



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

December 18, 2023

7:00 PM, Room 307, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to order – 7:05 PM

- *Jim Fishman Y*
- *Kimberly Hughes Y*
- *Aditee Madkekar Y*
- *Christy Matthews Y*
- *Ted Newton Y*
- *Alejandro Paiuk Y*
- *Bernard Pelletier Y*
- *Stephen Sack N*
- *David Sagers Y*
- *Rachael Virgin N*
- *Patricia Wilson Y*
- *Town Staff: Catherine Diviney, Katherine Bruns*
- *Student Reps: Nathaniel Goldschmidt*
- *Public: Erik Granstrand, Lucianna Granstrand, Chris Nelson, Chris Feely, Lauren Walker*

2. Approval of prior meeting minutes– *Approved 10-0.*

3. Community comment - *None.*

4. Old business

- *Operating rules/voting – Commission revisited concept of majority voting and will stick with standard practice (i.e., must have a quorum to hold a meeting (and take any votes), majority vote wins.)*
- *Climate Pollution Reduction Grant/CRCOG recap – There is an Advisory Committee update meeting tomorrow (Bernie and Catherine). There are a series of events and meetings upcoming and opportunities for input via survey. In Jan, there will be an in-person meeting before Priority Climate Action Plan is published. Still a little unclear how CRCOG and their consultant Dewberry are going to tie all the input together and come up with priority regional actions.*
- *Working Group reports – see attached reports*
 - *Sustainable Land Care – Kim said the Sust Land Care Working Group events had great attendance through networking. The group is also considering changing their name to reflect something about “Nature-based Solutions”. She would like an opportunity to share their Action Plan in future.*

- Clean Energy – *Held 1st meeting and met each other. Priority in-flight project is PowerSmart – education outreach on solar & home batteries. Brainstormed additional ideas. Rachael commented that she had reviewed the Energy Plan and would love to discuss more. Jim gave summary of participating (as a Commission rep) in RFP selection process for new Elmwood CC architect. Town narrowed from 11 to 6 firms, which they interviewed and will be requesting cost proposals from 3. Jim also attended last 2 hearing on Asylum Ave. Chris Feely’s team asked good questions of the developer. Nothing has been approved yet. The 1700 site will be presented for vote soon. Developer withdrew application on 1800 as the and will resubmit. There is a good WeHa article summarizes the process. Big job for volunteer TP&Z Commission – it will take time. Chris and 2 others met with Todd, Duane, and Rick – were told that “Sust WH Commission will weigh in on the decision.” Bernie and Catherine will ask what was meant. Dave suggested getting a matrix together of all the things that Sust WH commission cares about in preparation for that. Catherine will also ask about status of DRAC incorporating sustainability questions.*
- Waste – *Waste Working Group has been very busy since sending the recommendation letter. Approval process and timeline to get in front of Town Council shifted slightly, but they did give presentation to the PWF&S Committee. Went very well. Link to recording in the report. Next step is to try and get pilot extended. Chris Nelson explained that in order secure funds they need to have a bridge to somewhere and show intent in the form of Town Council approval. Some frustration with iterative process. Katherine showed some slides of the waste audits (attached) – waste is astounding! The Town’s current waste hauler RFP has been broadened to include other options of co-collection due 1/10/24. IF co-collection is not a viable option, separate food scrap route may be viable interim with DEEP funds.*

5. Working Group discussion

- *Rachel presented some possible messaging points (attached). There was discussion about how far to take outreach and how to answer questions from the public until Commission had more certainty about Town Council’s direction. There was general agreement the outreach needs to start ASAP and that is needs to start with factual education about the waste crisis. WeHa waste audit photos will be useful to show. Kim suggested that until we start engaging with people we won’t know the exact messaging. Nathaniel suggested the Nightly News.*
- *It was decided not to vote on WWG commencing public outreach; instead, Waste Working Group will draft some example mini-presentations for Jan 22 meeting.*

6. New business

- *Communications Plan discussion, including boundaries – The Communications Working Group has its 1st meeting (Christy, Catherine, Katherine, and Pat). Christy went through her draft Communication Plan and shared some ideas about social media, websites, contact management, and funding/budgets. Top priority will likely be website content and supporting Waste Working Group. Catherine indicated some of the proposed ideas will need further discussion with Town and guidelines on Town vs Commission scope. There is overlap with Category 8 (Communication) in Sustainable CT. Ted voiced concern about oversight of content, even currently with Sust WH Facebook page which is Public Group. Catherine has talked to Corporation Counsel but will take the Commission logo down for now.*

7. Next steps (publicity, Town/Commission resources, etc.) – *out of time*
8. Commission calendar updates - *out of time*
9. Agenda for next meeting – *Next meeting Monday, Jan 22, 2024.*
10. Adjournment – *9:21 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.

Your Home is a HABITAT

WELCOME ALL!

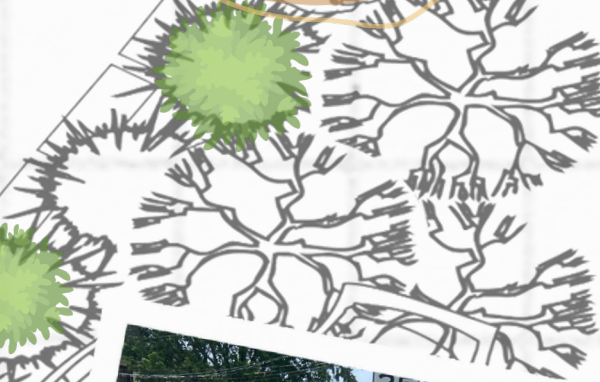
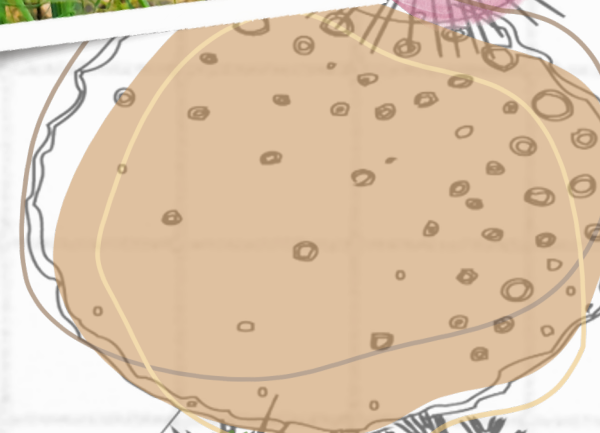
Brought to you by the
Sustainable Land Care Working Group:



Representing:



The WEST·HARTFORD·GARDEN·CLUB



SLCWG Update:

We are on a mission to
co-create climate action through
nature-based solutions
in a way that values health,
biodiversity, sustainability and
respect for all living things.



Educational Series

Westmoor Park (in-person), Nov 12

~15 people

Activities for children

Tour gardens

Noah Webster Library (zoom), Nov 16

150+ registered, 80+ in attendance

Q: How can we capture this audience?



Wolcott Park Meadow and Garden

Meadow

Wood Chips as site prep

Partner with DPW, Leisure Services

Entrance Garden

Mugwort – invasive management

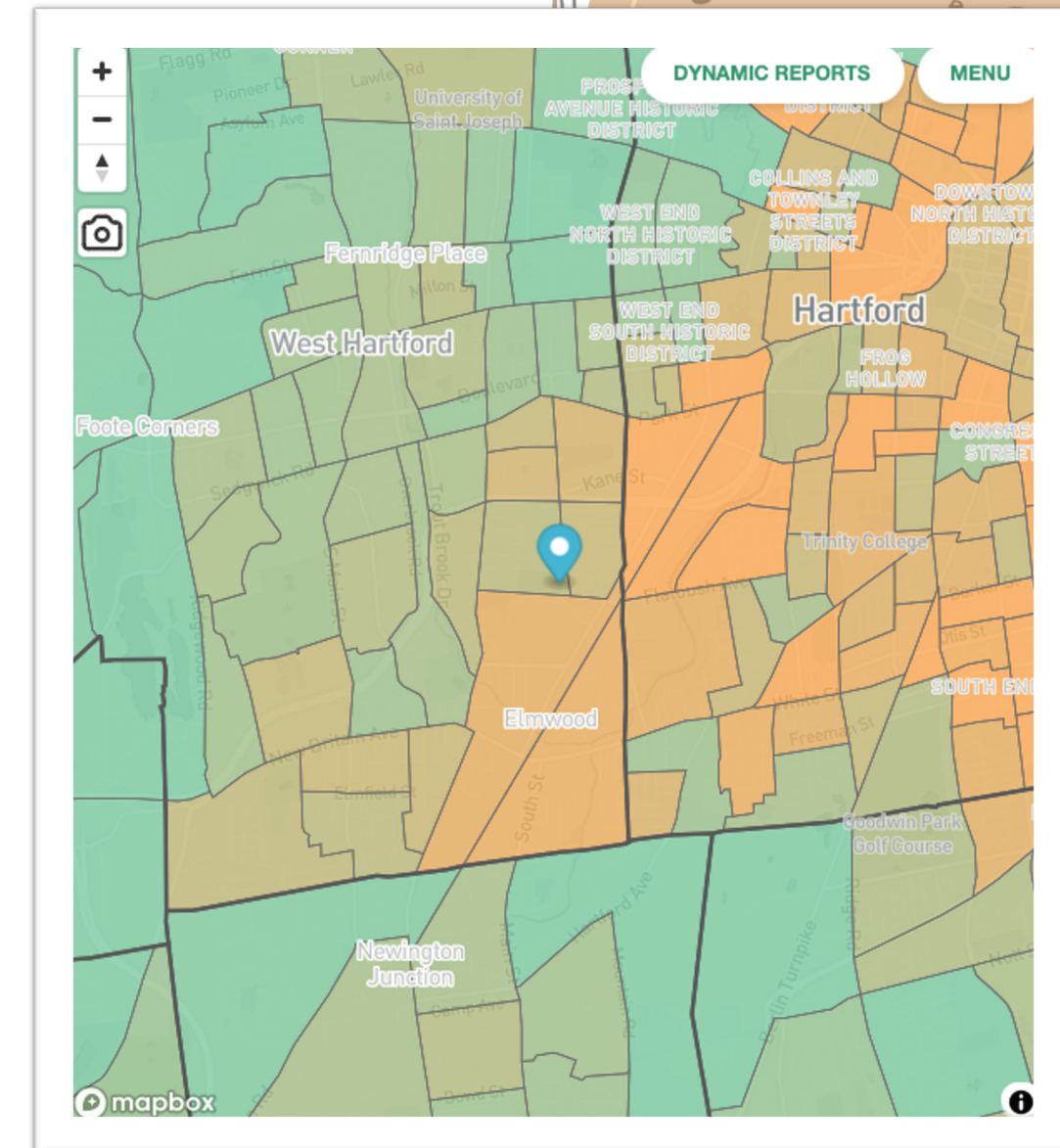
Perennial garden, work has begun and will
continue into Spring

Outreach plan needed



Action Plan

- **Nature-based solutions that address:**
 - *Climate Change * Biodiversity Loss* Habitat Loss*
- **Centering Environmental Justice**
- **Projects, Practices and Policies that are organized into 3 buckets:**
 1. Pollinator Pathways
 2. Absorbent Landscapes
 3. Connected Canopies



Clean Energy Working Group – Inaugural Meeting Report

5PM to 6:15PM, Wednesday December 13, 2024 via zoom

Attendees:

- Mike Cocca
- Stephen Sack
- Aditee Madkekar
- Celia Kosinski
- Jonathan Humphrey
- Bernie Pelletier
- Catherine Diviney

Introductions:

- Mike Cocca – GE Engineer. Interested in decarbonization, building efficiency, and hydrogen technology
- Stephen Sack – CEO (5 generation) of family energy company working in Oil, Renewable Diesel, BioDiesel, Electricity markets, and marketing Clean Energy Credits. Interested in solar, business efficiency, and biofuels.
- Aditee Madkekar – Working for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Previously with CT DEEP working on the Shared Clean Energy Facility program. Interested in Offshore Wind and increased adoption of renewable energy.
- Celia Kosinski - Policy Manager for Electrification Coalition. Interested in EVSE and EVs.
- Jonathan Humphrey – President of Natural Dividends. Interested in clean energy deployment and building efficiency
- Bernie Pelletier – VP People’s Action for Clean Energy. Interested in moving WH to a renewable energy future
- Catherine Diviney – West Hartford Energy Specialist. Coordinates towns Sustainable CT program. Interested in renewable energy and building efficiency for municipal buildings, residential buildings, and commercial buildings.

The group discussed the operating rules for 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 or Town Council without approval of the Commission
4. The working group cannot announce policy decisions without approval of the Commission
5. 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 within the scope of the Working Group

In flight projects (largely left over from the Clean Energy Commission):

- PowerSmart – an education and outreach campaign designed to educate residents on residential battery storage potential. To Do:

- Kickoff meeting (late January)
- Press release (early January)
- Plan 6-month outreach campaign
- Align solar education to go with batteries
- Formalize town's unofficial Dark Sky policy/review thru regulation

Additional ideas (open discussion):

- Improve building efficiency on new construction (major developments such as 1700/1800 Asylum)
- Intersect/ work with DRAC to ingrain energy efficiency along with design considerations
- Integrate EVSE (EV charging) into new construction projects
- Have the town foster buildings efficiency:
 - Smooth / reduced permitting
 - Incentives for energy efficiency
 - Even if the town cannot mandate standards, we could have a check list of steps that developers must take – i.e., talk to Eversource new construction group, acknowledge energy efficiency as a goal, etc.
 - Town leads by example – e.g., New Community Center
 - Help town officials and staff by exploring energy efficiency opportunities in other towns (e.g., Manchester net zero schools)
- Encourage appropriate electrification of town fleet. Encourage use of bio-diesel
- Encourage new building to be EV ready
- Review energy procurement opportunities (Aditee)
- Can West Hartford develop a Shared Clean Energy Facility?
- Solar on Affordable Housing stock (E.g., West Hartford Inn project)
- Update WH Clean Energy Plan:

https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1628009345/westhartfordctgov/etwrxr9c5p9avs2kz69/WH_ENERGYPLAN_2021_0622.pdf

Next steps – next meeting:

- January 10th at 5PM
- Work on PowerSmart Launch and press release
- Develop 2024 work plan from list above
- Report on Municipal Energy use, spending, and plans
- Report on Residential Energy and Commercial Energy use

Waste Working Group

Report to the Sustainable West Hartford Commission

We've been busy!

Waste Crisis/ UBP letter sent 11/30

Waste Audits of pilot and non-pilot neighborhoods took place 12/04-12/12

Appearance to Town Council 12/13 was blocked by cancelation of 12/04 PWFSC meeting

Instead, presentation given to Public Works Facilities Sustainability Committee 12/13 (Councillors Cantor, Walters, and Blanks in attendance, + Rick Ledwith and John Phillips). Click [here](#) to watch meeting.

Timeline update since our 11/30/23 letter:

- John Phillips will request extension of existing pilot (to take it past Feb. 1) in time for next PWFSC meeting 01/04/24, which is in time for 01/23/24 DEEP benchmark. (TC vote not needed at this time)
- Spring 2024: UBP/food scrap/co-collection Program design between Town Council, Town staff, and Waste Zero
- April 2024: John Phillips' budget plan completed, Town Council votes whether to take the pilot town-wide
- Fall 2024: Potential implementation of town-wide pilot, runs for the better part of a year (using DEEP grant funds)
- Fall 2025: Potential transition to permanence

We are optimistic!

Notes for beginning outreach

Waste Working Group

- Creating a spreadsheet of relevant info and resources, including:
- Waste Crisis in general (NV story map <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/be24e917780f42909ddb3248384a2b90>)
- Discussion of status quo in our town: summary of pilot results

- Modes of communication: coffee hours, community organizations, print and media

Public Works

- Public Works has a stated goal of reducing waste
- Public Works has concluded there are 3 options:
 - Do nothing (Pay utilities of unmeasured and unmonitored trash)
 - De-couple waste from town services entirely, and privatize collection (residents contract their own hauling/ disposal)
 - Adopt generational change to waste management: UBP + either separate food scrap collection or co-collection

Town of West Hartford

- Town is taking a deep look at UBP, food scrap diversion, and co-collection, using pilot as a springboard
- Town is aware of DEEP grant benchmarks and working in partnership with DEEP/ WZ
- Program design to be finalized through the spring as PW, TC, and staff explore options more deeply, and PW develops a business plan
- Town is exploring all options carefully, especially food scrap separate collection or co-collection

Vote to have the WWG and Sustainable WH Commission begin outreach



CONNECTICUT'S WASTE CRISIS

WEST HARTFORD – PATHWAY TO WASTE REDUCTION

When is trash day?

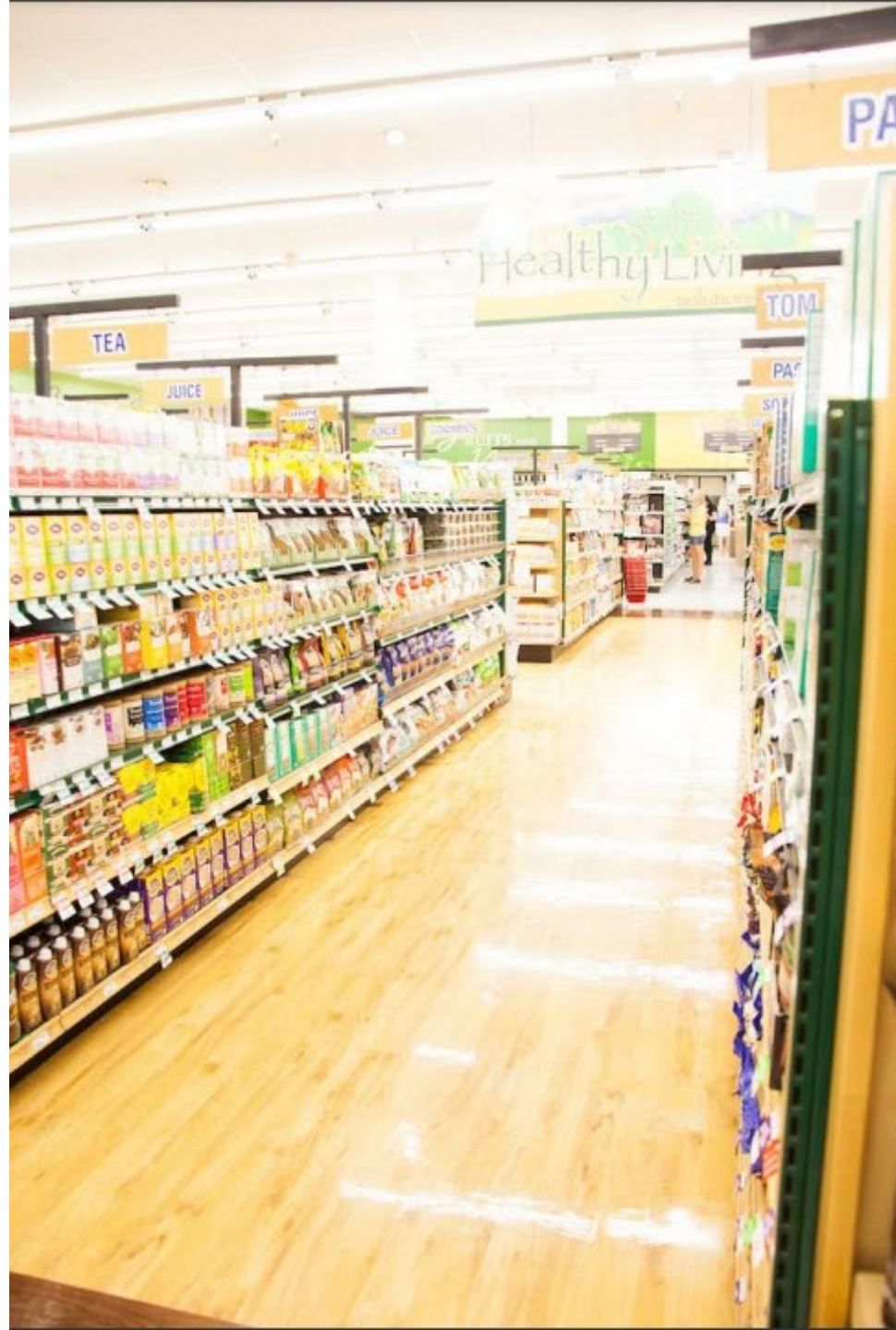
Why do we know so much about the supply chain, and so little about the “removal-chain”?





WHAT DOES IT
COST AND WHERE
DOES IT GO?

- 40% of trash is shipped out of state – approximately 800,000 tons in 2022
- FY22 trash disposal cost around \$5.5 million
- US Americans throw away 2 X more trash in 2017 compared to 1960
- There is simply more trash due to single use culture
- Not sustainable



Morley Neighborhood Pilot



- 685 Households
- 2 orange trash bags & 1 green food scrap bag per week
- 51 % Participation - Food Scraps
- Avg 1.3 tons/week food scrap
- 43 tons food scraps diverted after 33 Weeks!
- “My trash is less stinky!”





Waste Audit- Day 1

Pilot Neighborhood

Pilot participants: 19 lbs. trash per week

Non participants: 38 lbs. trash per week





Waste Audit Day 2

- 20% of trash was recyclable
- 26% food Scraps
- 13.5 % donatable



Waste Audit Day 3



WASTE CRISIS IS NOT GOING AWAY

West Hartford Disposal Cost (Tip Fee)	Trash	Food Scraps
2023	\$97	\$61
2024	\$115 - \$120	\$61

