

Sustainability Committee

Draft Minutes

April 5, 2022

Members participating: Julie Kelley, John Carroll, Sara O'Brien, Jon Bromley, Jim Rozycki, Suzanne Filippone, Nell Neal, David McCormick, Sarah Larson-Dennen, Susan Richman, Sue Caswell.

The meeting began with a tour led by Rob Sullivan, of the new middle school. Rob explained the sustainable aspects of the building and offered more detailed tours for anyone who would like to do so. The group went into the gym, mechanical room, second floor, and the concert hall.

Upon return to the middle school commons a motion was made by John Carroll to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2021, minutes. Second by Jim Rozyck. All voted in favor to approve the minutes.

Suzanne explained the work of the teacher leaders. They will start to engage in conversation about the new DEIJ position and sustainability initiatives to put into the curriculum section. Next year's teacher leader positions will be posted at the end of this year for next year.

Sarah O'Brien talked about her Sustainability Club acting more like a social justice group. She has been pulling students into conversations about sustainability to get them more involved. Classroom students have been learning about the building from experts who have come in to explain the geothermal system, water conservation, composting, etc. The plan is to educate the students so they can lead tours of the building. The vision is to educate new students in the building as 5th graders so they know about sustainable buildings.

Jon Bromley's SUS club started out as a big group at the beginning of the year. The numbers have dwindled a bit. He continues to focus on composting. The reality comes down to changing behavior. Students have presented to the faculty about composting and waste with an emphasis on sustainable behaviors. Trying to problem solve compost efforts is challenging. They are preparing a transportation survey about student driving habits. Several students have partnered with students from Portsmouth and formed a non-profit group for sustainability-SSFS. Jon is using Meg's report to ground his work with the district.

Nell Neal asked about the gardens in the school. Jon indicated that the high school garden is being taken on by the new biology teacher. Sarah Larson-Dennen indicated that a lot of the initiatives have been stalled because of Covid. She is worried that a lot of years of work have been lost and is hopeful we will progress and get back to where we were. Jon commented that the numbers last year were very high and now he has only 8 really committed students. As we get back to normal activities it is hard to sustain the level of interest. Sarah indicated that the subject is isolated based on teacher focus. We want to work on changing that and hopefully make this a way of life and part of the vision of a graduate.

Nell Neal gave an overview of the composting report she worked on with Maggie Morrison, and Mary Caulfield. They presented their findings to the Durham Town Council last week. They

met for over a year with UNH, the Integrated Waste Committee of Durham, and 2 representatives from Lee. The original hope was that UNH would step up and work with them to make a regional composting facility. Since this did not come out of their work, they are reassessing what each town is doing with composting. They made recommendations for the town of Durham to do a trial of composting for residents. Todd Selig indicated that there are no funds to support a program like this. Perhaps we could start this in the schools.

Julie Kelly wondered if it would be helpful to have someone like her to be a connection to the community. There is a disconnect. Are there ways we can connect to help with the momentum. Can we have students do presentations at the library? Bring the students out into the community.

Nell suggested that we ask students to make posters to support initiatives the IMAC will be presenting. They are gearing up to increase the percentage of waste that is recycled.

Susan Richman suggested we have students write for a newsletter. Jon's group does have a newsletter that is sent out to the school community. Suzanne will get these newsletters to the committee. There was a suggestion to have students do some artwork and have it posted in the local restaurants. Julie is willing to reach out to the teachers.

Suzanne would like to first define what would be done and define what we are trying to communicate. The next real plan for integration is with the new DEIJ position.

John Carroll stated that there is a tremendous amount of social justice around climate change, and we need to recognize the connection between the two. They are all connected.

Where do we go from here? Community outreach? Jon asked if sustainability will be part of the DEIJ position. Do we define the new Maggie?

John Carroll brought up the impact of the dam removal in Durham. This is a unique opportunity for schools to learn about the impact of this on the environment.

Julie would like to see if we can get some students to participate in Durham Day on June 4. She is willing to help with this.

Nell gave an example of the impact students can have. She remembered the student who was responsible for getting the no-idle signs up at the Durham library.

The group agree to meet again before the end of the school year.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42.