

**PUBLIC WORKS, FACILITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 3, 2022, 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

- A. Chairman Ben Wenograd called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Attendees – Mayor Shari Cantor; Councilors Ben Wenograd, Carol Blanks, Mary Fay and Mark Zydanowicz; Acting Town Manager Rick Ledwith; Director of Public Works John Phillips; Director of Facilities Robert Palmer; Energy Specialist Catharine Diviney; Ms. Julia Farber and Mr. Bernard Pelletier.

2. Business Items

- A. Approval of January 6, 2022, and February 3, 2022, Minutes – Mr. Zydanowicz noted a time discrepancy for the Call to Order. The header states a 6:30 p.m. meeting but Call to Order at 6:01 p.m. Minutes were approved with the time amended.
- B. Presentation from the Sustainability Advisory Group – Mr. Ledwith introduced the members of the Sustainability Advisory Group (SAG) noting Ms. Diviney and Ms. Farber, who are 2 of the 30 volunteers, would be conducting the SAG presentation. Mr. Ledwith reminded the Committee the SAG had been created to assist the Town with the preparation of the 2021 Sustainable Connecticut application and to assess and provide recommendations to the Town on future sustainability. In the six months since its creation, they were one of 26 communities in the state awarded the Sustainable Connecticut Silver, the highest certification available. In 2023, there will be an opportunity to apply for Gold certification, which involves a significant commitment from the Town. Ms. Diviney and Ms. Farber went over the SAG presentation, which was uploaded to CivicClerk. Ms. Farber reported the State of Connecticut has a program called Sustainable CT and there are 13 categories that define how a municipality can move along the sustainability journey. The program is voluntary and West Hartford has been participating for many years and it is anticipated participation will continue in the foreseeable future. Ms. Diviney reported on the first two SAG foundational recommendations; sustainability with a sense of urgency and a Sustainable West Hartford team. West Hartford has completed 13 out of 13 categories; however, only completed about ½ of the required actions and only ¼ of the subactions and points available. West Hartford is a top performer and only a few towns have earned more points than West Hartford.

SAG encourages the Town to continue its participation in the Sustainable CT program and push forward. During the course of the SAG's work, it was concluded that a group of all residents was not good for success. Some members voiced concern about not knowing how to participate in Town planning or finding someone within the town to coordinate with on outside projects and others saw a critical need for the Town to build connections with West Hartford Public Schools around sustainability. SAG recommended the formation of a Sustainable West Hartford team, which would be comprised of leadership from West

Hartford Public Schools, staff, key commission representatives and additional residents, including youth. The team would have a dual nature; municipal and community. The group would meet four times a year and its main purpose is to provide a forum for discussion and collaboration on sustainability initiatives including existing projects, gaps and ideas for future work. They would be responsible for tracking Sustainable CT certification and possibly a greenhouse gas inventory in connection with the recent climate resolution. Ms. Farber presented the final SAG foundational recommendation of continued visible support of Town leadership. Ms. Farber briefly went through a 9-point To-Do list for the Town leadership regarding the visibility of its support including talking about sustainability in different media forums.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

- A. Plant and Facilities Update – Mr. Palmer went over his monthly report (uploaded to CivicClerk). He reported Buildings had been performing well until late last week when Fire Station 5's boilers failed. Supplemental heat was brought in via portable electrical units and a tent heater for the garage space. One boiler had an electrical issue and there was difficulty getting a replacement fuse due to supply chain issues. The original boiler had a burner that failed and they are currently waiting on replacement parts. Also, the Fire Alarm panel failed at Town Hall and there is difficulty securing parts. A refurbished panel was found and was installed. Outside of these issues, Buildings has performed well. Staffing levels remain constant. Regarding projects, five firms were interviewed regarding the new Elmwood Community Center and an architectural firm will be selected in the next few days. This firm will do the functional program development and look at the facility for feasibility. There has been some interim use of the building by Fire, Police and Emergency Management for training and other purposes. Regarding Capital projects, the Animal Control Facility has an RFQ out and will close later this month, at which point applicants will be reviewed and firms interviewed to begin the design process for the facility. The replacement of the Town Hall front sign has been completed. The Public Safeties Facility RFP/RFQ has been drafted to study the firehouses and the police department buildings and will be going out in the next few weeks.

An architect has been selected for the DPW roof project and the design is in process. This project is projected to go into early fall. Of note, this is the first roofing project for a building that has solar on it. There is a power purchase agreement and a third party owns the solar and they are responsible for removing the solar if we have to do a project, so there is no cost to the Town. There are some other ongoing projects including roofing, security and the Fresh Air project for Duffy and Webster Hill.

- B. Public Works Update – Mr. Phillips went over his monthly report (uploaded to CivicClerk), which reflected January's performance. Snow and Ice is within budget for overtime utilization, contractual service and treatment materials. Two street maintenance workers were hired and there is now only one vacancy, which may be filled in March. The landfill closure plan is under development. Municipal Parking is working with Corporation Counsel on

several projects including 920 and 924 Farmington Avenue and the FY 23 budget is being prepared. Regarding Municipal Parking, revenues were down in January mostly due to the weather and high increases in COVID. Also, hotel fare activity was also down, probably related to COVID activities. The Permit Management System has been rolled out to Town employees for registration of their personal vehicles that are parked in town a lot to avoid any enforcement coming as this process is worked through. Regarding the overall work performance, snow and ice patrols pulled away from working on incoming work orders. Only 76% of work orders were completed. The goal is 80% but January's rate was a little under due to the snow and ice patrol.

- C. Sustainability Update – Ms. Diviney reported SAG will continue to work on content for the new Sustainability website and they also plan to have at least one more meeting to debrief regarding the presentation and take another look at the Appendix included in the presentation for items they feel can be initiated without Town assistance. She also reported 98 people had signed up for the Heat Smart West Hartford. There is a community team meeting weekly to coordinate with the program contractors and plan future events and outreach. The Clean Energy Commission, the Chamber and Kristin Gorski (Economic Development Specialist) are collaborating on an energy efficiency forum, which will be put on for local businesses and is tentatively planned for March 23. There is an upcoming Earth Day event and Leisure Services in collaboration with the Town and some people from Public Works will be planting new trees on Trout Brook Trail. They have had some informal group meetings, which they hope will continue and are planning an invasive species plant cleanup. Ms. Diviney also mentioned a local reporter did a story on the food scrap composting going on at Bugby Elementary School.

5. Future Agenda Items

6. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

/axb