

Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee

Members: Richard Klain, Dave Low, Donna Lee Cheney, Lynn Breckinridge, Rich Bicknell, Audrey Hotchkiss, Alan Solander (recently stepped down)

Council Liaison: Peter LaFond

Staff Liaison: Ashley Krulik

Mission Statement

Advise residents, businesses, and municipal operations on sustainability initiatives that help cultivate a resilient community.¹

The committee continues to have active membership. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the committee met 5 times in 2020.

Overview

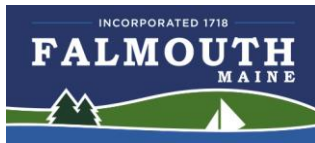
2020 was a year of change for the Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee. In addition to dealing with COVID and the absence of in-person meetings, the committee changed its leadership and staff liaison. Kimberly Darling left her role as the Sustainability Coordinator in the spring/summer and was replaced by Ashley Krulik in October. REAC appreciates the commitment that the Town has made to Sustainability, showing no hesitation in the decision to replace Kimberley despite budget constraints from COVID. In another change, REAC lost its Chairperson as Pete LaFond stepped off the committee to serve on the Council. Pete now serves as a liaison to the committee, and Dave Low, a REAC member for several years, has taken over as committee Chair.

Despite all the changes noted above and the COVID slow down, REAC had a productive year on several projects with the assistance of staff members. REAC has and will continue to rely on the work of the Town's Sustainability position to implement most of the items it addresses.

2020 Accomplishments

- **Landfill Solar Array:** This project was championed at REAC by Pete LaFond and he should be applauded for his dogged insistence that this project be pushed to Council for approval. Despite delays due to Central Maine Power, the array is on-track to go "live" in late summer. This 875 KW project is estimated to save the Town nearly \$2 million over 20 years.
- **Sustainable Business Recognition Program:** The committee developed a program to recognize Falmouth businesses that are championing sustainability in their operations - including energy conservation, waste management, transportation, air quality, water conservation, food issues and community stewardship. The committee has already received several applications from interested organizations and hopes others will be motivated to follow their peers.
- **Plastic straw ban:** The committee did extensive research on whether a plastic straw ban would be feasible for the Town. Ultimately, the conclusion was that this makes sense and should be implemented. However, prior to suggesting this to Council, COVID hit and the committee decided the potential financial implications businesses would incur when this is implemented

¹ Draft updated mission statement to be reviewed by the Appointments Committee.



would be too difficult to enact in the current business environment. The committee will re-introduce this idea to Council when it may be more feasible.

- **EV Charging for new commercial developments:** The committee has prioritized the need to transition to EVs through supporting the development of electric vehicle infrastructure. EV chargers will be installed at Falmouth Memorial Library, and outreach has been completed to some developers along Route 1. Grants will be used when possible to help fund the cost to install chargers on both public and private property.
- **Bicycle repair stations:** The committee has researched the installation of several bicycle repair stations around town to continue to encourage alternative modes of travel. Locations have not yet been fully studied but possibilities include the library, town hall, the school campus and Route 88 fire station.
- **Recycling Reform Bill Resolution:** REAC brought a resolution to Town Council to support LD 2104, an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging Law, to place more responsibility on manufacturers to produce less wasteful packaging. Town Council endorsed the resolution. LD 2104 stalled out when COVID hit, but a new version has brought forward this legislative session.
- **East Side Food Waste Kiosk:** The third and final food waste kiosk has been installed as part of the DEP food waste grant program. The locations include Community Park, the Falmouth Transfer Station, and Village Park (next to Casco Bay Arena).

Goals for 2021

- **Municipal Green Building Ordinance:** Require that all Town owned and/or funded construction projects over a certain threshold be required to meet a specific green building goal. Other local jurisdictions such as Portland have passed similar requirements.
- **Green Building Ordinance:** The committee will propose to Council that all commercial developments be required to meet certain green building standards. In many progressive municipalities around the world, building projects are held to a high standard given the impact they have on their local environments and the environment in general.
- **Sustainable Procurement Policy:** Work with the Finance team to better understand current policies and procedures to see where there is opportunity to look at things through a “green lens” and reduce waste, lower our carbon footprint, and save money.
- **Business Recycling Program:** The committee is discussing business recycling with the local waste haulers to ascertain the viability of aiding businesses in their recycling efforts. Should the committee be able to implement a successful program, there may be a suggestion to Council to move to a recycling requirement for businesses.
- **Thin film plastic recycling at the transfer station:** The committee is researching how the transfer station might be able to start accepting thin film plastics which can currently only be recycled at large retailers in town. Ascertaining viable haulers to help in the effort is proving difficult but the committee hopes to be able to make a recommendation later this year.
- **Resident Sustainability Education:** Ongoing effort to educate residents on sustainability efforts they can help to support.
- **Commercial Sustainability Education:** Continue to work with businesses to become more sustainable; oversee Sustainable Business Recognition Program.