

Grassroots Central Mass
Climate Change Cafe
January 22, 2020

Summary of small group presentations:

1. Reducing Food Waste (Sarah Heller)
 - Importance of composting at home and community sites
 - Starting compost collection in cities (as in Boston)
 - Creating a community compost pile at transfer stations, community gardens or other central locations
 - Encouraging schools to compost
 - Offering educational sessions or materials on composting, canning, and food storage
 - Promote menu planning programs
2. Plant-rich diet (Gus Steeves)
 - Talk about how easy it is to shift diets, start with small changes
 - Encourage schools to adopt Meatless Mondays and provide contest/incentives
 - Promote local agriculture of produce and meat and sustainable fisheries
 - Encourage more coop farms
 - Change the culture to one that respects earth
3. Solar Panels (Pete Krawczyk)
 - Talk about resistance to solar and commercial solar arrays
 - Municipal planning is important (get on planning board!)
 - Convince Town Meeting voters solar isn't so bad if well planned/controlled
 - Put panels on rooftops and parking lots; don't cut down trees
 - Battery storage is advancing; in 20 years, transmission lines will be a thing of the past
4. Reduce travel by car/plane (Gene Fry)
 - Promote carpooling, combining errands
 - Diffusion of electric vehicles, which are less than 1 cent/mile to maintain
 - By 2022-28, electric vehicles will be cheaper than oil, and oil companies will begin to lose money and go bankrupt
 - Strides are being made to build electric airplanes for short, commuter flights
 - Self-driving cars will proliferate, electric taxi cabs, delivery services, buses
 - The transition to electric semi-trucks will probably happen before passenger vehicles due to cost considerations
 - Carbon pricing is needed to incentivize people to make the switch and will help people save money by going green
 - Support organizations who remove CO2
5. Walkable towns (Ethan Melad)

Look to other towns as models for improving infrastructure, creating rail trails and sidewalks

Southbridge is working on a feasibility study for sidewalks

North Brookfield Downtown Development Committee is exploring a rail trail that connects North Brookfield to East Brookfield

Find land to create trails and fill gaps to connect trails

Prioritize cluster zoning and downtown density

Complete Streets Program offers grants for bike lanes

Talk to business owners to encourage them to promote adjacent businesses so that customers can get all their needs in one area

6. Reduce - Reuse - Recycle

Everybody makes personal choices and can make a difference!

Education is key:

a. Make a cultural change to use less, re-purpose more, and recycle as a last resort

b. Learn the town recycling policies, push for a more robust program and education campaign to reduce waste

c. Encourage businesses to expand recycling program: i.e. the Walmart in Hadley accepts not only plastic bags but all plastic wrap and packaging.

d. Get the word out: we need a media campaign like Smokey Bear and Don't Litter

7. Plant trees (Steve)

3 billion birds have been lost since 1970 in North America

Important to plant trees/shrubs to protect birds

Establish municipal Shade Tree Committees

Learn how to protect trees from invasive species and insects; support research efforts to control threats to trees

Petition Worcester/Red Sox to plant trees at Polar Park

If you cut a tree, plant two (adopt as town bylaw)

8. Talking about climate (Jane Fry)

Communication/educational opportunities (Wade Institute class)

Work with libraries to evaluate existing collection on climate and offer resources, talk to the person who puts together the newsletter to feature books on climate change

Have a film night or concert at Starlite in Southbridge

Plan a multiage climate event

Develop STEM to STEAM programming around climate (incorporating the arts)

Face to Face communication

Earth Day is the perfect opportunity for programming or campaign