

**PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 26, 2021, 8:00 A.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

A. Meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m. by Chairman Ben Wenograd

B. Attendees –Mayor Shari Cantor, Chairman Ben Wenograd, Councilor Carol Blanks, Councilor Mary Fay, Town Manager Matt Hart, Director of Public Works John Phillips, Director of Plant and Facilities Robert Palmer, Energy Specialist Catherine Diviney, Clean Energy Commission Chair Bernard Pelletier and Ms. Arleen Cohen, Mr. Alex Rodriguez and Mr. Thomas Regan-Lefebvre from Center for Latino Progress.

2. Business Items

A. Meeting Minutes June 24, 2021 – The minutes were approved without objection.

B. Transportation and Climate Initiative – Chairman Wenograd stated a few letters had been received regarding the Transportation and Climate Initiative and a summary was provided by Mr. Pelletier. Chairman Wenograd asked the advocates to make a presentation regarding the Initiative.

Mr. Regan-Lefebvre went through a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Transportation and Climate Initiative. The goal of the program is to reduce emissions, have cleaner air and invest in transportation and energy transition. There will be an auctioning off of greenhouse gas allowances with the first auction being around January 2023 and allowance sizes will decrease. At least 50% of revenues must be invested in communities that are overburdened by pollution and underserved by public transportation. The remainder will be spent by the Department of Transportation and DEP. The communities will have a say in how the investments will be spent. An Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Board will be created and will advise on how the revenues will be spent. The goal is to reduce green gas emissions by 26% within 10 years. This program will bring Connecticut between \$89M and \$117M after 10 years of revenue. It is forecasted to bring increased economic output and savings and the reduction in air pollution will save 300 lives a year in Connecticut, once the program is fully implemented.

Mr. Rodriguez stated the program is forecasted to bring about \$97M a year and will bring wide investment into the communities at the guidance of an Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Board to help represent communities like West Hartford and coordinate with DEP what the overlying transportation needs. It is important to hold the State accountable to its greenhouse gas reduction targets of 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 according to the Global Warming Solutions Act. With the release of the recent IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report, there is an overlying urgency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions faster than the current pace and TCI is forecasted to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions 26% by the end of the decade if it were fully funded. TCI is projected to save 300 lives a year and bring \$264M in combined health and safety benefits.

Mr. Hart proposed adding this to the next Council agenda as a resolution and authorize the Mayor to sign on and then Council could debate the action. Councilor Fay made a motion to that effect, which was seconded and passed without objection.

C. Ordinance Amending the Prohibition on Overnight Parking – Mr. Hart provided a status report with a more complete recommendation forthcoming at the next meeting. At the last meeting, it was recommended instead of amending the prohibition town-wide it be focused on the geographic regions within the Town where there is the most acute need. Based on an analysis of the data, the area is primarily in the eastern part of town along Farmington Avenue from Trout Brook to Prospect/Hartford city border. The primary need is from residents residing in multi-family units; tenants or condo owners living in older buildings with much less parking availability. They are leasing parking to have adequate parking for the people who live there. There is a proposal being created for the geographic area of Trout Brook to Prospect to the east and on the north Fern Street and to the south would be Whitney Park Road. The proposal will be presented at the next meeting. It would be a resident-only permit for people residing in condos and apartments in that area of town where a need for parking can be demonstrated.

3. Communications

A. August 9, 2021 Communication from Sustainability Advisory Group – Chairman Wenograd reported receipt of a letter from the Sustainability Advisory Group with a sustainability wish list.

Mr. Hart reported he had received an invitation to attend the September meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Group and he anticipates discussion of this letter and related topics at that time and he will be able to provide feedback to the Council through this committee.

4. Staff Reports

A. Public Works – Mr. Phillips provided an overview of his written report, which was attached to BoardDocs. It was seasonal work but the last seven days the storms have affected them greatly. All focus has been on core, deep maintenance work of the Town's transportation infrastructure, street sweeping, catch basins, flow investigations and working in coordination with the Town's engineering department. There was mid-level wind damage. There were 20 trees that fell during the storm, which have been cleaned up. There was a significant wash-out related to the flooding experienced near the former UCONN campus. Repairs are expected to be done today or tomorrow. Concerning staffing, there have been challenges with recruiting and hiring. There was an open position for a fleet mechanic with fewer than 12 qualified applicants when usually there would have been between 25 and 30 applicants. There will be a new management software for permitting and citations in coordination with the Finance and Revenues Department, which holds the contract. An agreement was reached on a new contract. Once the contract language is settled the next step

would be moving toward the new citation and permit software, projected to take place in early fall into the first part of winter.

Evaluation of possible expansion and other opportunities for the Fairview Cemetery is underway. The cemetery operations were running out of space for premier monument-type spaces and an evaluation of opportunities for shifting or making adjustments to accommodate more cremations, which is growing exponentially. There will be recommendations presented at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Phillips introduced an upcoming Eagle Scout project for the creation of a flag retirement ceremony. The location that has been identified is the Memorial Wall at Town Hall Parking. There will be a typical landscaped fire pit. It will have an insert and it will be under lock and key as it will be for ceremonial purposes only to burn and retire flags.

B. Plant and Facilities – Mr. Palmer provided an overview of his written report, which was attached to BoardDocs. Buildings continue to perform well. Some of the challenges include the wet July and August, so there have been a lot of water infiltration issues. With the high humidity and running the ventilation systems with maximum fresh air, there has been a lot of moisture being brought into the buildings and they are trying to manage that in addition to managing for fresh air and comfort at the same time, which is a very challenging endeavor. There are staffing challenges, very similar to Public Works with difficulty filling positions. Schools resume on Wednesday, so there are a lot of COVID issues being dealt with, especially for the elementary schools where the majority of people within the building are not vaccinated. There continues to be work with social distancing, which has been reduced to three feet. Maintenance and cleaning procedures have been modified, as well. There were some minor flooding issues, particularly with the storm on August 19 that produced 4 to 5 inches in a couple of hours. There were typical roof leaks and minor flooding in some buildings but it has all been cleaned up and no real damage. The sale date of the new Elmwood Community Center is pending but ownership should be granted in the next couple of weeks.

Regarding Capital Projects, there were a lot of challenges with the bidding process this year and finding qualified contractors to take on the jobs. The cost of materials escalated and material availability has also been difficult, so a lot of projects were postponed and will be rebid and done again in the future. The Animal Control Facility RFP has been drafted and will be going to bid shortly. All elevator control changes have been completed. The design for the town hall sign has gone through the review process.

C. Town Manager – Mr. Hart spoke briefly about the rain last Thursday and over the weekend and the engineering division has been inundated with close to 100 calls and emails from residents expressing concerns, filing complaints, etc. The impacts of the flooding were largely in the north-central and eastern parts of Town north of I-84. A couple of key stormwater studies are being completed and the information will be presented to Planning and Economic Development Committee. This is a major infrastructure project that will need 10 to 20 years to complete. Assistance from the State and Federal governments will be requested.

5. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items were indicated.

6. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

/axb