



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

October 28, 2024

7:00 PM, Room 407, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order 7:06 PM

- *Jim Fishman N*
- *Kimberly Hughes Y*
- *Aditee Madkekar (via Teams)*
- *Christy Matthews N*
- *Ted Newton Y*
- *Alejandro Paiuk Y*
- *Bernard Pelletier Y*
- *Stephen Sack Y*
- *David Sagers Y*
- *Patricia Wilson Y*
- *Vacant (since Aug 2024)*
- *Student Reps: Erica Kahn (via Teams), Nathaniel Goldschmidt*
- *Town Staff: Katherine Bruns (Recycling Coordinator), Catherine Diviney (Energy Specialist)*
- *Public: Andrea Yuliano, Dan Gleason*

2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes, approved 7-0

3. Administrative

- *Reappointments and vacancies – Pat and Aditee: interested in reappointment. Alejandro: to resign Dec 31. Commission will have 2 vacancies, up to Town Council to appoint new members, no indication of when yet. Town just sent out press/announcement about vacancies on multiple Commissions. Discussion about Town promotion process for vacancies and recruitment of more diversity on Boards & Commission.*
- *2025 meeting dates – Commission wants to continue with Monday evening meeting dates; will vote on schedule next meeting.*
- *New officers (votes) – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary*
 - *Dave Sagers to become Chair effective at close of meeting – VOTE: approved 7-0*
 - *Steve Sack to become Vice Chair effective at close of meeting – VOTE: approved 7-0*
 - *Bernie Pelletier to become Secretary effective at close of meeting – VOTE: approved 7-0*
 - *Working Groups – working groups and leads to remain the same for now (Waste-Ted; Nature Based Solutions – Kim; Energy- Bernie; Communications-not meeting). Existing Working Groups may be revisited in light of 2025 Commission workplan.*

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

- *Andrea voiced support for Cool West Hartford initiative in 2025.*
- *Students Reps – Student Rep reports will be included as standard agenda item under Working Group Reports for next meeting.*
 - *Nathanial introduced himself to group and reported that Hall Environmental Club is working on restarting programs from last year, including bottle recycling, farm program, and setting goals for the year.*
 - *Erica introduced herself and reported that Conard Enviro Club experienced some decline in recent years but is working to rebrand and expand activities. Currently, they have a fundraiser to sponsor a zero-waste market in Florida as part of Hurricane Milton recovery.*
- *Dave Sagers expressed thanks to Bernie for all hard work and dedicated leadership as Chair over many years!*

5. Ongoing Business

- *Sustainable CT Gold!!! – [Registration](#) for Wed, Nov 13, Old Saybrook, celebration and awards. Catherine announced that Town had received Gold-level certification and Climate Leader Designation and encouraged members to attend the Sustainable CT celebration. The Mayor, Councilors, staff, and several Commissioners are going, others interested – carpooling can/should be arranged.*
- *Working Group Reports*
 - *Waste – see attached report. Catherine reported that there was no discussion about proposals for either drop-off or curbside food waste diversion programs at the Oct 17, 2024 Public Works, Facilities & Sustainability (PWF&S) Town Council Standing Committee as originally indicated. Katherine says program options are still up in air. There was discussion about Public Works's commitment to waste reduction as opposed to waste diversion (i.e., materials management) and whether something might happen at the State level. Bernie asked about the "NIPS"/miniatures money that West Hartford receives (about \$40K per year). Katherine indicated that in West Hartford that funding IS going to towards MSW/Materials Management, including paying for her staff position, as designated in the 2022 "Bottle Bill," Other CT communities are still fighting for it or might not be aware of that the funding exists.*
 - *Nature-Based Solutions – see attached report. Kim showed diagram of Cool West Hartford and asked for time on next agenda to this action-oriented climate initiative (based on www.coolboulder.org) for Commission workplan in 2025. This initiative could include energy, waste, in addition to nature-based solutions, and the Commission would serve more as "hub" of information to provide knowledge, resources, and connections to empower residents and businesses to act. It would provide a way for people to decide what to do on their own (e.g., I care about this...I can do that....). Cool West Hartford seems to align directly with Commission's ordinance, and may also serve to push the Town by developing broader base of community support.*
 - *Energy / Buildings – see attached report*
 - *Communications & Engagement – none*

6. New Business

- *Report to Town Council (Working Group needed?)*
 - *Still in process: Catherine did first draft in PowerPoint, Aditee/Bernie/Dave took pass in middle. Commission can work to finalize the PowerPoint, or do something else (e.g., shorter, memo, etc.)*

- *There is no set format for report. Under “Duties,” the Commission’s ordinance only says: E. 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.*
- *Dave indicated maybe two versions of a report were needed. A high level to share with Council and more detail for the Commission itself. There was discussion about Cool West Hartford, Sustainable CT, and short-term work vs long-term planning work. It was decided that Working Group leads would provide their own 2025 workplan ideas for next meeting and a report (format TBD) would be finalized in hopes of a presentation to the PWF&S Committee on January 9, 2025.*
- *Bernie proposal on 12 “blank slate” sessions in 2025 – WHPL (virtual). These sessions would be booked in advance throughout 2025 and “populated” with whatever the Commission felt like doing – educational workshops, town Hall community conversations, etc. People liked this concept. Katherine will talk to Maura at the WH Public Library for dates. Commissioners should bring list of topic idea to next meeting.*
- *KO/Dan Gleason proposal on class project to inform workplan for 2025 –*
 - *See attached, Dan Gleason’s climate change class at Kingswood Oxford asking for permission/feedback to work with Commission on a class project. Dan indicated they have a draft survey based on a Yale Climate survey. There was discussion about how, who, where the survey would be administered, and what the questions were (e.g., values, demographics, willingness to sacrifice) In general, the Commission supported this as a class project. Dan will proceed and hopes the information collected will yield some useful information for the Commission.*
- 7. *Staff Report – Catherine shared that she applied for US DOE’s 2024-5 Energy CLASS, program on behalf of WHPS. “The Energy CLASS Program promotes building and energy management in school districts across America by offering trainings, resources, and a peer-to-peer learning network of schools seeking energy improvements.” Notification is delayed from Oct 18, but hopefully soon.*
- 8. *Calendar Updates – Sustainable CT Awards Ceremony 11/13, PWF&S Committee – 11/7, 12/5, 1/9/25*
- 9. *Next Steps & Agenda for Next Meeting*
 - *Natural Water Management Techniques – Aimee Petras, Farmington Valley Watershed Association is interested arranging a meeting/presentation for BOTH Commission and Town staff to share some ideas/work/projects she is doing with other communities (e.g., Bristol). People were supportive of this idea as a good fit with both educational objectives and a way to push/encourage the Town. Catherine will look to schedule something 2 months out.*
 - *Kim proposed that a discussion on Commission values alignment (not agreement) regarding sustainability topics be put on the next meeting agenda. There was discussion about whether this was necessary to move forward. Discussion was tabled at the end of the meeting.*
- 10. **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.

Waste Working Group Report

The Waste Working Group met on October 8th for 90 minutes to review the proposed options for food scrap recycling that Director of Public Works John Phillips presented to the Commission during its September 30th meeting. We discussed the potential financial and environmental impact of town-hosted drop-off locations, town-funded curbside collection and resident-funded curbside pickup. Catherine Diviney and Katherine Bruns, who had created a spreadsheet of projected expenses and food scrap diversion prior to the WWG, updated it based on WWG discussion and feedback.

Catherine and Katherine met with Mr. Phillips on the 11th later that week to review the options and develop a plan for presenting them to the Town Council. Although the curbside pickup option offers higher collection amount per dollar spent, it appears the town is leading toward the drop-off location option. Whatever choice the town makes, it include education measure to help make the program successful and emphasize the need for overall waste reduction.

The WWG does not have anything else to report at this time.

Nature-based Solutions Working Group

Sustainable West Hartford

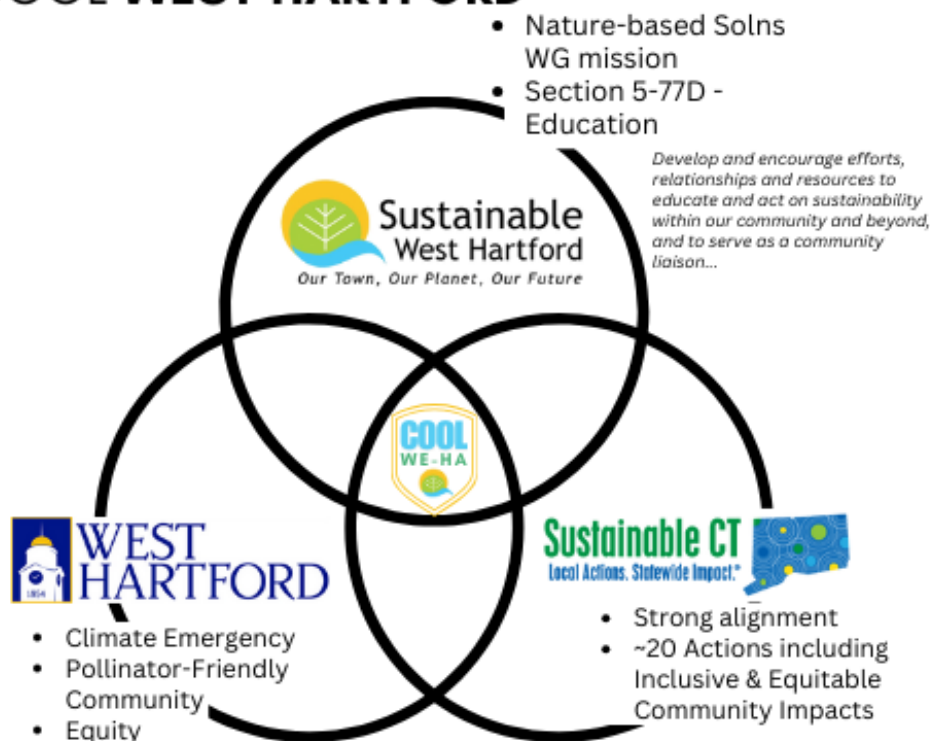
Meeting Report, October 28, 2024

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The Nature-based Solutions Working Group would like to propose, for discussion, a project for the Sustainable WH Commission's 2025 Workplan: *Cool West Hartford*. *Cool West Hartford*, an idea modeled after *Cool Boulder*, www.coolboulder.org, would be a **resident/consumer-based, climate-action education initiative** that closely aligns with the...

1. duties and responsibilities as defined by our **Sustainable WH Commission** Ordinance and the mission of the Nature-based Solutions Working Group,
2. our **Sustainable CT** Gold Certification,
3. and the **Town of West Hartford's** commitments around climate awareness and action (Climate Emergency Resolution), environmental health and well-being (Pollinator-Friendly Community Resolution) and equity advancement (inc. WHPS).

COOL WEST HARTFORD



Importantly, we believe the potential for Cool West Hartford goes beyond Nature-based Solutions. Cool Boulder is currently nature-based by design and is organized into three action

areas - Pollinator Pathways, Connected Canopies and Absorbent Landscapes (watersheds) - but we are asking the Commission to consider, ***could Cool West Hartford expand to include Action Areas that address consumer/resident-relevant topics around Waste and Energy and more?***

Key assumptions:

- Cool Boulder, our model, is a town-supported initiative with all the resources that come with a full department and paid staff. We don't have that. What we are proposing for *Cool West Hartford* would be a lot smaller in scale and would require commitment from Town leadership (Town Manager?) and various departments, notably, IT, Public Relations and Equity Advancement. Note: some of these structures, tools and permissions are already in place.
- A key success factor of the Cool Boulder program is partnerships with town departments, local organizations and experts, schools, businesses, houses of worship, etc. Essentially, one of the functions of Cool West Hartford would be to serve as a hub for citizen climate action education connecting entities that *have* resources with residents who *need* resources.
- SWC can successfully fulfill our Duties & Responsibilities by empowering residents with the knowledge and tools to take climate action. We empower residents when we make it easy to find information, which builds awareness, and when we connect them with educational opportunities in our community. A key success factor here is that every individual gets to tap into their own internal motivation to make change, connect with others and take collective action toward building a more sustainable community.

OUR ASK: Can we set aside time at our next meeting to explore this concept?

Energy Working Group Report – 10/28/24

- National Drive Electric Week was a success - >200 attendees / Help from KO students



- Applied for <https://www.energy.gov/scep/2024-2025-energy-class> - see Staff Report

KO “Literatures of Climate Change” class

12 seniors (17-18 years old); all male, surprisingly

Excited to partner with Sustainable WH



Created 4 videos for the October EV event

Helped out at the event



Current Proposal: Survey WH residents

We propose to survey residents to help Sustainable WH set or support its 2025 agenda. The survey can indicate levels of support for and levels of knowledge on various climate mitigation/adaptation plans.

- Create surveys on Sust WH items AND 2-3 class items
- Implement surveys of WH residents
- Survey through email, town center engagement, Insta/FB reels, and more
- Students will analyze the data
- Results shared at Nov 25th meeting, by Dan and (hopefully) some students

Question for the group: what key items (4-6?) would you like us to include?