



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

September 30, 2024

7:00 PM, Room 407, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order 7:01 PM

- *Jim Fishman Y*
- *Kimberly Hughes Y*
- *Aditee Madkekar Y*
- *Christy Matthews Y*
- *Ted Newton Y*
- *Alejandro Paiuk Y*
- *Bernard Pelletier Y*
- *Stephen Sack Y*
- *David Sagers Y*
- *Patricia Wilson (via Teams).*
- *Vacant*
- *Town Staff: Katherine Bruns (Recycling Coordinator), Catherine Diviney (Energy Specialist), John Phillips, Director of Public Works.*
- *Public: Eric Granstrand, Luciana Granstrand, Madeline Hexter, Chris Kelly, Chris Feely, Dan Gleason.*
- *It was confirmed that Quorum must consist of in person attendance, which it was. One commissioner attended via Teams.*
- *WHPS student reps status – Catherine reported she again reached out to Hall and Conard environmental club faculty advisors to encourage student reps. No answer yet*

2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes - Approved (9-0)

3. Communications & Community Comment (max 3 min each)

Madeline Hexter wished to comment on question of whether the pollinator planting project at Wolcott Children's Forest Entrance is reproduceable? She offered that "any plan depends on place." It needs planning and labor which is site specific and hard to reproduce. It needs ongoing maintenance which is a commitment. Chris Feely said she would write a methods section because there is a need for neighborhood resources for each particular planting area.

4. Ongoing Business

- Sustainable CT update – [Registration](#) for Wed, Nov 13, Old Saybrook celebration and awards
Town filed for gold level certification. Should hear by end of November. Catherine and Bernie encouraged other Commissioners to attend the Nov 13th Sustainable CT event in Old Saybrook.
- Working Group Reports, discussion as needed

- Waste – food waste diversion program update - John Phillips, Director of Public Works
 - *John Phillips gave presentation (attached) of updates on what Town is contemplating. Presented three options: curbside weekly collection; drop-off option with 12-15 drop off locations and last option, not on slides, is a Town franchise option meaning Town contracts with one hauler in the expectation with guaranteed collection, cost could be lowered. This third, franchise option, would be exclusive to WH residents to participate and contract directly with hauler.*
 - *There was discussion and Q&A about the pros and cons of each option, including convenience, cost, environmental impact.*
 - *John indicated that Town Council wants to make a decision very quickly, and it will be discussed at the 10/17 PWFS Committee meeting. He also noted that this is a materials management program; not waste reduction program. Public Works' job is to manage trash, not reduce.*
- Nature-Based Solutions - none
- Energy / Buildings – EV Showcase (joint with Sierra Club of CT) to be held this Sat, Oct 6 10-1 PM, Town Hall lot. Please come and help promote. Promotion ongoing, videos produced by Kingswood Oxford students to be used on social media this week. Town & BOE elected officials to be invited. There will be electric vehicles, an electric school bus, Town's 2023 Ford e-Transit Van, e-bike test rides, electric lawn equipment, EV charging, heat pumps, information on rebates, etc.
- Communications & Engagement - none

5. New Business

- Report to Town Council – *There was an interactive discussion about the structure and content of a Report to Council, how the Commission should set goals, and decide what to work on in 2025.*
 - 1st Half of Draft - Background / 2024 Year in Review sections.
 - *Should have "key accomplishments" in beginning of presentation*
 - 2025 Planning / Goal Setting discussion (led by Dave Sagers)
 - *Appears to be a wide variety of items Commission can tackle, but no direction*
 - *How does Commission focus to make the most difference? Go deeper with one item? Or spread ourselves across. Breadth vs Depth*
 - *What difference does Commission want to make? How does Commission bring this into planning process?*
 - *Looking to 2025 – prioritize initiatives; research other municipality efforts, engage community stake holders on priorities*
 - *Example: City of Melrose net zero action plan example: 5 goals, 31 actions. Ambitious goals. Sustainable CT is another a ready-built framework*
 - *Have a listening session to see what residents want. Sustainable CT – has equity coaches or use WH's own Equity Coordinator*
 - *What questions should group be asking? Does group want to engage Town Council? Residents? Schools?*
 - *Build trust with Town/Council by asking what their sustainability initiatives are. Get to point where there is trust and the Town will look to Commission for guidance. Decisions are made and fiscally based before Commission hears about them*

- *Encourage more diversity in Commission membership.*
 - *Meet with Town Council and see what Town wants, and try to assist*
 - *Give the Town the tools to make good Sustainability decisions.*
 - *How to navigate Town politics?*
- 2nd Half of Draft - 2025 Look Ahead and other sections
- *New officers' election, working groups – confirmed who wishes to remain on ballot and deferred to next meeting*
6. Staff Report – Catherine provided several updates:
 - *Town buying its 2nd EV, partially funded by a CMAQ (Congestion, Mitigation, and Air Quality) grant. Public Works also buying an electric litter vacuum, instead of gas version.*
 - *Implementing steam trap repairs in 5 steam-heated buildings/school ahead of heating season.*
 - *Just started state mandated HVAC inspections at all 16 schools. This work will lead to reports with recommendations ranging from small, O&M items, to large capital projects.*
 - *Duffy HVAC Replacement & Windows project (the first of 9 elementary school projects) is underway (2 years of construction). Webster Hill in planning stages.*
 - *Many recent personnel changes in Town personnel (trades especially) due to retirement and people leaving.*
 7. Calendar Updates – 10/6 (Sun) – WH EV Showcase (rain date 10/13), PWF&S Committee – 1st Thursday of month: **10/17**, 11/7, 12/5, 1/9/25
 8. Next Steps & Agenda for Next Meeting – *continue with 2025 planning and Report to Council - Aditee will consolidate any comments from Commissioners; Election of officers.*
 9. Adjournment 9:08 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.

A high-angle, top-down photograph of a family of four sitting around a round dining table. The table is covered with a blue and green plaid tablecloth. On the table are various breakfast items: a bowl of cereal, a plate of fruit (melon, grapes, kiwi), a plate of toast with jam, a bowl of cornmeal, a small plate with butter, and several cups of coffee or juice. The family consists of a man, a woman, and two children. The man is on the left, the woman is on the right, and the children are at the top of the frame. The text "Public Works Waste Management" is overlaid in large white letters, and "Food Scrap Diversion" is overlaid in smaller white letters below it.

Public Works Waste Management

Food Scrap Diversion

What is Food Scrap Diversion ?

- Food scrap diversion means keeping all food out of the waste stream. This includes all food scraps from meal prep and leftovers to expired foods. Collected food scraps are turned into beneficial products like energy and compost.





Food Scrap Collection Programing

- Following the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole Council on August 7, 2024, Public Works has been tasked with developing a town-wide food scrap diversion program to support the Town's waste reduction efforts.

Option 1 Curbside Collection



Available to all Residential Households



Weekly collection



Participants would purchase a 13 gallon collection cart, identical to the way the yard waste carts are purchased.



Food scraps will go to Quantum BioPower – a food scrap to energy facility in Southington, CT



Curbside Collection Benefits

- Highly convenient
- Ensures higher participation
- Easy to use 13 gallon cart
- Weekly collection encourages waste reduction for every household



Option 2

Food Scrap Drop Off Stations

- Available to all residents
- Drop off station locations at all town parks and town facility parking lots:
 - Eisenhower, Fernridge, Vanderbilt, Kennedy, Beachland, Wolcott, Spice Bush, Norfeldt, Faxon Library, Senior Center/North Library, ECC and the Town Hall
- Free food scrap drop off - permit required via an app
- 24/7 access
- Homebound households can utilize a help-a-neighbor program. We will consider alternate support programming as demand for services increases
- Addresses concerns of wildlife intrusion

Drop off Station Benefits

- 12 convenient drop off locations throughout the town
- Bear and rodent proof
- Cost efficient vs. curbside collection
- Accessible 24/7



Program Cost Comparison

Curb-side Collection		Drop-off Stations	
Collection and Transportation	\$400,000	Collection and Transportation	\$35,000
Assumes 2000 (10%) household participants at \$200 hh/yr		For one or more weekly collections, including station maintenance	
13 Gallon Carts	\$25.00 per cart	Drop-off Stations	\$45,000
- Purchased by Household - One time charge for participation		15 station throughout town	
Disposal Fees	\$60 per ton	App fees	\$3,000
\$35 per ton savings to MSW cost		Disposal Fees	\$60.00 per ton
\$35 per ton savings to MSW cost		\$35 per ton savings to MSW cost	
Education and Outreach	\$24,000	Education and Outreach	\$24,000
		Station Build-out and Signage	\$20,000
1st Year cost	\$349,000	1st Year cost	\$124,000
Assumes 2000 participants		Assumes 2000 participants	
Annual Recurring Cost	\$440,000	Annual Recurring Cost	\$62,000
Assumes a 10% increase in participation		Assumes a 10% increase in participation	

Next Steps

- Seek input from Sustainable West Hartford Commission
- Consensus of discussed options
- Initiate support resolution and program funding
- Initiate a procurement process to support program resources and implementation.
- Education and Outreach

