

Sustainable Hanover Committee Meeting September 17, 2025 Minutes

Attending: Committee: Judi Colla, Susan Edwards, Barbara Callaway, Lynn Sheldon, Ben Steele, Marcus Welker, Catherine Rieke, Chris Kennedy, Gail Gentes, Jennie Chamberlain, Yolanda Baumgartner, Dennis Robison, Rob Houseman, Peter Kulbacki; Guests: Jen Gentrish, Judy Payne, Tracey Yarlott-Davis (Listen Community Services), Heather Griffin (Listen Community Services), Joe Whitten (CEO, Apparel Impact)

1. Introductions: Committee members and guests were introduced.
2. Minutes. The minutes of the August 20, 2025 Sustainable Hanover meeting were distributed. Please send any corrections or additions to Dennis Robison by September 22.
3. Discussion: *Textile recycling and supporting community needs*: In a previous meeting of Sustainable Hanover, Apparel Impact (textile recycling) had requested support for additional collection locations in the Hanover area. This resulted in the need for additional information, particularly regarding Listen Community Services efforts in collecting and distributing clothing through their thrift stores. Was it competitive or collaborative?

Tracey Yarlott-Davos and Heather Griffin gave an overview of Listen's Thrift Store clothing operations at their Miracle Mile location. Basically there is no shortage of clothing donations. Listen works closely with other organizations such as the Haven to meet clothing need. There are significant problems with the quality of clothing donations due to their being soiled or damp and moldy resulting in their going directly into the waste stream. Listen's Casella bill is over \$100,000 per year. They are seeking ways to reduce this cost. Listen's contributions go to support over 35 community programs.

Apparel Impact, which started nine years ago, has 1900 locations in six states. Thirty-nine tons of textiles were collected from

Hanover locations in 2024. Nationally Whitten estimates that 85% of used clothing is still ending up in landfills caused primarily because of the lack of convenient locations for recycling. Apparel Impact has a number of programs encouraging partnerships in the redistribution of usable textiles in local communities. The company is now moving to a municipal impact program of helping communities by collecting clothing to be kept out of the waste stream and being a resource to meet the clothing needs of community residents whose resources are limited. They are seeking ways to partner with towns and non-profits.

To date there had not been any meaningful conversation between Listen and Apparel Impact on how they might cooperate and support each organization. It appears that there is no shortage of textile material available so “competition” is not an issue. However there are a number of opportunities to collaborate. Sustainable Hanover discussed opportunities to support both organizations.

4. Town Manager Report: - (Rob Houseman) There are no updates on the search for the Sustainability Director position. Hanover is working on setting up a “live” dashboard on the website for the Master Plan on how the tax dollars are being spent. This has been a struggle as staff learn how to use the software. Judi Colla suggested that help might be available from Dartmouth IT classes.

5. Reports from recent Sustainable Hanover events:

a. *Community Yard Sale:* Lynn Sheldon reported that it was very successful with 82 sellers. SHC earned a gross of \$2,700 (net \$2,000) plus \$172 from the sale table.

b. *EV Expo:* Ben Steele noted there was a good turnout, notwithstanding some weather issues. There were some excellent information sessions.

6. Upcoming Events:

- a. *Local Solutions Conference* September 18-19 at the Irving Institute. Judi Colla and Marcus Welker will be leading local tours and Yolanda Baumgartner will be attending. Peter Kulbacki will be making a presentation on Hanover's energy goals.
- b. *Sun Day* (September 21, 2025 - there will be a parade beginning at 10:30 am from the Ledyard bridge to the Norwich green. The festival will last from 11:00 am-1:00pm and feature a number of programs. Sustainable Hanover, Norwich Energy Committee, Lyme Energy Committee and Thetford co-sponsored the event. Help is needed and all are encouraged to attend.
- c. *2025 Local Energy Solutions (LES) Conference*, will be on September 25 (Manchester). Use of balcony solar is being featured. Yolanda Baumgartner and Lo Judi Colla will be attending.
- d. *FallFest* at Storrs Pond, September 26, 4:00 pm-6:00 pm. Catherine Rieke has some activities planned.
- e. *Window Dressers Build* at the Norwich Congregational Church (September 25-October 1). Volunteers are needed and can sign up at <https://signup.com/go/PybfDRm>.
- f. *Week Without Driving* October 4, 2025 (<https://weekwithoutdriving.org/>) - the *Bike to Trails Event* will begin at Kilton Library and end at the Boston Lot in West Lebanon. Rob Houseman noted that Advanced Transit runs a similar route on Saturdays. The purpose is to provide opportunities for those who have the option to drive to learn firsthand about the barriers and challenges that non drivers face and work with non drivers to create more accessible communities for all. Jennie Chamberlain will write a *Who Knew* article.

7. CPCNH - Pete Kulbacki. There are upcoming meetings scheduled - CPCNH Finance, September 29, 9:00 am-10:00 am; October - CPCNH Board of Directors, October 2, 10:00 am-12:30 pm; Regulatory and Legislative Affairs Committee October 3, 10:00 am-1:00 pm. All meetings are in Concord and have links.

Consult the CPCNH website (CPCNH.org) for additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Robison, Secretary