

CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION

February 27, 2023

7:00 PM, Room 217, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening / Call to order – 7:08 PM

a. Roll call

Commissioners present: Bernie Pelletier, Joe Campanella, Catherine Diviney (Energy Specialist), Steve Sack; Student reps present: Dawson Bondi (Hall HS), Nathaniel Goldschmidt (Hall HS); Member of the public present: Emilee Scott, Jim Fishman, Kim Hughes, Rick Bush, Ted Newton, Emily Sexton (phone), Christine Feely, Noah Schulman; Town staff present: Helen Rubino-Turco (Director of Leisure & Social Services), Katherine Bruns (Recycling Coordinator)

b. Approval of minutes – January, *approved*.

2. New Business

a. Guest Speaker – Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure & Social Services

Helen gave an overview of her personal background and her department's operations, focusing on Leisure Services side, not Social Services (may be another meeting?). She highlighted some of their key project priorities including accessibility, landcover/tree canopy, equity, and education. She also highlighted groups that the Town works closely with including the Parks & Rec Commission, Friends of WH Parks (formerly Friends of Fernridge) WH Garden Club, WH Tree Project, Land Trust, and more. Her department is unique b/c there are often community partners on projects and the Town may take in fundraising donations towards projects (e.g., Youth Baseball LED Lighting at Wolcott Park). There was specific discussion about the tree canopy study that is being funded by \$140K allocation of the Town's ARPA funds for "sustainability projects." Once the scope of this work is clearly defined, a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an external consultant will be released. Kim Hughes, Emilee Scott, (and Sean Daly) were identified as the Cons & Env't Commissions representatives for this project at a prior meeting. A potential Commission Earth Day event possibly at Westmoor Park, or with WHPS Foundation at Town Hall was also discussed.

b. Working groups

- *Waste – CT DEEP food waste & PAYT pilot (Katherine Bruns) Katherine provided an overview of the Town's CT DEEP grant for food waste pilot (slides attached). Rick Bush indicated that there needs be more explanation of the financial why? we are doing this. Volunteers for this group: Ted Newton, other SAG members?, Chris Feely, Dawson Bondi, Rick Bush.*
- *Sustainable Landscaping – incl. electric lawn equipment, gardens, pollinator pathways, etc. Volunteers for this group: Kim Hughes, Emily Scoot, Chris Feely.*

- Earth Day? – Sat Apr 22, 2023 “invest in our planet” e.g., Water Wyland Foundation National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation (Apr 1-30) – or Other? *Commission decided not to participate in Wyland Water Challenge as it was felt that this program, while nicely packaged, was better-suited to community (e.g., Western states) will real drought crises. West Hartford should at some point focus on developing an educational campaign with MDC, and other partners more grounded in local water issues (e.g., water quality, storm water, LID, irrigation, waste, costs, etc.) Immediate Earth Day event should concentrate on 3-4 “info stations” at Westmoor Park on Town Hall lot. Volunteers for this group: Kim Hughes, Bernie Pelletier, Emily Sexton, Emily Scott, Catherine Diviney.*
 - WH Celebrates? – June 10-11, 2023 – *There was thought that the Earth Day themes/work might carry over for this event.*
- c. Status of town-related new construction projects: *deferred to next meeting due to time*
- Community Center
 - Fellowship Housing
 - Animal Shelter
- d. Legislative activity: *deferred to next meeting due to time*
- e. Stats just released by EnergizeCT: *deferred to next meeting due to time*
Recommendations for spending the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG). \$123,000 formula grant. Next milestone: April 28, 2023.
Catherine indicated would likely be easier to spend on one project (e.g., Remaining decorative street lighting that needs to be converted to LED)
3. Old/Ongoing Business:
- a. Sustainable West Hartford Commission – status update: ordinance, logo, etc.
Catherine indicated that Corporation Counsel is working on this. She plans to ask for update at the Public Works, Facilities, and Sustainability Committee meeting on March 2.
- b. Plan priorities for 2023
4. Staff Report – Catherine indicated the E-Transit Van for Nutrition Services is here. *They are working on logo. There is potential to create a similar version of logo for residents on their own cars? Rick suggested may be a public logo competition? (That may take too long.)*
5. Public Comment – *Chris Feely presented information on the Town’s current solar regulations and urged that the restrictions of ground-mounted solar be revisited (handouts attached). There was general agreement that this could be brought up at next meeting with Todd Dumais, Town Planner, as guest speaker.*

6. Agenda for Next Meeting – *Todd Dumais, Town Planner, has agreed to come. Duane Martin, Director of Community Development, indicated he would be there too.*
7. Adjournment – 9:30 PM

Anyone requiring auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or modification of policies or procedures to participate in a meeting, service, program or activity of the Town of West Hartford, should contact Suzanne Oslander, ADA Coordinator, at suzanneo@westhartfordct.gov or (860) 561-7580, as soon as possible, preferably seven days beforehand.