

Sustainable Sharon Coalition
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 7, 2023, 7:00 PM
Held in-person at Moose Hill Audubon Sanctuary

Members in attendance: Marlene Arnold, Ellen Bordman, Debbie Choudhury, Molli Denrich, Ralph Halpern, Kevin Izzo, Judy Karlin, Rory McGregor, Colleen Mirabello, Kathi Mirza, Justin Paik, CP Pototsky, Cheryl Schnitzer, David Slater, Debbie Tatro

Guests: Amber Marcus-Blank

1. Cheryl welcomed everyone and we recited the mission statement together. *We inspire, educate, connect, and catalyze our community to protect the planet.* She acknowledged SSC's 10th anniversary and shared our citations from Senator Feeney and Representative Ted Philips.
2. [Minutes](#) from the last Annual Meeting held on June 1, 2022 were accepted.
3. Motion to approve new 2023-24 SSC Board of Directors as approved by the Board.

President: Cheryl Schnitzer
Vice President: Ellen Bordman
Treasurer: David Slater
Secretary/Clerk: Marlene Arnold
Debbie Choudhury
Molli Denrich
Paul Lauenstein
Guoqiang Li
Mike Littman
Colleen Mirabello
Kathi Mirza
CP Pototsky
Helen Poynton
Simone Tamkin
Debbie Tatro

Motion passed unanimously. Thank you to the outgoing SSC Board members.

4. Motion to ratify the change to the bylaws (Section 6.5 Disbursal of Funds) as follows:
The last sentence in the section was changed from *“Both the president and treasurer may disburse up to \$100 without the need for a board vote”* to *“The Board shall vote at the*

first meeting of the fiscal year to set a maximum amount that the treasurer or president may disburse at their discretion, without the need for a further board vote. The Board may vote to change the amount at any time.”

The motion passed unanimously.

5. The High School Senior Sustainability Award was presented to Amber Marcus-Blank for her work in the High School Environmental club and Sunrise movement.
6. Several Special Interest Groups reported on activity this year and plans for next year.
 - a. Green Day – Marlene presented for Xander (see attached report)
 - b. Energy - Ralph presented (see attached report)
 - c. Transportation - Cheryl presented for Mike (see attached report)
 - d. Water/Lake Health - Debbie presented 3 main challenges of Lake Health and what Lake Management committee was doing to address:
 - i. invasive weeds (e.g. from dumping aquarium) trying to fix mechanically rather than through chemicals “DASH”
 - ii. ecoli – could be from the ducks – need to close beach if too high (Community Center will be closed this summer)
 - iii. cyano bacteria – problem related to climate change; have always been around but now starting to bloom – easily adapt to warm temperatures
 1. focusing on phosphorus; might do an alum treatment
 2. may team with Everwood Day Camp to do a low dose alum treatment
 3. Need to educate – non-phosphorus fertilizers; keep your septic maintained
 - iv. Rory commented how Neponset River Watershed Association has been working as well regarding educating on effects of phosphorus in the water
 - e. Litter cleanup / invasive species - Rory talked about how Japanese knotweed was taking over the side of the roads – growing along the rec center beach. Very hard to get rid of: it requires use of chemicals. Best to clip it in fall and then dab it with round-up. There will be a traditional cleanup Sat 6/10 – at Memorial Park Beach. Discussion on using goats to eat the invasives.
 - f. Youth/Tree planting - CP reviewed May 20th event where 3 trees were planted and awarded Kurt Burman the SSC sustainability award.
 - g. Zero Waste - Kathi reported on:
 - i. Skip the Stuff campaign – worked with food establishments to avoid automatically giving out straws/plastic utensils

- ii. Being mindful of containers and which types can be recyclable. And try to go to reusables. Presented to Board of Health to allow customers to bring in their own food containers (which is a big deal!)
- iii. Trash – last night’s Select Board meeting didn’t go as well as we would have liked, and the recommendations were not adopted. Very disappointed.

7. Getting Involved - Cheryl asked who would like to get in which interest group

- Green day - Debbie C, Dave, Cheryl, Ralph, Ellen, Marlene, CP
- Energy – Ralph, Kevin, Colleen, Justin
- Transportation – no one added
- Water --Debbie, Judy
- Invasive Plants – Rory, Debbie C., Debbie T,
- Youth – CP
- Zero Waste – Cheryl, Dave, Judy, Kathi, CP
- SSC Kids – will probably be dormant this year
- Green Day – need a leader, but others will probably stay involved
- Photographer – CP will supply youth names
- Lynn Wolburst – remains vacant for now
- HS Award - remains vacant for now

8. Planning for 2023-2024 - New SSC word of the year and brainstorming program ideas and speakers was pushed to the next meeting.

9. Adjourn

GREEN DAY REPORT

Overall, we had a great Sharon Green Day. It was our first since 2019, and it was special this year because we were also celebrating our 10th anniversary.

Logistical challenges: It was held in the new HS which was a new venue for us (weird shaped room); there was a lot of construction going on in the parking lots; it was held the same day as Emma's Run (adjacent major town event). All seemed to work out.

Sharon's first "Drop & Swap": We collaborated with Eve Carey, our recycling coordinator, who ran the Drop & Swap and it was held in the main hallway on the way into Green Day. It helped bring people into the HS, and many shoppers wandered down as a result, but many didn't – so next year we definitely want to find ways to entice those shoppers to visit the Green Day exhibition area.

30 vendors and exhibitors: The tables were organized by Interest Group so people could easily find what they needed, and similar vendors could network with each other.

EV Showcase & Food trucks: We also had 10 electric cars participate in an EV showcase outside, and we had 3 food trucks selling food and ice cream.

Sponsors: This year was the first time we asked for **Green Day sponsorships**, and NEC Solar graciously agreed to sponsor. They commented that it was their best Green Day yet – less people but more quality discussions. We received positive feedback from other vendors as well.

Finances: We earned \$3,700 which we're hoping will grow to \$4,000 once the water bottles are sold out. In addition to NEC Solar's \$1500 sponsorship, we applied for and received a \$400 grant from Sharon Mass Cultural Council, and Alicia raised an additional \$900 for us by organizing a 5K Run at Borderland held just ahead of Green Day.

Our expenses came to about \$2,000, which included the cost of signage, water bottles, custodian and police detail, table/chair rental. So overall **we netted over \$1600** in revenue which we're hoping will climb further as we sell more water bottles.

Plans for next year:

- Try to schedule next year's event to avoid other large town events (such as Emma's Run, or the Historical Society marketplace) but still plan to hold it in April/May timeframe
- Discuss with the town how we might make it more of a "Town" -wide event, that the town helps promote and perhaps financially support
- Have a more focused effort on soliciting sponsorships from our local businesses
- Find some creative ways to boost attendance as well as capture attendance numbers at the event. Also how to engage more with the attendees regarding joining or connecting with

SSC without being too invasive.

- Look for more direct tie-ins with school classes and community groups (e.g. 6th grade, Girl Scouts and Robotics tables were particularly enthusiastic and drew friends and family attendees)

Xander did an amazing job leading the event this year, but is stepping down. If anyone would like to get involved, please let me know.

ENERGY REPORT

The Sustainable Sharon Coalition Energy Interest Group (EIG) continues its three-tier agenda. (1) Resident-directed focus to educate and motivate homeowners and renters to reduce their carbon footprint. (2) Work with the town and the Energy Advisory Committee on projects and plans for energy efficiency and climate resilience. (3) Inform residents about climate concerns and advocacy opportunities at the state and national levels. Here are some goals and activities for each tier.

Activities directed at residents and homeowners/renters

- SSC Website: Provide information and resources. See the section under tab “Resources” devoted to “Energy & Renewables.” Add additional topics for their own pages, e.g., Electric Vehicles, Induction Cooking, etc.
- Collect and post neighbor-to-neighbor comments and suggestions: helpful hints as well as warnings, impacts of projects on costs and comfort, advice about steps and process, recommended organizations and websites, etc. Post these under “Resources” or as Blogposts.
- Partnerships with contractors and vendors. See on website “Initiatives/Energy & Renewables.” Add others to those currently listed. Work with them on outreach to residents.
- Publicize Town’s programs and partners, presented online at [Energy Advisory Committee](#). Includes Mass Save Community First Partnership, Net Zero Campaign, and Sharon Power Choice.
- SSC programs for the community: Forums/Webinars with presentations and Q&A on topics of interest. Archived as videos on SSC’s [YouTube page](#).
- Options: (a) Heat-Pump Coaching program / citizen Energy Advocates ([see info](#)) (b) Online platform for residents to learn and implement solutions ([MassEnergize](#)). Note: These activities require more volunteers and more commitment.
- Exhibit at Green Day 2024, and other community-wide events.

Collaboration with the Town and the Energy Advisory Committee (EAC)

- Background: The previous Energy Manager for Sharon & Walpole & Norwood has resigned. A new Energy Manager for Sharon & Walpole, Jay Tobin, has just begun. ... Also, the Select Board has approved development of a Climate and Energy Plan for Sharon. Now Sharon is considering a joint Plan with Canton and Stoughton, an approach that some agencies support. ... Also, a new contract for Sharon Power Choice will start in January 2024.
- Activities for SSC and EIG: Attend meetings of the EAC. ... Participate in developing a Climate and Energy Plan. ... Support and give comment on projects like solar canopies at the schools. ... Publicize and promote Sharon Power Choice as a positive option for

residents.

- Eversource: Proposal for “Sharon Gate to Brockton 265# Line Reliability project.” \$90M, 2024-2026. 20-mile gas pipeline. Waiting for next step, likely to be public meetings for Eversource to make their case. (Ralph has information about the proposal.)

Climate concerns and advocacy opportunities beyond Sharon

- SSC Website: Add content about climate, and resources/websites for interested readers.
- Advocacy opportunities: Share information and alerts from local and national organizations; legislative lobbying activities, petitions, rallies, etc. Consider campaigns where SSC might endorse a position (as well as individual members/residents).

TRANSPORTATION REPORT

What we have done:

- 1) South Main Street Bike Lanes: project was approved at last night's select board meeting. Bike lanes will be painted along South Main Street between Chestnut Street and Laurel Way sometime this summer or fall.
- 2) E-bike grant: our group didn't play too significant of a role but we did support the Transportation Advisory Board with a letter about the placement of the e-bike dock at the train station. No real outcome yet but will continue to monitor.

What we want to do:

Education: Do a blog post or two on the website highlighting transportation projects. Start with a project in Stoughton along Central Street where they converted a sidewalk into a shared use path (or side path) that is wider, paved with asphalt, and allows for bicycling. Interested in another educational post about roundabouts.

Community Led Road Safety Audit (RSA): an RSA is a formal study at a high crash location led by MassDOT. This effort would be hosted by the transportation group and we would invite town staff, emergency responders, possibly MassDOT safety experts, and local residents. We would also produce a report highlighting existing safety concerns and recommendations for improvement categories ranked by timeframe (short/medium/long) and cost (low/medium/high). First one would take place at the rotary near the lake (Massapoag Ave/Pond) or Ames/Pond, possibly both since they are close by. We are open to other suggestions and can do one or two per year.