



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

July 28, 2025

7:00 PM, Room 407, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order – **7:10**
 - **Jonathan Ferigno**
 - **David Sagers**
 - **Bernie Pelletier**
 - **Stephen Sack (via Teams)**
 - **Ted Newton**
 - **Kim Hughes**
 - **Kelly Kennedy**
 - **Pat Wilson – Absent**
 - **Christy Matthews – Absent**
 - **Staff Liaison – Catherine Diviney**
 - **Staff Intern – Conor Schulken**
 - **Staff Liaison – Katherine Bruns - Absent**
 - **Members of the public – Dan Gleason, Steph Daniel, Chris Feely, David Englert**
2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – **Approved, 6-0-1 abstention**
3. Administrative – vacancies, etc.
 - **Anticipate that 2 vacancies will be filled by August meeting**
4. Communications & Community Comment (max 3 min each)
 - **Resident complaint and discussion of Town communication reminding residents to keep their grass below 1 foot in height (attached). The commission notes that such a communication should have been done with input from the commission. This is a chance for a discussion of town/commission engagement.**
 - **Next step – find the author of the communique, have a discussion, make recommendations on alternative language for future communications on subject.**
5. Ongoing Business
 - Student Rep Reports (on hold for summer)
 - **N/A**
 - Working Groups Reports
 - **No discussion – reports attached**
 - Town Engagement
 - **Highlands Region Resolution**
 - **Resolution is being drafted (attached) and will go to the Public Works and Finance Committee with hopes of having it approved at the August 12 meeting**
 - Waste Monitoring & Enforcement Recommendation
 - **Continued discussion of reminding residents of existing regulations around recycling.**

- Food Waste Data/Goals
 - ***Working on a standard report – that tracks % of waste diverted***
 - ***Recommend that the commission set goals for diversion***
 - ***Since bins are now overfilled the commission wants to hold off on encouraging more use (i.e. – it is counterproductive to send more people to the bins if they are already full).***
- Planting Policy, Garden Signage, Meadow
 - ***Pat Wilson is liaison for nature-based solutions working group and the town***
 - ***Meadow is in progress***
 - ***Planting list is in progress***
 - ***Planning a restoration celebration 9/27 Wolcott Park***
- Sustainable Development Checklist
 - ***Discussion of Interim checklist presentation (attached)***
 - ***The scorecard does not serve to differentiate between the different uses of the same land– rather it determines whether a project is good within its category. However, the town may welcome such a perspective***
 - ***Plan to have a suitable draft to share with the town by next commission meeting***
- Resident Engagement
 - Cool West Hartford Website To Dos & Launch Plans (***attached***)
 - ***Review the draft pages by August 21, topics were assigned to different people***
 - ***Work with IT to finalize mock-up 1st week of September***
 - ***Be open to launch without partner pages – i.e. this may take a while – we can offer value before everything is done***
 - ***Get the “short” version of website out ASAP, can grow***
 - ***Shoot for September 20 launch***
 - ***Think about a logo – Looked at some alternatives (attached)***
 - Newsletter & Social Media
 - ***Commission voted to send out summer newsletter (6-0)***
- 6. New Business
 - Th 7/31 – Public Works, Facilities & Sustainability Standing Committee Mtg
- 7. Staff Report
 - ***Changing utility bill management software***
 - ***Finished school energy shutdown walkthroughs where devices are shutdown over summer – so far noticeable usages reductions have been achieved – will have more data next meeting. Walkthroughs yielded information/feedback that stretches well beyond energy and recycling, into health & safety, IAQ, risk management and fire safety. Also noted wide inconsistency across schools.***
 - ***Working with Eversource consultant Cascade Energy to document energy savings***
 - ***Plan to talk to others departments (WHPS administration, Risk, Health District, Procurement, Plant & Facilities etc.) about collaboration on district guidelines/policies.***

8. Calendar Updates: ***Tuesday August 12 @ 10 AM tour of Quantum Biopower 9/20/25 @ 10 - 1 PM – West Hartford EV Showcase/Sun Day; 9/21/25 – Third Act CT Sun Day Event, New Britain; 9/27/25 – Wolcott Entrance Garden Tour; 10/5/24 @ 1-3 PM Restoration Celebration at Traprock Ridge lot***
9. Agenda for Next Meeting – 8/25/25
10. Adjournment ***8:58PM***

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.

From: [Town of West Hartford](#)
To: [Catherine Diviney](#)
Subject: Don't Let Tall Grass Create Safety Issues!
Date: Thursday, July 3, 2025 1:31:06 PM



Why is tall grass a problem?

It's growing season. With the abundance of rain and sunshine in Connecticut, everything is growing fast. The Town of West Hartford reminds residents and businesses of their responsibilities for maintaining their properties.

Why is tall grass a problem?

Whenever grass, weeds, bushes, vines, poison ivy or other vegetation are allowed to grow tall, there are negative consequences. Overgrown yards are not only an eyesore but are public health and safety issues too. Properties with tall grass and unkempt vegetation erode community value and create a breeding ground for rodents and other vermin. Lawns that are not being cared for give criminals the impression that the property is unattended and might be an easy target.

The Town of West Hartford has a local law (known as an ordinance) that requires properties to be maintained and when they are not, the owner could face a penalty of \$79 per day.

According to West Hartford's Litter and Community Appearance Standards, "No owner or occupant of any premises shall permit grass, weeds, or similar

growths to reach a height greater than one foot on any premises with a building or dwelling located thereon, whether said building or dwelling is occupied or not. Nor shall the owner of any undeveloped premises allow any grass, weeds, or similar growths thereon greater than one foot in height to remain thereon within 25 feet of a street line or any adjoining property (West Hartford Code: Chapter 115-22).

The West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District enforces this ordinance. They can be reached at 860-561-7900.

Enforcement of these ordinances is not intended to burden property owners, but instead to raise awareness of the responsibilities of maintaining your property so West Hartford is a safe and enjoyable community.

Town of West Hartford | [Website](#)



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Constant Contact



Energy WG Report – 7/28/25

The energy working group met last night - the 23rd of July.

Stephen Sack - Dan Gleason - David Englert - Bernie Pelletier were in attendance.

On Monday we'd like to share a presentation that:

- Introduces the scorecard as a means for the town to engage with new development on sustainability measures.
- Outlines for discussion the Building Energy and Building Resilience measures
 - As the energy working group we focus on these measures - but there is opportunity for nature-based solutions and waste to adopt the process if they think it makes sense
- Recaps the different approaches we have to using this score card.

The EWG has more work to do - so this is an interim check in.

Bernie

Nature Based Solutions WG Report - 7/28/25

The Nature-based Solutions Team met and our discussion focused on an event that a few team members are planning to welcome residents to the Wolcott Entrance garden. The event is planned for: Saturday, September 27, 2025; rain date Sunday, September 28.

Thanks,
Kim

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING WEST HARTFORD PART OF THE HIGHLANDS REGION

WHEREAS, the Highlands region, encompasses more than three million acres of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands region is an area of national significance, possessing substantial natural beauty, containing contiguous forest and productive farmland, numerous cultural and historic sites, plentiful recreation opportunities, and the protection and supply of important drinking water sources for over fifteen million people; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress, in bipartisanship, passed the Highlands Conservation Act, Public Law 10-421 that was signed into law by the President of the United States on November 30, 2004, designating the Highlands as a significant national conservation priority region; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Conservation Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to provide financial assistance to Highlands States to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highlands region; and

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service manages a voluntary grant program to assist Highlands States, local units of government, and private forest and farmland owners in the conservation of land and natural resources in the Highlands region in coordination with willing sellers; and

WHEREAS, land preservation efforts in the Highlands region should link the parks, historic sites, wetlands, wildlife habitats, streams, rivers, reservoirs, watershed, trails, scenic and natural lands and other protected areas unique to the region for the enjoyment of future generations; and

WHEREAS, land conservation and preservation are priorities of the Town of West Hartford as outlined in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD THAT the Town of West Hartford should hereby be officially included in the federal Highlands boundary, as maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Highlands Conservation Act grant program, thereby qualifying for financial and technical assistance provided by the U.S. Congress.

July 15, 2025 or Aug 12, 2025?
(LEDWITH)

Sustainable WH Commission Development Scorecard

July 28th 2025

Why – What – For Whom

- Scorecard allows the town to engage new development on matters of sustainability. Currently sustainability is not an explicit factor in town consideration of new development (neither P&Z nor DRAC).
- Scorecard rates developments on defined measures
 - Voluntary
 - 2 iterations – at time of project proposal and then just prior to building
 - For new developments of >10 units, or 10,000 sq feet, or where more than 20,000 square feet will be disturbed
- This is a tool for the town – ideally DRAC and or Planning and Zoning

Inspiration: Stamford Sustainability Scorecard

- Stamford has 9 categories
- Energy working group is focused on Energy Use and Resiliency
- Waste and Nature-Based solutions may consider expanding the work EWG is doing

	Category
	BH - Building Health
	EU - Energy Use
	LA - Landscaping & Open Space
	LU - Land Use
	MO – Mobility
	RE – Resiliency
	RM – Resource Management
	UD - Urban Design
	WU - Water Use

Status and input request

- Mike Cocca has adopted the overall verbiage to be relevant to West Hartford (available on request)
- Building Energy (next slide) has a list of measures for consideration:
 - Input from Commission
 - Input from the town
- Building Resiliency has draft measures:
 - Less developed – need to spend time before showing town

Building Energy

- Low Carbon construction materials under discussion
- Points still in flux

Next Steps

- Develop final proposal for Building Energy measures
 - Input from Commission
 - Research (low carbon building material)
- Conversation with DRAC/ P&Z

Building Resilience

Cool WH To-Dos

Remaining work:

- Edit content for remaining pages (Energy-related pages OK)
- Final review/voice once-over
- Share/Review with Town Manager/Mayor
- Implementation by Town IT department to production web site

Awareness Launch/Outlets

- Newsletter (town distribution) mention
- Weha.com story?
- Social (Instagram/Facebook)
- Featured at in-person events (Sun Day, Wolcott Meadow, Celebrate)

Later (Post-Launch) Issues

- Partners - who and what does it mean
- Calendar (this could live on the newsletter)



Goals

1. Connection. Reach what is probably the largest segment of our West Hartford population and help them move from anxiety/indifference to agency. Create a sense of community. Stimulate curiosity. This happens through thoughtful, simple messaging and an outreach campaign that builds recognition and identity in the name, Cool West Hartford. In other words, we are offering, "we see you, we know that you care and we know it can be hard to take the first step".
2. Provide education. Keep the message and ideas simple! Focus on actions that don't cost a lot of money and actions that can be implemented immediately.
3. Provide resources. Again, start simple, preferably local. For those able and willing to learn more, provide resources that Commission has vetted. (Does not need to be a formal process if we speak from the personal...not, "the commission approves of these resources" but instead, "members of this commission utilize these resources...")