

**PUBLIC WORKS, FACILITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2022, 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

- A. Chairman Ben Wenograd called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Attendees – Mayor Shari Cantor, Councilors Ben Wenograd, Adrienne Billings-Smith, Carol Blanks, Mary Fay, Mark Zydanowicz, Town Manager Matthew Hart, Director of Human Resources Rick Ledwith, Director of Public Works John Phillips, Director of Facilities Robert Palmer and Energy Specialist Catharine Diviney.

2. Business Items

- A. September 23, 2021, Meeting Minutes – Approved.
- B. Ordinance Amending the Prohibition on Overnight Parking – Mr. Hart briefly went over the prior memo (attached) regarding amending the prohibition on overnight parking ordinance. The amendment suspended the ban on overnight parking. The recommendation is to restore the ban on overnight parking, providing the public with appropriate notice beforehand. There is a parking omit system where if someone needs to park overnight, you can request an omit, giving temporary permission to park on the street. There are still concerns for those living in larger apartment complexes, condos, etc. where parking may be limited. There is also a recommendation that once the ban goes back into effect, outreach be made to the owners of the large apartment complexes and condo associations to get a better idea of how many people are challenged by the ban and, based on the number, a very limited overnight parking program allowing residents only to park overnight via permit be started. Polling could be done through the outreach to ascertain how significant the need is and then do a trial period of a year or 2 with 100 to 200 permits. Chairman Wenograd inquired about how quickly they would need to push forward in authorizing the resolution once the software is in place. Mr. Hart stated the full council would need to amend the existing ordinance. Corp Counsel thinks the draft presented last April would need to be revised. Even to do a very limited pilot program, the existing ordinance should be amended. This will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.
- C. Resolution on Climate Crisis – Mr. Hart went over two documents (attached); A West Hartford Climate Emergency Resolution and a draft resolution concerning the climate crisis. The draft affirms the scientific consensus that climate change is a crisis, all levels of government need to address this and it would be the policy of the Town to assess the climate change impacts of all future actions; building a new building, new roadways, etc., to achieve Net Zero as soon as possible. The draft also requests the federal, state and local officials to take more immediate action to address the climate crisis and calls on the Town Manager to coordinate the various resources of the Town in collaboration with various entities to reduce the effects of climate change and improve air quality. The Town Manager would also track

and report on the Town's progress to achieve Net Zero and report back to the Council by a specific date with the need to report annually thereafter. Chairman Wenograd stated the consensus was for Mr. Hart should sign the paperwork to put the ban back on and then the Committee will wait to hear the results of the polling and expect a resolution in the future for the Committee to move on.

- D. Public Works Materials Management and Site Expansion – Mr. Phillips stated there was a lot in the PowerPoint presentation and it was built as a document for reference and historical preferences to get the Committee from the 1930s to today. The goal tonight was to introduce where they were going with the site and the opportunity to develop a town asset in a space where it cannot be developed for any other reason, which is waste management and it is the old landfill. The Town owns a landfill and West Hartford's waste has been managed there since the 1930s. It has gone from whole trash to an ash landfill, which was transferred to several landfills throughout the state. It was then mandated that municipalities bring their trash to the plants. The landfill has been used for yard waste/chunk wood receiving and processing. The site is coming up for renewal and there has been a major shift in the landscape of waste management. A year ago, knowing the contract was expiring, a private-public partnership was sought to develop a materials solution center. They are developing a landfill closure plan as it was never officially capped or closed. To develop an asset like a landfill, you need a proper closure plan for the type of development you are looking to do. Exploratory measures and testing and designing are currently being done on what the closure plan will be with a plan being presented by the end of January by the vendor.

They would also be working on the final operational and fiscal impacts of what the private-public partnership would look like; its benefits, the work and activity the private company would want to do and the operational costs for Public Works. The goal is to develop a comprehensive materials solution center for the residents to use and possibly expand regionally by contract in the most cost-effective manner.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

- A. Public Works – Mr. Phillips submitted a written report. They are status quo. They are in the middle of the winter operations and are preparing for the upcoming storm. Counselor Blanks inquired about the holiday decorations, when are they put up and taken down. Mr. Phillips stated they are put up just before Thanksgiving and are taken down as soon as possible after the first of the year.
- B. Plant and Facilities – Mr. Palmer reported operationally, the buildings have been performing well without any major mechanical issues. They are still running extended hours due to COVID. As far as staff retention, they are doing well. They are seeing illness due to COVID with some significant absences but with revised protocols, this is being worked through. Regarding the new Elmwood Community Center, 12 requests for proposals for the functional program and feasibility study have been received. The proposals have been narrowed down

to five firms to be brought in for interviews and by the end of the month or early February, a firm will be selected. The underground storage tank at the Center will be removed next week.

- C. Energy and Sustainability – Ms. Diviney briefly went over some Town operations. The utility budget numbers have been compiled for 2023 and they are anticipating a flat utility budget, no increase. For Fiscal 2022, the prediction is to be on budget even with the higher gas prices. There have not been a lot of energy-efficient programs lately due to COVID. They are trying to finish up the street lighting project and potentially shifting some of the energy and resource conservation funds into water efficiency and irrigation projects, working with Grounds ahead of the spring. Some of the systems are old and water rates are increasing substantially. Some of the solar projects are also on pause, waiting for the capital roofing projects to catch up. Chairman Wenograd requested Ms. Diviney address her role with the Clean Energy Commission. Ms. Diviney stated she was the staff liaison for two groups, Clean Energy Commission (CEC) and the Sustainability Advisory Group (SAG). The CEC is working on a Heat Smart campaign, which is a community-based outreach and education program and is modeled after the solarize campaigns that were done and it aims to increase understanding and awareness of the technology of heat pumps and to increase their deployment (residential and small commercial). The program is funded by a \$20,000 grant from Eversource Community Energy Efficiency Engagement Partnership Initiative. This will be a year-long initiative.

In November, the Town received its Silver Certification through the Sustainable Connecticut program, which is a voluntary municipal certification program. In 2022, Sustainable Connecticut will be piloting a climate leader shift designation and West Hartford is already eligible based on the work for the 2021 application. Regarding the SAG, they took a break over the holidays, they are focused on preparing a presentation for the Committee with their priority recommendations on sustainability initiatives for the town. They are using the Sustainable Connecticut framework in addition to their knowledge to conduct a GAP analysis of what the Town has done and areas where more needs to be done. Once the presentation has been made, the next step is implementation.

5. Future Agenda Items – Items 2B, 2C and 2D for continued discussion.

6. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

/axb