

Progress on Sustainability

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With spring upon us, I have been reflecting on my first year as a Town Councilor. I am grateful to all who endorsed my message of building a more inclusive, sustainable and livable Wakefield by electing me last April. I believe that we have accomplished much over the past year, and I am particularly proud of the progress we are making on sustainability.

Recognizing that Wakefield can learn from other towns, I have been active in state-wide efforts to share ideas and successes that can be replicated here. In January, I attended the Massachusetts Climate Action Network's Green Muni Summit, a gathering of clean energy advocates working with municipal light departments to promote clean energy. In March, I joined 50 other municipal officials at the Climate Leadership Summit organized by the Sierra Club and designed to educate and empower community action to protect our air, water and lands from the threats of climate change.

Here in Wakefield, there are impressive efforts, big and small, underway at many levels, including:

- A year-long Sustainability Series organized by the Beebe Library;
- The designation of a community Solar Coach and a standing-room only solar information workshop;
- Community dinners at Most Blessed Sacrament and First Baptist Church converting to reusable flatware from disposable plastic;
- Rain catchment barrels being offered again this spring;
- Locations being identified for public electric vehicle chargers;
- The arrival of private composting services;
- The successful implementation of the plastic bag bylaw, proposed by a visionary high schooler and passed by a wide majority at Town Meeting, making Wakefield one of 96 Commonwealth communities eliminating single-use plastic bags in advance of state-wide legislation; and
- A strategic retreat spearheaded by the WMGLD Commission Chair focused on the need for climate-friendly energy efficiency and clean energy measures.

Against this backdrop, I am proud to share that the Town Council's newly-formed Environmental Sustainability Committee will meet for the first time tonight at 7 pm. Appropriately, it is being hosted by the Wakefield Police Department and their Mountain Bike Patrol at the Public Safety Building. The Environmental Sustainability Committee is the first standing committee tasked to work with Wakefield Departments, Boards and Commissions **"to assist and advise on ways to encourage balanced and responsible environmental stewardship."** Officially, the Committee is comprised of four citizen members, a youth liaison and representation from the Council, WMGLD, School Committee and Department of Public Works. In reality, I hope that participation will be far broader. We invite the public to attend and plan to engage the community as we develop practical and meaningful goals that will raise awareness and result in positive change around sustainability issues important to all.

I remain available to discuss these or any other topic of interest to you at monthly Community Office Hours. Please drop by on Thursday, April 11th from 5 – 7 pm at The Savings Bank Community Room or participate in my Facebook Live chat on April 25th at 8 pm. Additional information is available on my website at www.julieforwakefield.com.

I am excited by what has been accomplished this year, and I look forward to continuing to work together to build a more inclusive, sustainable and livable Wakefield.

Julie Smith-Galvin
Town Councilor