

# THE RECORDER

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## Keeping the ‘green’ in Greenfield: Sustainability committee heads into new year with even more to accomplish

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GREENFIELD — The town committee responsible for implementing Greenfield’s new sustainable master plan is making progress every day, according to its chairwoman, and plans to continue into and through the new year.

Carole Collins, who is also the town’s energy and sustainability coordinator, said she’s proud of the work that’s been done so far. The new master plan was adopted in 2013, and the implementation committee was formed in spring 2014.

Collins said in less than two years, there have been great strides made in the areas of Greenfield’s creative economy and downtown beautification, reducing costs and climate change emissions, and enhancing education, to name a few.

“It’s all about making our town appealing to families and people of all ages from 8 to 80,” said Christy Moore, Greenfield’s recreation director. “Over the past eight months, many park upgrades have been done — the new splash park at Hillside Park, the new play equipment at Greenfield Middle School, and the recently installed playground at Newton School.”

Additionally, the town made improvements to the Davis Street tennis courts and purchased a portable stage, which supports all sorts of town events, including “Movies in the Park.”

More than 54 percent of those projects were funded by grants or foundation money.

Collins said over the past several months, Greenfield Gallery & Fine Art Printing opened, and the Arts Block is thriving once again.

“All this was in addition to existing summer activities, festivals and programs, Artspace programs, and the growth of First Friday activities,” said Collins.

Greenfield Rejuvenators, a collaborative effort of the Greenfield Business Association, Garden Club, Tree Committee, Greening Greenfield, and Greenfield public works and recreation departments, continue with downtown beautification, including the installation of more than 60 colorful lights pole banners designed by elementary school students. More recycled benches have been installed and plants have been planted on the median strips.

“Greenfield police has also increased its downtown presence with a new satellite office located at 114 Main St.,” said Collins.

She said the outpouring of support for Adams Donuts and World Eye Bookshop this past year — both had threatened to close without some financial support — is another example of a concerned and engaged community.

“Additionally, some of our merchants have relaunched a buy-local campaign,” said Collins.

She said the Greenfield Department of Energy and Sustainability continues to reduce energy-related costs and climate change emissions.

“All of Greenfield’s streetlights have now been upgraded to LEDs,” said Collins. “Energy use and, therefore, climate change emissions, have been cut by more than 60 percent. The cost of electricity will be cut by nearly \$70,000 each year going forward.”

Collins said many of the upgrades, including downtown lighting, were completed with grants and utility incentives.

“These have cost the town and its taxpayers very little,” said Collins.

She said the committee’s survey of success would not be complete without mentioning that Greenfield’s state-of-the-art high school, built to LEED Gold energy standards, is open and saving the town money every day.

Collins said the town has partnered with Greenfield Community College to provide students with sustainability education.

“We received a \$600,000 grant for scholarships and efforts to support the Sustainable Agricultural and

Green Energy program,” said Collins. “Through this grant, GCC will continue to offer cutting-edge programs and play a leadership role in training people to transform our world into the more sustainable place to live. Additionally, fifth graders learned more about community service and sustainability through a new unit on water, which was supported by Greening Greenfield and the Connecticut River Watershed Council.”

Collins said as the town and its committee look forward, efforts will continue to target sustainability.

“Buildings that generate as much energy as they use is now the new norm as the town looks to design and build a new senior center and library,” said Collins. “GreenLight was approved by voters on Nov. 3, so the town will be bringing high-speed broadband to all.”

She said new initiatives will also come soon from the newly re-established Youth Commission.

“Sustainable Greenfield has given us the road map to enable our community to move forward, and this is only the beginning,” said Mayor William Martin. “The plan is a living document, and we look forward to working with everyone to not only implement all of what is outlined in the new master plan, but discover and implement new and exciting ideas that will make our lives even better, as well as benefit the entire community.”

The Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee meets on the second Thursday of every month at 4:30 p.m. in Town Hall. The meeting is open to the public.

For more information, contact Collins at 413-772-1412.



Audrey Young, 6, Sophia White, 4, and Brooklyn Gaida, 6, all of Greenfield, beat the heat by hanging out at the water park at Hillside Park in Greenfield on a July afternoon.

Recorder Staff/Paul Franz



Brendan Austin of Greenfield gets trounced by a bucket of cold water at the Hillside Park splash pad in Greenfield on a warm Friday afternoon.

Recorder Staff/Paul Franz