Sustainability Committee

Regular Meeting Agenda

Thursday, December 14, 2023
5:30pm at the Conference Room in Boone's Planning and Inspections Office
At 680 W King St, Boone or via Webex

The Town of Boone Sustainability Committee will meet on Wednesday, February 7th, 2024 at 5:30pm. This meeting will be held in a hybrid fashion. In-person attendees will meet in the conference room in Boone's Planning and Inspections office, located at 680 W. King St, Boone. Virtual attendees will use WebEx. For information on how to watch, listen, and/or participate in the meeting, please see the WebEx Conferencing information at the end of this agenda.

The following items will be on the agenda:

I. **Call to Order**
II. **Introduction of new council liaison and members**
III. **Adoption of Agenda**
IV. **Approval of December 14th, 2023 Sustainability Committee Minutes**
V. **Old Business**
    A. **Earth Third Friday and Film Fest**
    B. **CCAP Action Matrix**
VI. **New Business**
    A. **Townwide Invasive Species inventory and management plan**
    B. **Upper Hardin Creek grant application**
VII. **Other Matters**
VIII. **Public Comment**
IX. **Adjournment**

Individuals who wish to participate may do so through Webex, the video conferencing software, either online (by computer or smartphone) or by telephone. To do so, please email George Santucci, Sustainability and Special Projects Manager at george.santucci@townofboone.net and you will be provided with an email invitation to the meeting. All requests for participation must be completed by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

Town of Boone
Sustainability Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 14th, 2023
5:30 P.M.

Members Present: Chair Brian Crutchfield, Member Ryan Robinson, Member Michael Weiss, and Member Bhuwan Thapa

Members Absent: Vice Chair Jennifer Maxwell, Member Evan Flaherty, Member Joan Brook, and Member Joey Crews

Staff Present: George Santucci, Sustainability and Special Projects Manager, Brandon Wise Environmental Specialist, and Laney Wise, Administrative Support Specialist/Communications/Interim Grants Coordinator

Council Liaison: Mayor Pro Tem Dalton George

Others Present: Eric Woolridge, Becca Nenow, and Luke Barber

Call To Order:

Chair Crutchfield called the meeting to order at 5:34pm. Chair Crutchfield then asked all who were present to introduce themselves as Member Weiss is a new member. Member Weiss introduced himself, and explained that he has worked within the field of environmental justice policy in Vermont and is currently working in conservation finance. Mr. Wise introduced himself as the Environmental Specialist for the Town of Boone. Mrs. Wise introduced herself as the administrative support for the sustainable initiatives in the Town of Boone. Chair Crutchfield introduced himself, and explained that he worked with Blue Ridge Energy to help with sustainable initiatives for 25 years before retiring. Mayor Pro Tem George introduced himself as the council liaison for the Sustainability Committee. Member Robinson introduced himself, and explained that he is the Community Relations/Corporate Responsibility staff member for Mast General Store. Mr. Santucci introduced himself as the Sustainability and Special Projects Manager for the Town of Boone. Member Thapa introduced himself, and explained that he worked within the Department of Geography and Planning for Appalachian State University, and that his field of focus is in climate resilience. With no further introductions, Chair Crutchfield moved to adopt the agenda as presented.

Adoption of Agenda:

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The Sustainability Committee unanimously adopted the agenda as presented.

Approval of October 12th, 2023 Sustainability Committee Minutes:

Chair Crutchfield presented a motion to approve the October 12th, 2023 Sustainability Committee minutes as presented. Upon the motion of Chair Crutchfield, seconded by member Robinson, the October 12th Sustainability Committee minutes were approved unanimously.

Requested Appearance: Winkler Creek Park - Eric Woolridge, Destination By Design:

Chair Crutchfield introduced Mr. Woolridge, and explained that Mr. Woolridge would be giving a presentation to the Committee in regards to the proposed Winklers Creek Bike Park project. Mr. Woolridge thanked the Committee for allowing him to come and present. Member Robinson asked if the funding for this study was given to the Destination by Design firm through the Town of Boone or through the Boone Tourism Development Association (TDA). Chair Crutchfield noted that the study was funded by the Boone TDA. Mr. Woolridge explained that the Boone Town Council had approved a resolution of support for Destination by Design so that they could publish a study in which they could then present to the Boone Town Council a completed design. He went on to say that he wanted to present to the Sustainability Committee to learn more about what they felt was important at the proposed bike park, as they were appointed by the Boone Town Council as stewards of sustainability for the Town of Boone. With no further questions, Mr. Woolridge gave the presentation.

The full presentation is found on packet pages 5 through 26 within the December 14th, 2023 Sustainability Committee meeting packet.

After the presentation, Mr. Wise explained that while the Winklers Creek reservoir was not in the Town of Boone limits, he had discussed with Dr. Carrie Caviness, the environmental consulted for the proposed project, the ordinance in which this project would follow. As it is a Town of Boone property, Destination by Design and Dr. Caviness agreed to follow the Town of Boone's ordinance as it is more restrictive in regards to environmental impact and it would meet the standards set forth in Watauga County's ordinance. Member Robinson asked about the restricted area presented on the proposed project's map, and Mr. Wise and Mr. Woolridge explained that the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Environmental Quality would not allow any development to take place within that area as it is a protected high hazard dam that impounds water for the Town of Boone's water source. Mr. Woolridge then explained that the project would cost approximately $9 million to complete, however, as the Town of Boone already owns the land, the cost for the project dropped significantly to approximately $3.4 million. Mr. Woolridge noted that this project could be used as an example of recreation and environmental stewardship joining together in order to meet the ultimate goal of conserving the land. Chair Crutchfield noted that with the completed Greg Young Water Intake project located in the Todd community, this intake is now the back-up for the back-up for water in the Town of Boone. Mr. Wise and Mr. Santucci echoed that sentiment. Mr. Woolridge noted that there are three areas of concern in which the community has voiced. Those areas are as follows: what is the cost-benefit for the environmental impact of this project, what impacts will there be in regards to traffic in this area, and what are the safety concerns for the location of the proposed parking area. Member Weiss asked if there was any plan in place for management of the areas in the property outside of the trails. Mr. Woolridge explained that, like any other trail system, the purpose of the trails was to keep individuals on the trail and away from the remainder of the property. Member Robinson noted that as of right now, with the study presented, he felt that there was very little concern to the community in regards to impacting the water found within the reservoir. He went on to agree with Mr. Woolridge in regards to his sentiments of recreation and environmental stewardship joining

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together for the ultimate goal of conservation. Member Robinson then explained that he felt the proposed ADA loop was necessary in order to allow the property to be accessible for all, and that he felt that the property could be an excellent educational resource for the children of Watauga County. Mr. Santucci asked the Committee if they would endorse an addition to the deed which would permanently protect the land for conservation use. Mr. Woolridge noted that this endorsement would need to be done after the construction of the trails, as the ADA loop and other aspects of the proposed project would need to be constructed. Ms. Nenow asked Mr. Woolridge when the area was last logged, and if protecting the old growth on the property was discussed. Mr. Wise explained that after talking with Dr. Caviness, he could reasonably assume that based on the current growth the area was last logged in the 1950s. Ms. Nenow then asked if the proposed trails could be constructed farther away from the neighborhoods already developed. Mr. Woolridge explained that based on the topography of the property, they could possibly move the trails slightly, however, not by much. Mr. Woolridge then explained that he would love to see a group formed, with the agreement from the Boone Town Council, that would be focused on trails and parks in Watauga County. Ms. Nenow then asked Mr. Woolridge if the parking lot could be reduced. Mr. Woolridge said that it could. Ms. Nenow then explained that by reducing parking, it would reduce the cost of a retaining wall and may reduce the concerns that the Winklers Creek community has regarding the traffic going to the proposed project. Discussion was had regarding the size of the parking lot at the Clawson-Burnley park on the Boone Greenway Trail. Mr. Woolridge noted that they could reduce the parking, however, that thoughts of the future were needed. He explained that it was easier to add more parking at the beginning of the project then to add more parking 20 years later. Mr. Santucci noted that some of the concerns had by the public were that individuals would park on the side of the road, and Member Robinson added that on Flannery Fork Road, there is a problem of individuals parking on the side of the road. He explained that this parking area could alleviate the problems on Flannery Fork Road as well. Member Robinson also noted that this property could help connect the national park, which is important. He also explained that he has seen property values increase when a property is next to protected land, not decrease as some residents of the area have voiced. Mr. Wise explained that he grew up in an area in which bike trails and walking trails surrounded the area's main water intake, and that no major impact to the waterquality was reported. Discussion was had regarding the impact to the buffer of the streams and reservoir and how the proposed project would rarely impact the buffers. Mr. Wise noted that if this project were to follow the Town of Boone's ordinance, very little impact would be had in regards to the old growth trees found on the property. Member Thapa added that from the presentation, he sees no major concerns. Mr. Woolridge noted that he would like this to be a community project, and that he would like to gain support for this project from the Sustainability Committee. Mr. Woolridge noted that through the grant sources presented in the presentation, the proposed project could be funded by up to $1 million in grants, with a $200,000 match. He went on to say that this project would most likely need community support through private donors, similar to the Boone Skatepark. Chair Crutchfield noted that as a member of the Boone TDA, one issue in regards to funding the project is that there are multiple projects in need of funding currently. Mayor Pro Tem George agreed with Mr. Woolridge. However, he noted that the Town of Boone did not have much in regards to discretionary funds in order to fully support this project financially, as one of the main projects that the Town must fund is to find a new area for the Public Works Department. He went on to explain that, as an elected official for the Town of Boone, he would like to see the Committee produce something more in-depth than a resolution of support. Mr. Woolridge noted that he would be happy to help the Committee craft something along these lines. Mr. Santucci added that it was possible for the Committee to recommend having 1 or 2 committee members meet with Mr. Woolridge before the February Sustainability Committee meeting to help craft a document. Member Robinson noted that he would like the document to focus on water, carbon reduction, and waste, as those are three main areas of concern noted in the draft Boone Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP). Member Robinson asked Mr. Woolridge if he had thought about adding electric vehicle charging stations to the parking lot of the proposed project. Mr. Woolridge explained that he was happy to look into it. Mayor Pro Tem George noted that if this land was not used for trails, it would also not be used for development and that he would like to be sure that

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members of the community would not buy into that narrative. Mr. Wise agreed, and added that due to state and federal regulations, a big portion of the land would need to remain Town owned as it is a Town of Boone water reservoir. Chair Crutchfield reintroduced the topic of assigning committee members to create a document of support for the project. Member Weiss noted that 2 committee members should be adequate to draft a document. Chair Crutchfield added that he would like Mr. Santucci and Mr. Wise to be present to help with terminology. Chair Crutchfield noted that he would like himself, Member Weiss, and Member Robinson to meeting with Mr. Santucci and Mr. Wise to draft the document in early January 2024. Mayor Pro Tem George noted that he would like the document to be reflective of the narrative already out in the public, and that he would like the document to answer those concerns. Member Robinson noted that the document would need to be drafted using the lens of sustainability. Mr. Santucci noted that the document could be presented to the Committee during the February meeting, as the next meeting would be on the Wednesday before the first February Boone Town Council meeting if the updated Sustainability Committee charter was approved by the Boone Town Council in January. Mr. Barber asked if there was a timeline published that shows the approximate time of completion of the project. Mr. Woolridge said that until further direction is given by the Boone Town Council, there is not a timeline created. With no further questions, Mr. Woolridge thanked the Committee for their time and ended his requested appearance. Chair Crutchfield then moved to the next item.

Old Business: Review Formatted Draft Community Climate Action Plan:

Chair Crutchfield introduced the next item on the agenda, and asked Mr. Santucci if there were any major changes to the Boone CCAP which needed review. Mr. Santucci noted that, outside of beautifying the plan, there were no major changes. He then briefly reviewed the Boone CCAP. He noted that he had a meeting with ICLEI, the consulting firm which produced the data found in the Boone CCAP, to obtain data for some of the charts in order for Mrs. Wise to change the colors to match the rest of the plan. Furthermore, he added that he and Mrs. Wise were working on a glossary of terms to add to the in of the plan.

The full draft Boone CCAP is found on packet pages 37 through 81 within the December 14th, 2023 Sustainability Committee meeting packet.

Mr. Santucci noted that by approving this plan, the Committee would be approving the updated climate goals for the Town of Boone. He explained that the previous goals were not based on exact data, and that the new goals are based upon the data produced by ICLEI. Mr. Santucci read the new goals as follows: Municipal Operations. Carbon Neutrality by 2030, Community-Wide. 52% Reduction Below 2020 Levels by 2030, and Community-Wide. Carbon
Neutrality by 2050. He also explained that the actions listed throughout the Boone CCAP were actions which the Town of Boone municipally and the Boone community would need to take in order to reach these goals. Mr. Santucci asked the Committee if they had any questions.. Member Weiss asked Mr. Santucci if they could add a matrix which shows which actions are more important in regards to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction. Mr. Santucci explained that in the charts throughout the Boone CCAP, the hand symbol shows the impact the actions have on GHG emissions. Mr. Santucci then suggested that the Committee create public outreach materials that are not included in the Boone CCAP, but are targeted towards different demographics of people in Boone. Mayor Pro Tem George suggested the Committee create a guide for renters. Mr. Wise noted that from his understanding, the Boone CCAP would be used for other town boards in order to help assist in planning related matters, similar to the current Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, and that the Boone CCAP would be used as a lens for the updated Town of Boone Comprehensive plan. He added that in 2024, the Planning Department would be presenting an

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update for the Town of Boone's ordinance to the Planning Commission and Boone Town Council in order to make the removal of invasive species easier. Mr. Santucci then asked that if the Committee was satisfied with the draft Boone CCAP, that a motion be presented for adoption. Chair Crutchfield noted that the document is very readable and that he liked Member Weiss's comment regarding prioritization. He asked Mr. Santucci if a document could be created which had exact numbers which needed to be reached to reach these goals. An example is how many residences would need to purchase green power in order to reach the community goal of GHG reduction. Mr. Santucci said that he could have a draft created to bring to the Committee during the February meeting. Chair Crutchfield then presented the motion that, after review of the draft Boone Community Climate Action Plan, the Sustainability Committee approves the goals and targets presented and hereby recommends approval to the Boone Town Council. Upon the motion of Chair Crutchfield, seconded by Member Weiss, the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tem George explained that he would need to leave the meeting, as he had a prior engagement at 8:00 p.m., but that he would like to thank Mrs. Wise for her work in beautifying the Boone CCAP. Mayor Pro Tem George left the meeting at 7:50 p.m. A brief discussion was held in regards to weatherization programs through the electric utilities in the Town of Boone, and options in which weatherization could be increased through federal funding through the Town of Boone or through a non-profit organization.

New Business: Solar Project @ Clawson-Burnley Park:

Mr. Santucci noted that the Committee meeting had run long, and that he would quickly discuss the remaining items. He explained that the Town of Boone would soon install a 20.5 kilowatt solar array on the covered picnic tables at the Clawson-Burnley park. He explained that because the park is located within the floodway, the panels and batteries were going to be waterproof, per Mr. Wise's requirements as the floodplain manager for the Town of Boone. Mr. Wise and Mr. Santucci briefly discussed the reasons to necessitate this, as it is a public safety concern.

New Business: Solar Haven Picnic Shelter @ Jones House:

Mr. Santucci explained that a solar picnic shelter was approved by the Town of Boone's Historic Preservation Commission during their quasi-judicial meeting held on December 12th, 2023. He explained that this system will be fully contained, and they it would be able to charge any device from cell phones to e-bikes.

New Business: Earth First Friday and Film Fest :

Mr. Santucci asked to table this topic until the next meeting, but explained that the Town of Boone hosts an Earth Day event in April. Mr. Wise noted that while in the past, it was held on the First Friday of the month of April, that in recent years it has been held on the Third Friday of the month of April to coincide with Earth Day. Mr. Santucci went on to say that last year, the Town of Boone hosted its first ever Boone Earth Film Fest. He pledged to send the Committee the films which were shown last year, and asked that they come up with ideas for films to discuss during the next meeting.

Other Matters:

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Chair Crutchfield asked if there were any other matters which needed to be discussed. Mrs. Wise noted that the Blue Ridge Conservancy would be hosting a public comment session at the Watauga County Public Library to discuss the proposed trails within the Rivers House property. She explained that the Mr. Jordan Sellers with the Blue Ridge Conservancy would be presenting to the Boone Town Council the project in January, and that she would be in attendance as the Grants Coordinator for the Town of Boone. Chair Crutchfield asked if the trail system would be connected to Appalachian State University's new Innovation Campus, in which Mrs. Wise replied that while she was not the one who was spearheading the project, she was under the impression that it would not as there are multiple private properties between the Innovation Campus and the Rivers House property.

Public Comment:

Chair Crutchfield asked if there was anyone in attendance that would like to make a public comment. With no response, Chair Crutchfield asked for a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment:

Chair Crutchfield presented the motion to adjourn the December 14th Sustainability Committee meeting. Upon the motion of Chair Crutchfield, seconded by Member Weiss, the motion passed unanimously. The December 14th Sustainability Committee unanimously adjourned at 8:15 p.m..

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Highlighted = 2023 films

In Echo All About - documentary about bats in NC (Reached Out)
https://vimeo.com/763019842

The Need to Grow - farming (12.99, need to look at how to download and play at theatre)
https://vimeo.com/ondemand/theneedtogrow/

Story of Plastics - Feature length film trailer (Reached out for access to full video for screening, looks like it's FREE!!)
https://youtu.be/37PDwW0c1so
The Story of Plastic (documentary film) - Story of Stuff

DOCUAPPALACHIA: In 2017 an untitled, silent 16mm film reel from the 1970s was discovered in storage in Boone, NC. The heavily spliced film, made by local photographer George Flowers, juxtaposes images of idyllic Appalachian landscapes with piles of trash, rusting vehicles, black smoke, dirty water and a pig. When Flowers made the film, he was clearly influenced by the psychedelic culture of the day as well as by views at that time about environmental conditions.

The 1970s were a watershed moment in American environmental history. Partly because of images like those that George Flowers captured, the Federal government enacted sweeping environmental laws. Now, 50 years later, what might a Flowers-like film reflect? DocuAppalachia compares scenes from the Flowers film to those same scenes in the 21st century and reflects on what has changed and what has remained the same in the rural southern Appalachian mountains.

Wild & Scenic: Wilson Creek, located in Caldwell County, North Carolina, is known for its wild and scenic beauty but has had a history of ecological destruction due to timber harvesting. Now the area is used by many from all over the state for daily outdoor recreation such as biking, fishing, rafting and camping. Due to the lack of waste infrastructure, high traffic, and ecological abuse, a team of devoted volunteers have started a non-profit to keep the river clean. (Reached out, in correspondence)

Women of Ginseng (a series of three films by Claire
Haizlett that run about 4 minutes each, the filmmaker can provide all three as a 12 minute film)
Vicky Fergusen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-e67ilziufc
Mary Lawson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4BDNJi6GhM
Ruby Daniels: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAOL9nkHRRE
(Reached out to Tom Hansell)

Local river restoration portraits by Jesse Barber
Emma Crider:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/19A7IeQzhTXgudHr9cXkEnVV5JKHGv3X1/view?usp=sharing
Katie Krogmeier:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r1xGeXDCecvmUknFPrRJdQcGrxZRdxC5/view?usp=sharing

The Last Pig- https://www.thelastpig.com/ (250, applied for grant to cover screening fee)

Possibilities for 2024

Uninvited: The Spread of Invasive Species - 55 minutes
https://www.pbs.org/video/uninvited-the-spread-of-invasive-species-npryjl/

The Last Dragons - Protecting Appalachia's Hellbenders (Reached Out)
https://vimeo.com/108512185

Hidden Rivers - A feature film exploring America's Richest Waters (Reached Out)
https://www.freshwatersillustrated.org/hidden-rivers

Under Water - Climate Change in Bangladesh (Reached Out)
https://vimeo.com/72038228

Sustainable Living on 1/10th of an acre (Pretty sure we can just download this and play it)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeNaMlibiak

Treeline - the secret life of trees (includes a snowboarding shinto priest!) (Pretty sure we can just download this and play it)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCEaYInJbos

Island on the Brink of Collapse Makes Huge Comeback (Pretty sure we can just download this and play it)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5VcPoGj4DU

Gather- https://www.nativefoodsystems.org/watch-2/ (On Netflix/Youtube/Amazon/ITunes)

The Revolution Generation- https://www.rocoeducational.com/the_revolution_generation (Free)

On the Way to School (2014)- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIsQ0B43Q9Y (Amazon, only in HD)

Slay: https://vimeo.com/705876093

To The End- https://www.totheendfilm.com/

Connectivity Project- http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/conp.html (200)



Fixing Food Series- http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/fxfd.html (looks like only on DVD)

Once the Ice Melts: *Once the Ice Melts*

Last Call for the Bayou-
https://www.collectiveeye.org/products/last-call-for-the-bayou?_pos=1&_sid=162b3ce29&_ss=r&mc_cid=c7ef8f955a&mc_eid=2ed03891c2

LIVING THE CHANGE: INSPIRING STORIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: Living the Change is a feature-length documentary that explores solutions to the global crises we face today – solutions any one of us can be part of – through the inspiring stories of people pioneering change in their own lives and in their communities in order to live in a sustainable and regenerative way. (19 for download)

The Custodians - Patagonia
Restoring Scottish fisheries
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8a8vuFx4N8&t=6s

Symbol	GHG Reduction
	0-1,000 MTCO2e
	1,000-5,000 MTCO2e
	5,000-10,000 MTCO2e
	>10,000 MTCO2e

Symbol	Co-Benefit
	High potential to save money
	High potential to enhance resource security
	High potential to create jobs
	High potential to improve public health
	High potential to deliver benefits to frontline communities

Table: Stationery Energy Reduction Strategies

Action	Co- Benefits	Reduction Potential
SE 1 – Transition 5% of existing residential and commercial buildings to heat pump heating each year		
SE 2 – Install 3MW of community and rooftop solar		
SE 3 – Transition 50% of residential and commercial customers to 100% renewable energy through utility programs		
SE 4 – Advocate for a cleaner grid. Utilities improve their average grid mix to 60% lower emissions/kWh in 2030, compared to 2020.		
SE 5 – Energy efficiency in residential and commercial buildings		

Table: Transportation Reduction Strategies

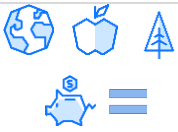
Action	Co- Benefits	Reduction Potential
T1 – Reduce Vehicle Miles traveled by expanding transit and improving bicycle, pedestrian, e-bike and scooter infrastructure		
T2 – Improve Electric Vehicle adoption. Transition 20% of light duty vehicles to EVs		
T3 – Increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including infrastructure in multi-family homes		
T4 – Collaborate with institutional and private fleet operators		
T5 – Community Outreach and Education		

Figure: Community-wide results of implementation of strategies

Action	Net reduction in 2030 (MT CO2e)	Level of Impact
Wastewater green power purchase	20,283	High impact
EV adoption	15,591	High impact
Residential/commercial green power purchase	13,092	High impact
Commercial building electrification	10,944	High impact
VMT reduction	8,661	Medium-high impact
Clean electric grid (60% lower CO2/kWh in 2030 compared to 2020)*.	7,953	Medium-high impact
Residential and commercial building efficiency	4,758	Moderate impact
Residential building electrification	3,835	Moderate impact
Commercial Energy Efficiency	2,531	Moderate Impact
Residential Energy Efficiency	1,922	Moderate Impact
Community/Distributed solar	1,164	Moderate impact