



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

November 13, 2023

7:00 PM, Room 400, Town Hall

MEETING MINTUES

1. Call to Order, Attendance 7:03 PM

- *Jim Fishman Y*
- *Kimberly Hughes Y*
- *Aditee Madkekar Y*
- *Christy Matthews Y*
- *Ted Newton N*
- *Alejandro Paiuk Y (left early)*
- *Bernard Pelletier Y*
- *Stephen Sack Y*
- *David Sagers Y*
- *Rachael Virgin Y*
- *Patricia Wilson Y*
- *Town Staff: Catherine Diviney, Katherine Bruns, John Philips (Director of Public Works)*
- *Public: Erik Granstrand, Luciana Granstrand, Johnathan Humphrey, Chris Nelson, Rick Bush*

2. Introductions – Skipped.

3. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – **Approved (10-0)**. *Catherine noted in future minutes will only be available on Civic Clerk, per Town Clerk.*

4. Commission Foundational Work and Operating Rules – *Dave Sagers walked the group through the Foundation Work document that he had prepared (attached). Some of the following items were discussed. Commission will revisit some of these items and finish up this discussion about operating procedures at a future meeting.*

- *Everyone agreed a set of rules and procedures was a good idea for shorter, more effective meetings*
- *People liked the idea sending out information ahead of time for old business recapped by email in bullet points and employing a “consent” agenda so that meeting discussion could focus on particular items, as needed.*
- *Any agenda materials would be submitted to Catherine by Thursday to be emailed out prior to Monday meeting.*
- *There was general support for better community engagement, website and potentially an online calendar.*
- *There was discussion about voting procedures. The official rule is a simple majority of the Commissioners present at a meeting. 6 Commissioners are need for quorum to hold meeting. Some Commissioners were concerned that if only 6*

members were present then a vote could carry with only 4 members. Alejandro suggested required a minimum of 6 “Yes” votes to carry. There were also questions about phone or email votes. Or whether past votes of Clean Energy or Conservation & Env’t Commission still hold. Katherine will follow up with Corporation Counsel. This discussion will be continued.

- *Commission official name is Sustainable West Hartford Commission.*
- *There was discussion about what working groups can//cannot do without permission of the umbrella Commission (e.g., support a policy position, organize a workshop, talk to Town Council, etc.) This item will be revisited. There was general consensus that anything that goes to Council must be approved by whole Commission first.*
- *Catherine suggested, similar to Bloomington, MN, that the WGs develop Work Plans and Priority Action Items that are approved by the Commission and presented to Town Council so everyone is aware and in agreement on current WG initiatives. WGs must be realistic about how many initiatives they can tackle in a year.*

5. Elections – Vice-Chair & Secretary

- *Dave Sagers, Vice-Chair. **Approved (9-0).***
- *Christy Matthews, Secretary. **Approved (9-0).** Envisioned this role also working on Communications. Katherine/Catherine to assist with minutes.*

6. Working Group Reports –

- *Energy: Bernie said Energy Group needed to meet but that Waste seemed to be priority issue right now.*
- *Communications: Christy has drafted a Communication Plan with can be shared at a future meeting. Bernie indicated her plan is impressive and many parts could apply to the Town as a whole. Catherine mentioned that Communications planning is a Sustainable CT Action that she discussed with Renee McCue (Town PR Specialist) and Town Manager.*
- *Land Care: Kim said they would like to present their draft plan to Commission at some point. They organized 2 education shops called “Your Home is a Habitat” – one online thru WHPL and one in-person at Westmoor. They are also currently working with DPW and other partners to install pollinators gardens at Westmoor Park.*
- *Waste: Lead is Rachel Virgin. Group has decided to adopt Waste Working Group as official name.*
 - ***Motion by Rachel to send a letter of support and commendation to Montessori School of West Hartford for their recent student/school effort to divert food waste. Approved (9-0).***
 - *Rachael presented group’s plan and timeline to recommend Unit-Based Pricing and co-collection of Food Scraps to the Town Council for an adoption vote and implementation by July 2024 (attached). There was discussion and question about some types of materials like construction*

waste, diapers, medical, etc. or other options – like direct-hauler subscription.

- *Waste WG to prepare recommendation letter for Commission's approval at next meeting Nov 27 in order to stay on timeline.*
- *Katherine/John Phillips will share Public Works memo with group (attached).*

7. Public Comment - *none*

8. Agenda for Next Meeting - *On Nov 27 @ 7 PM in Rm 400. CRCOG is hosting working session on Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. All commissioners and other towns are invited. A short Commission meeting will be held @ 6:30 PM in advance of CRCOG's CPRG presentation to vote on Waste Group recommendations.*

9. Adjournment

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.

Sustainable West Hartford Commission – Foundational Work

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Purpose

This document contains approaches for the Sustainability Commission to consider adopting to:

- Run streamlined, effective meetings while tackling a widening range of topics related to sustainability,
- Keep all members informed of working group and other activities,
- Create operating rules for adopting and building a repository of policies and actions, and
- Find more ways to impactfully influence the Town's actions, as well as those of West Hartford residents.

Operating Rules

Meeting Agenda

Meeting structure (90-minute expectation)

1. Call to order
2. Prior meeting minutes
3. Community comment (max 3 minutes each)
4. Old business – Working Group reports (included with meeting invite and agenda)
 - What have you done?
 - What are you planning to do?
5. Working Group discussion, as needed (max 10 minutes each)
 - What do you need from the full Commission (additional resources, vote, outreach to Town, etc.)?
6. New business (including voting)
7. Next steps (publicity, town resources, Commission resources, etc.)
8. Commission calendar updates
9. Agenda topics for next meeting
10. Adjournment

Meeting Preparation/Package

- Brief writeup (bullets) for
 - For an issue requiring a vote/adoption, (also include wording of proposed resolution)
 - To frame an issue requiring a discussion
 - Status of working groups or other activities (see #4 in agenda above)
- Materials submitted by prior Friday for Monday meeting
- Each commissioner responsible for reading beforehand

What requires a Commission vote?

- New policy stance
- Official participation/support of an event or project
- Official communications that state or imply a new policy stance
- Voting is done through a statement of resolution, motion and second, then discussion, any revisions to the resolution and vote (yea, nay, abstain)
- Approval requires two thirds of commissioners (or simple majority?) present so long as there is a quorum present (6)

Representing the Commission

- As policies are approved, incorporate into the document of adopted policies and procedures
- Commissioners may refer to past votes by the Commission in citing policy.
- Commissioners may provide their personal thoughts in the following manner:

- I am a member of the West Hartford Sustainability Commission or I am a member of the X Working Group of the West Hartford Sustainability Commission, but I am speaking as an individual resident
- Public events sponsored by the Commission or Working Groups should state the mission
- All official written communications and materials of the Commission or Working Groups should be reviewed by the Commission's Communication function.

Working Groups

Sustainable West Hartford Commission Working Groups

The Sustainable West Hartford Commission has working groups comprised of Commissioners and citizen volunteers (e.g., individuals or organizations) from the public. Working group members are not required to be electors of West Hartford. The working groups work on initiatives and report to the Sustainable West Hartford Commission at the monthly meetings.

These are the working groups restrictions:

1. The working group cannot have a quorum of commissioners on it – i.e., must have fewer than 6 commissioners
2. The working group must report back regularly to the Commission
3. The working group cannot go directly to the public without approval of the Commission
4. Other working rules may be added as we gain experience

The working group can:

1. Meet and communicate internally without public notice (the full commission can meet only with public notice)
2. Develop initiatives, projections, actions, related to their Working Group purview.
3. Suggest Commission meeting agenda items
4. Engage members of the public

Sustainable West Hartford Commission Working Groups

Sustainable Land Care Working Group

Members:

- **Kim Hughes (Commissioner)**
- Suzanne Sayers (local garden designer)
- Aimee Petras (ED Farmington River Watershed)
- Beth Ann Loveland Sennett (WH Garden Club leader)
- Madeleine Hexter (WH Garden Club leader)
- Chris Feely (local activist)
- Danielle George (schoolyard habitat advocate)
- Dave Sagers (Commissioner)
- Rachael Virgin (Commissioner)
- Pat Wilson (Commissioner)

Projects:

- Work with Parks and Recreation to develop town wide sustainable land care practices
- Identify open space to use as demonstration projects for sustainable land care
- Participate in the tree canopy project
- Wolcott Park pollinator gardens
- Educational workshops
- Working Plan

- Website content

Waste Working Group

Members:

- **Rachael Virgin (Commissioner)**
- Katherine Bruns (Recycling Coordinator)
- Ted Newton (Commissioner)
- Bernard Pelletier (Commissioner)
- Kim Hughes
- Luciana Granstrand
- Chris Nelson
- Jonathan Humphries
- Erik Granstrand
- Vanessa Borkowski
- Lori Davidson
- Rick Bush

Projects:

- Waste Plan
- **UBP and Food Scrap Collection Recommendation**
 - **Critical outreach to Town officials**
 - **Community education on town wide adoption of program**
 - **Stakeholder engagement to present them with the facts and encourage making this town wide: Town Manager, Mayor, Council members, Garden Clubs.?**
- School Cafeteria Food Scrap Collection programs
 - Bringing Norfeldt, Whiting Lane and Wolcot onboard this fall
 - Middle and High Schools next
- Recycling Education in Schools
- Website content
- Commercial – Restaurant and grocery store waste reduction, recycling and food waste. See sample letter here at Beyond Plastics
- Food Rescue

Clean Energy Working Group

Members:

- **Bernard Pelletier (Commissioner)**
- Catherine Diviney (Energy Specialist)
- Stephen Sack (Commissioner)
- Joseph Campanella - tentative
- Christine Feely - tentative
- Aditee Madkekar (Commissioner)
- Celia Kosinski – tentative
- Michael Cocca - tentative

Projects:

- National Drive Electric Week Event (September 24)
- Business outreach on solar and efficiency programs
- Greenhouse Gas inventory

- PowerSmart
- Update Energy Plan
- Website content

Sustainability Website and Publicity/Communication (Working Group?)

Members:

- **Christy Matthews (Commissioner)**
- Catherine Diviney
- Pat Wilson (Commissioner)

Projects:

- Discuss outside resources and webpage protocols/restrictions with IT
- Build out Town (and Schools?) sustainability website
- Develop outreach strategy for commission projects - e.g. - websites, social media, existing town outreach (Renee McCue)
- This IS Sustainable CT Action 8.2.1a Provide Effective Community Communications: Develop your communications strategy. <https://sustainablect.org/actions-certifications/actions#open/action/45>

Schools Education (Working Group?)

Members:

- Catherine Diviney
- Katherine Bruns

Projects:

- Chart plan for Sustainability in all WHPSs
- PPP - projects, policy, promotion
- Engage with administration
- Develop a WHPS sustainability policy - possibly working with other Districts (e.g., Fairfield) - would earn Sustainable CT collaboration pts. or Equity toolkit pts.

Building Advisory Group (Interface with DRAC) – should this be one part of the larger land presentation effort? Do we create a working group that is focused on land preservation and use?

Members:

- **James Fishman (Commissioner)**
- Christine Feely

Projects:

- Interface with DRAC
- Preservation/Usage
 - POCD Land conservation strategy,
 - POCD Revisions to zoning/ordinance in POCD
- Asylum Avenue development project

The work

How can this group have the most impact? Future decisions/votes/working group will be much clearer if we collectively agree on the following

Purpose/Mission

Code Sec 5-16 – Establishing the Commission

“The Town Council hereby establishes a Sustainable West Hartford Commission ... for the purpose of promoting practices that lead to greater environmental, social and economic sustainability; ensuring a high quality of life for present and future generations by fostering an inclusive, resilient, and thriving community; and encouraging the responsible use and conservation of energy and natural resources.”

Work/Scope/Priorities and Goals

- Very wide scope of work potentially, very few limitations
- Given a potentially wide scope, how should we focus/prioritize on areas of greatest impact?
 - Existing working groups
 - Sustainable CT certification
 - Preservation/Usage? Other?

Roles/Levers – Impact on Town actions

- Climate Resolution – “it shall be the policy of the Town to assess the climate change impacts of all future Town actions”
- Many levers spelled out in Commission resolution
 - Annual Report to Town Council
 - Advise and make recommendations to the Town Manager
 - Serve as a resource for Town Council, Town departments: possible interactions:
 - Interface with Town Planner
 - Interface with DRAC
 - Connection with the Public Works, Facilities and Sustainability Committee

Roles/Levers – Impact on residents’ decisions

- Again, some levers spelled out in Commission resolution
- Community liaison
 - Communication strategy
 - Most impactful steps residents can take
- More visibility with the Town will establish the credibility of the Commission with residents

Outputs

- First step - statement/report on work plan/priorities/goals/levers to ?

Background Documents

Code Sec 5-16

Establishing the Commission (Code Sec 5-16 - relevant sections included only)

- **Identify and prioritize concerns and issues** relating to long-term environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Town of West Hartford with due consideration of local, regional, state, national, and global contexts.
- Advise and make recommendations to the Town Manager on policies, programs and proposals regarding sustainable practices including, but not limited to, environmental and ecological resources, air, water, energy, land, waste, materials management, transportation, climate change, equity and environmental justice.
- Collaborate with and serve as a resource for Town Council, Town departments, boards, commissions, and committees of the Town, and the community at large in order to advance a comprehensive, integrated approach to sustainability.
- Develop and encourage efforts, relationships and resources to educate and act on sustainability within our community and beyond, and to serve as a community liaison for issues, ideas, and proposals.
- File an annual written report with the Town Council. Such report shall include a summary of current sustainability initiatives, as well as recommendations for future sustainability initiatives and policy

WEST HARTFORD CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

Resolved (relevant sections included only)

- BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD that the Town of West Hartford recognizes the overwhelming scientific consensus and declares that anthropogenic climate change is a crisis that requires immediate action by all levels of government; and
- that it shall be the policy of the Town to assess the climate change impacts of all future Town actions, to achieve net-zero carbon emissions from Town activities as quickly as practicable, and to encourage residents to do the same; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Manager shall coordinate and employ the resources of the Town, through consultation with the Clean Energy Commission, the Conservation and Environment Commission, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission, the Sustainability Advisory Group, and other stakeholders, including youth, to mitigate the effects of anthropogenic climate change and to improve air quality through the implementation of projects, practices and policies that reduce, eliminate or counteract the burning of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases.
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Manager shall establish a mechanism for tracking and reporting on the Town's progress to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and report back to the Town Council by September 2022, and at least annually thereafter.

Plan Of Conservation and Development

Conservation section: Preserve, protect, enhance and promote our open space and our fragile natural systems in concert with managing responsible growth and development.

- Preserve, maintain, enhance and expand open space, conservation or recreation areas.
 - Support the efforts of conservation organizations to purchase and protect land with priority placed on properties with wetlands and floodplain areas.

- Explore Federal, State and Town funding opportunities to purchase open space, conservation or recreational lands with a priority on properties with ridgelines, wetlands, watercourses and floodplain areas or that provide connections between environmental resources.
- Support the Conservation and Environment Commission in performing its duties and strengthen the connection to and collaboration with the TPZ.
- Review and evaluate the development of require open space standards within the zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations 64 Actions
- Promote stewardship of our fragile natural systems
 - Educate residents about proper waste disposal and the responsible use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.
 - Promote awareness of and encourage innovative practices for materials management including the disposal of solid waste, recyclables, yard waste, and electronics.
 - Continue to evaluate opportunities and implement solutions that lead to more fiscally and environmentally sustainable materials (solid waste) management that attain the goal of the Connecticut Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy for a 60 percent diversion of materials from disposal.
 - Reduce solid waste by implementing a composting program for schools and residences.
 - Continue to work collaboratively with residents, neighborhood groups and other stakeholders to address open space or environmental needs or concerns throughout Town.
 - Continue to invest in, and convert to, IPM on Town-owned property.
 - Continue to invest in sustainable practices and energy-efficient infrastructure in Town and school facilities.
 - Support the efforts of the West Hartford Clean Energy Commission and the implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Energy Plan.
 - Continue to participate in Sustainable CT's municipal certification programs and work towards achieving a Silver Certification.
 - Encourage the creation of a municipal climate action plan.
- Review the zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and inland wetlands and watercourses regulations, and revise as necessary, to support responsible growth and development while preserving and protecting the Town's environmental resources.
 - Review and evaluate the development of ridgeline protection standards within the zoning ordinances.
 - Review and evaluate the development of Low Impact Development (LID) standards within the zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and inland wetlands and watercourse regulations.
 - Review and evaluate the development of additional environmentally sensitive land protection measures within the zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations, such as the exclusion of steep slopes, wetlands, and flood plains from lot area calculations.
 - Review and evaluate the current Open Space Development zoning ordinances with a focus on modernizing and expanding the applicability of this zoning tool
 - Review and evaluate the current Screening and Landscaping zoning ordinances to provide for more innovative approaches and techniques requirements for use of native species.
 - Review and evaluate the current drainage water zoning ordinances to ensure consistency with the State of Connecticut Stormwater Quality Control Manual.
 - Comprehensively review and update the inland wetlands and watercourses regulations to ensure consistency with the model State regulations and current best management practices.
 - Review the zoning ordinances and identify potential areas for targeted modifications that support sustainable development practices.

- Continue to promote sustainable stormwater management and floodplain management to be resilient and adaptable to a changing climate.
 - Fully conduct and implement the best management practices of the Town’s SMP.
 - Review and evaluate the current Special Flood Hazard Area zoning ordinances to ensure consistency with the CT DEEP and FEMA recommended model ordinances.
 - Continue to participate in the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) program and work towards increasing the Town’s rating to a Class 7.
 - Continue to invest in stormwater infrastructure improvements throughout Town. Emphasis on sustainable, green infrastructure improvements should be prioritized.
 - Review current floodplain management procedures and identify opportunities that enhance sustainable practices and improve community resiliency.
 - Implement the recommendations and continue to participate in updates to the CRCOG Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Commissioner Expectations

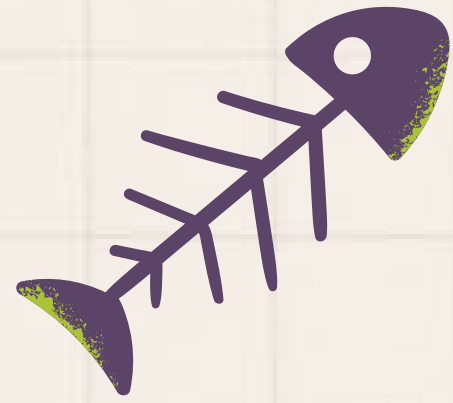
General Commission and Commissioner rules can be found at the following document link:

[WelcometoPublicService.pdf \(finalsite.net\)](#)

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WASTE WORKING GROUP

REPORT 11/ 13



GETTING ORGANIZED...

NAMING CONVENTIONS

Waste Working Group
Unit-Based Pricing

DIRECTION

Vision Statement
Mission Statement
Goals

PROJECTS

Montessori School of Greater Hartford
student food scrap composting program

Transition to UBP

WHY THE URGENCY?

CT in a waste crisis generally



WH tipping costs about to increase dramatically

Striving to comply with DEEP's Solid Waste Management Plan of 60% diversion by Jan 1

Striving to comply with WH's Plan of Conservation & Development

Coming off the pilot (social momentum)

Additional bridge funding available

Waste Zero engaged by DEEP to guide us, they are ready for next steps

Recent elections (good timing politically)

Rest of CT looking to us as a leader

POTENTIAL TIMELINE:

nov 15

Public Works sends
letter of intent to
unlock DEEP funding

Nov 27

WWG proposal to
Sustainable WH
Commission

dec 4

Commission sends letter
of recommendation to
PWFSC

Dec 12

Waste Zero presents
to Town Council

Jan 23

Town Council
commits and
requests DEEP for
bridge funding

Feb 1

Morley pilot grant
ends

Apr 1

Town Council
decision

Jul 1

Implementation

COMPONENTS

Unit-Based Pricing

Food Scrap Collection

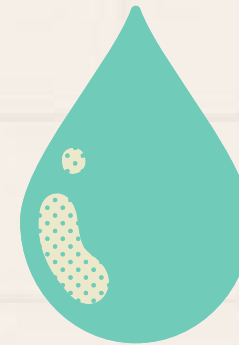
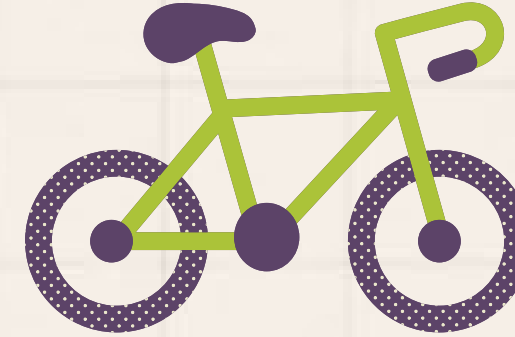
Co-collection

Curbside Recycling

Town Recycling Center Revamp

Direct Billing

Extended Pilot





educate ourselves

Documentaries

Frontline- Plastic Wars
The Story of Plastic
Kiss the Earth

Story Maps

We Are in a Waste Crisis (Naugatuck
Valley Council of Governments)

News Articles

"Seriously, Is This the Best We Can
Do?" (Commonwealth Beacon)

Books

Garbology



Educate our town

Meet with Councilmembers

Have them organize coffee hours,
Q&A sessions

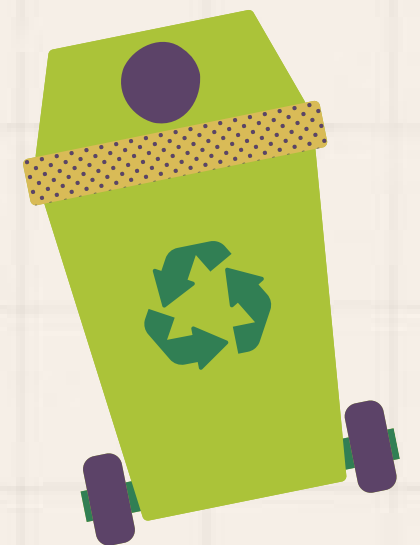
Write op-eds

Social media campaign

Public schools (poster contest)



WE CAN DO THIS!





To: Sustainability Commission, Waste Taskforce

From: John Phillips, Director of Public Works

CC: Katherine Bruns, Recycling Coordinator.

Date: October 27, 2023

Re: Sustainable Material Management Update

Executive Summary

Connecticut is facing a pressing challenge as its waste disposal capacity reaches its limits, making it increasingly challenging to establish new facilities. Maintaining current waste generation levels is becoming prohibitively expensive, with the costs of waste management on an upward trajectory that shows no signs of abating. Additionally, the state of Connecticut is exerting pressure on the Town to embrace waste reduction as part of its Sustainable Material Management (SMM) initiatives.

The Brixton Street facility is currently undergoing comprehensive redevelopment assessments aimed at aligning it with the Town's future waste management infrastructure needs and supporting residential waste reduction initiatives. Simultaneously, the facility is in the process of implementing a formal cap and closure procedure for the Town's historic landfill, ensuring compliance with DEEP regulations and enhancing the landfill's environmental sustainability.

West Hartford's Solid Waste Program Goals

The Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) places significant emphasis on the crucial role of sustainable waste management practices in safeguarding the long-term well-being of our community. In pursuit of this overarching goal, Public Works has outlined the following waste management objectives:

- Minimize dependency on expenses associated with incineration and landfill disposal
- Achieve and sustain a recycling/diversion rate of 60%, aligning with the guidelines outlined in the State's Solid Waste Management Plan
- Establish financial models to bolster a sustainable waste management program, encompassing the implementation of direct billing to residents for waste collection and disposal services
- Examine the advantages and logistical aspects of Unit-Based Pricing or Pay-As-You-Throw program implementation
- Free responsible recyclers from cross-subsidizing wasteful practices of others
- Empower individuals to manage their garbage-related expenses by offering disposal choices
- Take the lead in environmental sustainability
- Diminish the volume of solid waste production and elevate recycling rates
- Establish an enterprise fund utilizing generated revenues to support public works initiatives and programs
- Enhance fairness by requesting residents to cover costs based on their individual waste generation

Over the past seven years, Public Works has been diligently assessing a range of alternatives to determine the most effective approach to realize its waste management objectives. These considerations encompass implementing the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) recommended unit-based-pricing (UBP) Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) program, enhancing existing recycling avenues, privatizing waste services, franchising waste services, or maintaining the status quo. From the perspective of our staff, it is our belief that unit-based pricing or Pay-As-You-Throw, coupled with food scrap diversion, holds the potential to be the most promising avenue for achieving waste management objectives. This memorandum will furnish an outline of our present waste management system and the challenges that confront us.

Municipal Profile

General Information

West Hartford is comprised of 64,083 residents and 25,805 housing units with 2.43 persons per household according to the 2020 Census estimates.¹ Roughly 69.6% of the housing units or 17,960 units are single family residential, 7.4% or 1,898 are two family and 4% or 990 are three family. The Town provides curbside trash collection to properties with three (3) or fewer dwelling units as well as some condo units and apartments. Automated trash collection is provided to 21,466 housing units.

In fiscal year 2024, West Hartford will dedicate \$5,416,500 or 1.71 % of the General Fund Budget or 4.30% of the Town Services (non-education) portion of the General Fund budget to provide solid waste collection and disposal. The costs are broken out by Yard Waste Collection and Disposal at \$300,000, Municipal Solid Waste Collection and Disposal at \$3,540,700 and Recycling Collection and Disposal at \$1,575,800. The total solid waste and recycling cost per housing unit is \$252.33 per year.

The expenses associated with waste management are on an upward trajectory and are expected to persist in their rise. The realm of waste material management is currently experiencing a significant transformation, primarily spurred by Connecticut's waste disposal predicament, which stems from the diminishing capacity of the state's waste disposal resources. A notable development in this context is the closure of Hartford's Material Innovation Recovery Authority (MIRA) in the summer of 2022, leaving Covanta in Bristol as the sole direct haul facility option for the Town.

The State of Connecticut is placing an obligation on municipalities to enhance their recycling programs with the aim of diverting or segregating materials for recycling to achieve their utmost value. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has set a target of achieving a 60% diversion rate by 2024. The Town's current diversion rate is 32.3%.

Residential Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)

Residential MSW

West Hartford's residential solid waste is transported to Covanta Energy, situated in Bristol, Connecticut. Covanta operates as a resource recovery facility that converts waste into energy. The initial contract with Covanta was signed on November 8, 2012, and it has since been extended until June 30, 2024. The tipping fee has surged by 66% since the commencement of the contract. These tipping fees are financed through the General Fund. At present, the Public Works department lacks any means to measure or enforce the volume or composition of the waste that is placed for collection.

It is anticipated that the tipping fee will experience an increase in 2024 due to the forthcoming MSW contract. A likely increase of 10-20% is expected. Currently, West Hartford has just one in-state direct haul option for MSW disposal.

Curbside Collection

The Town offers numerous curbside collection services for waste removal. A contracted hauler is responsible for collecting MSW and recycling from non-commercial residential properties as well as all municipal properties. Additionally, the Town's contractor, Paine's Waste Management, provides seasonal curbside yard waste collection, weekly fall leaf collection, and Christmas tree collection services.

Under the town contract, Paine's Waste Management provides bi-weekly recycling and weekly MSW collection services. This contract is valid until September 2027 and offers the potential for two additional two-year extensions, resulting in a potential 10-year contract duration. All costs associated with collection and disposal are funded through the tax base. For the fiscal year 2024, the annual cost of MSW collection is \$1,615,700, with annual fee adjustments to account for changes in the cost of doing business, as indicated by fluctuations in the US City Average Consumer Price Index (CPI). As the economy expands, so too will the expenses associated with collection.

At the outset of the collections contract in 2007, eligible residents were supplied with a 95-gallon MSW cart. Presently, a 65-gallon cart is available as an alternative, although it is not the preferred cart size. The Town is the owner of all MSW carts, and it is advisable that when the time comes for cart replacement, the uniform cart capacity should be standardized at 65 gallons. This alignment with 65-gallon carts supports the Town's objectives to reduce waste disposal efforts. In general, the Town's waste carts have been in service for 16 years since 2007, surpassing their estimated lifespan. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the Town initiates the process of recapitalizing our waste carts in the near future.

Furthermore, Paine's also offers a bulky collection service, where residents can acquire permits for curbside bulky waste collections. These permits can be obtained via credit card 24 hours a day through the Town's website or by directly contacting Paine's. The items eligible for bulky collections include appliances, mattresses, box springs, metal waste, and bulk waste loads equivalent to a standard-sized pickup truck.

	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
MSW Collected (T)	19,525	19,551	19,656	19,553	18,824	18,674

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
MSW Collected (T)	18,246	18,617	19,339	18,332	18,227

Residential Recycling

Curbside Recycling

A bi-weekly single-stream curbside recyclables collection service is provided for properties with three or fewer dwelling units, as well as certain condo units and apartments. Acceptable recyclable materials encompass mixed paper, corrugated cardboard, chipboard, glass, metal cans, food grade aerosol cans, plastic tubs, jugs, bottles and jars, and cartons.

The recyclables collection service is funded through the tax base. The recycling budget for FY24 amounts to \$1,619,800, encompassing expenses related to management, collection, and the operation of the Yard Waste and Recycling Center. Specifically, the cost of curbside recyclables collection is \$256,000. Similar to refuse collection, the collection cost undergoes annual adjustments to account for changes in the cost of doing business, as measured by fluctuations in the US City Average Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Furthermore, the operation of the Yard Waste and Recycling Center incurs an annual cost of \$141,000. This fee encompasses site management and the transfer of yard waste materials dropped off by residents. To offset the

operating fees of the drop-off center, a permit fee is imposed on residents who utilize the facility. Supplemental permit revenue attributes approximately \$150,100 annually.

In 2010, residents were supplied with 95-gallon carts for curbside recycling, which are owned by the Town of West Hartford. Similar to MSW carts it is advisable to contemplate the recapitalization of recycling carts in 2027.

Processing of Recyclables

Recyclables collected are transported to the Murphy Road Recycling LLC material recovery facility, situated at 655 Christian Lane in Berlin, CT. Murphy Road Recycling was granted a three-year contract commencing on January 1, 2017, with the option for two one-year renewal periods, bringing the contract's current expiration date to June 30, 2024. Under this agreement, Murphy Road LLC invoices the town at a rate of \$85.00 per ton or market equivalent based on current commodity revenue sharing. Commodity sharing is the value of recycled items on the open market for remanufacture. When prices are favorable Murphy Road passes on those increased valuations lowering the Town's costs. All loads are screened as they are tipped and graded by a loader operator. Fees are assessed for high contamination rates.

Resident Recycling Center

The Town offers a Drop-off Center at the Yard Waste and Recycling Center, situated at 25 Brixton Street, where residents can bring various recyclable materials. At this location, residents can drop off items such as small (less than 4" diameter) chunk wood, brush, leaves, clean fill, scrap metal, acceptable plastics, cardboard, clothing, textiles, paint, mattresses, electronics, and books. It's important to note that while this site supports recycling, it is not a Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) transfer station or a dump. Plans are currently in progress to redesign and modernize the site, including the formal capping and closing of the historical landfill, repurposing open space for Public Works operations and emergency response needs.

The town is also exploring opportunities for enhanced disposal options for residential construction and demolition debris, bulky waste, and other challenging-to-dispose-of items, as well as expanding recycling options to support Product Stewardship programs, including food waste diversion. The site may also include waste transfer options for new MSW disposal methods, potentially necessitating a public-private partnership.

Supreme Forest Products operated the Drop-off Center under a contract awarded in 2015 for the management and maintenance of the Yard Waste and Recycling Center. This contract with Supreme Forest Products concluded on March 30, 2023. The town's 2015 contract included provisions for considering alternative proposals to achieve cost savings and revenue generation for the town while fulfilling its need for a full-service provider to manage the Yard Waste and Recycling facility. However, Supreme Forest Products declined to take any action on alternative proposals, including essential storm-water management improvements.

The Yard Waste and Recycling Center is situated on the former Town dump and the site of the former incineration building, which was demolished in 2019. Supreme was given an opportunity to submit a new proposal to operate and maintain the site's operations in 2021. Nevertheless, Supreme Forest Products primarily specializes in wood and vegetation production and did not express interest in collaborating with the Town to develop the site to accommodate additional waste material disposal solutions. Furthermore, considering the landfill capping, storm-water management, and Public Works yard requirements, the practicality of a large-scale wood and vegetation product operation within the available footprint became unrealistic.

Currently, the historical landfill site is in a state of readiness, awaiting final cap and closure permit approval from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Permit issuance is anticipated by the end of the current calendar year.

Commercial MSW

Commercial waste refers to the waste generated by businesses and large multi-family properties, including apartments and condominium associations. In West Hartford, the management of commercial waste is handled privately. Private haulers are obligated to register with the Town of West Hartford annually and obtain permits in accordance with Town Ordinance 94-2. However, it's worth noting that a significant number of haulers are not in compliance with this requirement.

Commercial businesses bear the costs associated with the collection and disposal of their materials. Unlike residential entities, commercial establishments are not granted access to the Yard Waste and Recycling Center through a Town permit. Nevertheless, Supreme Forest does permit the disposal of yard waste for a fee.

It's important to highlight that the Town does not maintain records pertaining to commercial waste, and as such, the Town does not have information regarding the quantity of waste and recycled materials generated by commercial entities. Commercial waste haulers are mandated to provide this information to the State of Connecticut on an annual basis.

Waste Reduction Initiatives

In 2016, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) updated the State Solid Waste Management Plan, which outlines a strategy to divert waste through source reduction, reuse, and recycling, with the ambitious goal of diverting no less than sixty percent (60%) of the solid waste generated in the state after January 1, 2024. Since 2016, the Town's waste management practices have remained unchanged, and our gross waste data has shown minimal variation year after year. It is evident that the State's 2024 goal will not be attained under the Town's current practices.

At the departmental level, we have explored alternative programs, including efforts to educate the public about the advantages of Unit-Based Pricing (UBP), also known as Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT). Waste reduction programs are highly recommended and endorsed by DEEP.

In 2016, the Town was granted an opportunity to explore the "Save Money and Reduce Trash" (SMART) initiative. We contracted with Waste Zero to propose and educate the public about a fairer and more equitable system of solid waste financing that could reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills or incinerated and boost recycling. Unfortunately, the waste reduction incentive did not receive a favorable response from the Town's constituents, and the Council decided against implementing any changes to its waste and recycling programs.

The Public Works Department has undertaken various initiatives in an attempt to reduce waste, such as offering weekly recycling collection, which did not result in a significant increase in recycling quantities or waste reduction. Additional measures have been introduced, including food scrap collection in schools. Public Works has also implemented various tools, such as hiring a Recycling Coordinator who spearheads programs like a waste wizard app to address recycling inquiries, social media educational campaigns, public workshops, educational tables, and a range of public events like farmer's markets and Celebrate West Hartford. The Town has made enhancements to its website, restructured the yard waste and recycling permit process, and introduced more recycling options, including electronics collection, mattress collection, and paint collection.

Looking Forward

All of the actions undertaken by Public Works, while well intentioned for conservation and waste reduction are not enough. It will require substantive action (directive?) from Town administration to truly reduce the amount of waste generated, affect behavior and move residents to higher levels of understanding and compliance in meeting the environmental goals of the state. Changing nothing in our waste management program is not an option nor is it considerate of future generations. West Hartford is at a waste management crossroads and has the exciting opportunity to be a leader in the state by choosing an innovative waste management path forward.