



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

March 31, 2025

7:00 PM, Room 407, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order: **7:03**
 - **Jonathan Ferrigno Y**
 - **David Sagers Y**
 - **Pat Wilson Y**
 - **Stephen Sack Y**
 - **Bernard Pelletier Y**
 - **Kim Hughes Y**
 - **Ted Newton Y**
 - **James Fishman N**
 - **Christy Mathews N**
 - **Kelly Kennedy Y**
 - **Vacant**
 - **Staff Liaisons – Catherine Diviney Y, Katherine Bruns Y**
 - **Student Reps – Erica Kahn Y, Nathaniel Goldschmidt Y**
 - **Public Attendees – Madeline Hexter, Dan Gleason, John Wenz, Kerrin Jeromin, Chuck Lucas**
2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – **(approved Yes 8, No 0)**
3. Administrative – vacancies, etc.: **No progress on filling vacancy.**
4. Communications & Community Comment (max 3 min each)
 - **John Wenz discussed Strong Towns movement which encourages increasing residential density, fewer cars, more walking and bicycling. Mr. Wenz encouraged attendance at the 7PM April 15th meeting at the Gastro Park.**
 - **Email from Hall High School re Earth Day Fair (Catherine Diviney & Katherine Bruns to attend)**
 - **Liane Allen Jacobson – resume sent to commission. Catherine invited to Commission mtg and suggested submitting application to Town Clerk.**
5. Ongoing Business
 - Student Rep Reports
 - **Hall working on Earth Day Event (Student Earth Day Fair w/ educational booths at lunch)**
 - **Conard working on Earth Day Event (Fast Fashion)**
 - Town Engagement
 - Clarity on roles of liaison vs PWF&S Committee
 - **The liaison role does not eliminate the need to send proposals through the PWF&S committee. Rather the liaison role is a means for the Town Council and the Commission to engage in dialogue about priorities and goals**
 - Monthly check-ins -Dave/Town Manager
 - **Dave Sagers (Chair) relayed the Mayor's Youth Council would be willing to work with the Commission on suitable projects. Website: <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/government-services/boards-commisions/mayors-youth-council>. There was also discussion of having Nathaniel Goldschmidt and Erica**

Kahn reach out to the Mayor's Youth Council to share work they are doing in the HS environmental clubs.

- Update on [Earth Action Day](#), Earthday.org event
 - ***It was confirmed that Town/Sustainable West Hartford Commission won't organize a town hall event this year.***
- Working Groups Reports
 - Waste
 - ***Katherine Bruns and Ted Newton discussed their "Waste Reduction" WHCI session. They enjoyed doing it. There was discussion of taking shorter pieces from the 27-minute video to share on social media.***
 - ***There was discussion of the town's food waste drop off program. There is recognition that while this is not a complete solution to food waste diversion it is a step in the right direction and we should support it***
 - ***There was a discussion that because the trash bill is buried in the mill rate there is little resident recognition of the cost of trash pickup.***
 - ***Paine's has been purchased by USA Waste. This change of ownership is expected to have no impact on pick out routes and timing. However, it is an opportunity to reacquaint residents with recycling rules. (It is recognized that many residents recycle incorrectly.)***
 - Nature-Based Solutions
 - ***Discussion of the planting policy that the Nature Based Solutions group sent to Leisure Services. John Phillips provided a detailed response noting that full implementation of the proposal would be too expensive. Nature Based Solution group members noted that all they really wanted was for the town to adopt a list of native plants for plantings. This would be a zero-cost proposal. Dave Sagers and Kim Hughes to follow-up.***
 - Energy / Buildings
 - ***Bernie Pelletier distributed the EEB Annual Legislative Report. This report provides a high-level summary of the programs and accomplishments and will be useful for the town to understand what programs exist for residents and businesses.***
 - ***The decision on the "Vessel" technologies building on Highland Street was rescheduled.***
 - Land Use / Planning
 - ***On behalf of Land Trust, Dave has been exploring land acquisition and other options in line with POCD.***
 - Cool West Hartford
 - ***Kelly Kennedy, Jonathan Ferrigno, Katherine Bruns, and Catherine Diviney have been in discussion with the town's web development staff. Cool West Hartford is envisioned to be a "brand" for sustainability measures in our town. The embodiment of the brand is a website for residents. The town has strict rules on what web resources can be linked on a town webpage. Because the discussion has gone back and forth a number of times without resolution it was agreed to produce a mockup of the page to use for discussion with IT.***
- Resident Engagement (see New Business)

6. New Business

- Newsletter (Kelly)
 - *Kelly Kennedy proposed that the commission issue an action-oriented newsletter to residents through town media channels. There was recognition that people are “buried” in emails and to be successful the newsletter would have to be short and engaging. It is estimated that the town has an email list of over 6000 residents. If the Cool West Hartford initiative were further along this would be part of that movement but since Cool West Hartford launch is a ways into the future there was agreement to produce a newsletter for Earth Day.*
 - *In lieu of Earth Day event we intend to have a resident trash pick-up event sometime after Earth Day.*
- Instagram and list of ideas (Johnathan)
 - ***Deferred to next meeting***
- Sample action draft (K/Catherine)
 - ***Deferred to next meeting***
- Regular communication plan – e.g., seasonal or monthly top 5 actions
 - ***Deferred to next meeting***

7. Staff Report

- ***Deferred to next meeting***

8. Calendar Updates – 4/22/25 Tu - Earth Day, Hall HS Earth Day; 4/26/25 W - Film & Discussion: Cooked: Survival by Zip Code; 6/7 & 6/8/25 Sa & Su - Celebrate! West Hartford

9. Agenda for Next Meeting – 4/28/25

- ***BOE/Schools Engagement***
- ***Deferred Items***

10. Adjournment at 9:02

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.

Subject: Waste Working Group Report

Hi Catherine. The Waste Working Group did not formally meet this month, but Ted and Katherine got together on March 20 to prepare for our WHCi segment on waste, which we taped on March 24 with John Phillips. We all thought it went well. We are compiling visuals to overlay the recording, which we hope to provide WHCi by early next month so the educational presentation will be available for viewing (and promotion) mid-month.

The WWG is still looking for additional members to discuss additional WHCi sessions, educational outreach to WH schools, resources to add to the Cool WH website, and sustainability-related ideas to present to town leaders.

- Ted

Sent from my iPhone

Energy Working Group: Meeting 3/19/2025

- Stephen Sack Yes
- Christine Feely Yes
- David Englert Yes
- Jim Fishman No
- Bernie Pelletier Yes
- Celia Kosinski No
- Jonathan Humphrey No
- Lauren Walker No
- Dan Gleason No
- Catherine Diviney No
- Michael Cocca Yes

New Members – Dan – Dave

- Dave – Molecular Biologist
 - Discussion of DAS central power in Hartford – does it have fuel tanks in the ground – if so what about bio diesel?

Open discussion:

- Growth v not growth- Discussion of the upsides and downsides of growth
- Discussion of towns' limited ability to make changes to process and procedures that will increase sustainable building development.
 - Mike Cocca will go ahead and adapt the Stamford checklist – we all recognize that it may not get adopted by the town but thought it'd be a good exercise

Programs in process

- Business Efficiency Elmwood Business Association
- WHCI video <https://youtu.be/672Q5P3D6ro>

Cool West Hartford

- <https://www.coolboulder.org>
- Action list and resources
 - Home Efficiency – HES – HES IE – email campaign – examples/
 - Behavior changes –
 - Weatherization
 - Solar
 - Buy “green power”
 - EV – Hybrid Efficient vehicle
 - Public transportation
 - Batteries
 - Lawn care equipment
 - Recognition program – businesses and residents

- Other Business Associations – outreach
- Time in front of W Hartford Chamber -
- Partners:
 - <https://energizect.com/>
 - <https://www.eversource.com/content/residential/save-money-energy/clean-energy-options/solar-energy/solar-incentives>
 - <https://www.energystar.gov/>
 - <https://www.ctgreenbank.com/>
 - <https://www.pacecleanenergy.org/>
 - <https://www.heatsmartct.org/>
 - <https://www.energysage.com/>
 - <https://ctrides.com/>
 - <https://evclubct.com/>
 - [Right now – hard to mention individual businesses](#)
- Building in town:
 - <https://www.ctinsider.com/projects/westhartford/west-hartford-housing-developments/>
 - Vessel meeting 3/20/2025 – 6PM Town Council
 - https://we-ha.com/west-hartford-town-council-continues-vessel-hearing-again/#google_vignette
- Next meeting: April 16, 2025 5PM

Cool West Hartford Working Group

3/20/25, 6pm

Attendees: Catherine, Katherine, Dave, Johnathan, Pat

Newsletter – Met with Renee McCue, PR Specialist. Commission now setup to use Constant Contact. Kelly not at meeting, but was intending to target Earth Day for 1st newsletter,

Instagram – Still researching full access to IG account. Johnathan has ideas for content and would like to set up central way to get more ideas from Commission members and working groups. Johnathan schedule meeting with Eversource's social media department to educate himself and get their advice.

Website – next steps– Need to develop content that we will be “driving” people to. Some requests have gone out to other working groups, but we should discuss this at 3/31 meeting. C/Katherine will work on a sample action draft to share 3/31. Kelly and Catherine discussed some Town's Finals website capabilities (posts news feature linked to Newsletter, searchable) and town process for getting content approved and posed, but Kelly would like to schedule a meeting with Town IT. Discussion included: there should be seasonal actions, events/calendar, permanent vs rotating content, not too much words/reading.

Other Discussion (should also include Commission)

- **How do we “launch” at Celebrate?** Ideas included: ipads to sign people up for newsletter; each working group pick an action to highlight at table/with displays; giveaways (hate waste aspect)
- **Do we track/publicize participation? (game).** This would be great, yes – SHARE what you did. Action counter/ticker, Sust CT menu/checklist approach, #coolwasthartford, prizes/recognition, etc. General feeling was initial focus needs to be on developing content/actions...this piece would come later...no capacity to tackle both and we need a following 1st!
- **What do you have to “do” to be part of Cool WH** – want to make sure variety of actions that are accessible to everyone (equity, cost barriers)
- **Do we have any “criteria” for partners?** Besides IT preference for .gov. For example, non-profits, B-corps, hyper-local, etc.
- **Level of effort** - Need to keep our lists and content manageable and organized, not reinvent wheel, clear/concise/easy to navigate for residents.