of our complete streets policy, Nathan Charron will send along the borough council resolution. Tom will work with Bill Sullivan on this.

Safe Routes to School: Nathan will take lead on this action, upload documentation onto SJ portal

Wildlife Action Plan pledge: Joel Boriek will lead effort to get borough council to adopt a resolution in support of this

Community Tree plan -- Jim Meade will take lead and work with Shade Tree Commission

Smoke Free Community -- Lacey will take this on.

Joel will take **Environmental Commission and Site Plan Review**.

Bill will take **Prescription Drug Safety**.

Laura Pointon -- will be lead and primary contact for all communications of SF activities and educational outreach, through the S Facebook Page and SF page on the Borough website. We agreed that she should go ahead and change name from Green Team to Sustainable Frenchtown on communication sites.

Group also agreed that individuals and teams will work together to complete actions and documentation of actions, everyone that is taking the lead on an action will be added as contributors to the Sustainable Jersey portal for Sustainable Frenchtown application to upload documentation, and that Holly and Margaret will be final arbiters/editors of materials before being made "public" on any of our communication sites, or prior to submission to Sustainable Jersey for consideration.

And everyone felt that Riverfest presented a good opportunity to engage and educate the public as to SF activities, we will discuss what we might provide at a booth

We discussed dates to track and developing a calendar:

- Hunterdon HUB meetings -- Nathan will email next meeting date/roughly quarterly
- Borough Council
- Shade Tree commission
- School Board

We then engaged in some brainstorming as to long term actions to pursue, the things that are our passion, once we get beyond initial recertification.

--onsite solar, is there opportunity for sustainable jersey credit for our current DPW building solar array?

Mike R -- get the recycling yard set up properly, purchase of barricades to divide and sort, -- to promote more recycling and efficient resource recovery

No more plastic bags! -- or at least recycle at the IGA in the short term, discount if you bring your own bag, etc. -- approach IGA, or work with them

More bike racks in town, promote bicycles as fuel efficient, healthy, cleaner, community friendly transportation

Eliminating pesticides on lawns, education around healthy lawns

Reduce salt for snow and ice -- brine is more efficient and effective, can we finance equipment?

Electric car charger station

Alternative forms of energy, local utility, worker owned cooperative

Disseminate information about setting up alternative energy supply through JCPL

Erosion along the river front, river bank stabilization-- education about long term erosion and change that will come

Green business recognition, promotion and support of strong local economy, health and wellness

Resource exchange -- building materials, art supplies, fabrics, etc. salvage to support the creative community, encourage historic building rehabilitation and materials reuse

Quick discussion as to who is missing from the effort?

--Hardware store Mike

--Erik Fiorito

--Melissa Olson -- business owner

Next Steps:

Holly and Margaret will send a recap email following meeting to include contact list with email addresses, confirmation of actions everyone agreed to lead, and instructions to access the Sustainable Frenchtown application portal on the Sustainable Jersey website. Will also forward Leigh Marino, Val Sivili's email address.