



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

April 27, 2026

7:00 PM, Room 217, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order 7:05 pm
 - *Commissioners: Present: Dave Sagers, Blake Ellavsky, Maura Beaudreault, Kelly Kennedy, Ted Newton, Ally Schoenhorn, Pat Wilson, Andrea Yuliano, Stephen Sack, Lianne Allen-Jacobson. Absent: Jonathan Ferrigno*
 - *Staff Liaisons – Catherine Diviney, Katherine Bruns*
 - *Members of the public – Parker Walsh, Dan Walsh, Madeleine Hexter, Dan Gleason*
2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes - *Approved (10-0)*
3. Administrative – *Dave to assign Secretary before May meeting*
4. Communications & Community Comment
 - *Maura discussed craft swap at WHPL. Info sent out through library newsletter.*
 - *Repair Cafe – Parker would like to volunteer if this initiative happens. Katherine to follow up with Adrienne Billings-Smith.*
 - *Councilor Jason Wang forwarded email from resident regarding– bears and birdfeeders, can there be a no bird feeder ordinance April 1 - Oct 1? like some Towns, e.g., Simsbury. Commissioners generally agreed WH should have similar ordinance but were unclear who/how an ordinance recommendation is made. Kelly indicated bear education was highlighted in one of the previous Sust WH newsletters and she could include it again.*
 - *Madeline gave several updates: Planting at Spicebush Swamp using trees from WH Tree Project; Denice Merrill (former secretary of state) cultivated enough White Oaks for all 169 CT Towns. Who gets to decide where the one for West Hartford will be placed?; Bill Gleason giving tree canopy meeting 4/28 6:30 Westmoor Park; Town putting in White Oaks at elementary schools (concern tap roots may not be there)*
 - *Andrea was emailed by a resident who asked about pollinator gardens and any town resources; discussion about where to have information like that easily discoverable by the public, Blake mentioned creating a pollinator garden fact sheet; a more robust planting policy for town properties could also serve as resource for residents.*
5. Ongoing Business
 - Report to Town Council / 2026 priorities / Sustainable CT action recommendations
 - *Dave reported on his report to the PWFS committee on the work of SWHC*
 - *Dave reported on attending the Mayor's State of the Town address: Sustainable CT, solar array, food scrap diversion program were mentioned.*
 - *There was discussion of energy efficiency at both town and residential level; Duffy ES as an example; discussion of consolidating schools and potential of field trip to new Manchester or Mansfield's schools; extensive conversation around long-term facilities' plan for renovation/replacement*

- Catherine & Dave gave overview of internal staff meetings which are being held every 2 months to work on town's Sustainable CT Certification for Aug 2027. Dave attends meetings also. Discussion of which Sustainable CT actions (points) the SWHC would like to see the Town go after. List to be finalized 5/18 for 5/20 staff meeting. (Andrea asked about Dark Night Skies regulations and color temperature (moving from 4000K to 2800K) of replacement LED lighting projects which are outlined in the Town's budget.
 - Student & Working Group reports - *Skipped, due to limited time. Reports were submitted online.*
 - Tree Canopy – *Dave still awaiting draft plan from Bill Gleason to share; Kelly mentioned adding tree canopy to all education and outreach including Celebrate.*
6. New Business
- Planning for Celebrate! West Hartford
 - Catherine will send out sign-up sheet for volunteers
 - Kelly shared some mock-ups she had done for stickers/decals (attached)
 - There was discussion and general consensus that Tree Canopy was a good focus topic for the SWHC booth. There was discussion about other visual displays, activities and funding by NIPS or other Town funds to pay for materials.
 - Catherine/Katherine will request for booth to be part of event Scavenger hunt – potential activities: 1. tree canopy related –Look at your tree canopy “which street would you rather lived on” or 2. waste-related activity
 - Think Before You Print – Catherine shared that the Town & BOE printed 22 Million pages in FY25 according to data collected by the IT Dept. In honor of Earth Day (4/22) and Arbor Day (4/24), last week email was sent out highlighting this data and encourage employees to make small changes to bring that number down (attached).
7. Calendar Updates:
- Sa 5/2/26 – Craft and Hobby supply swap @ Noah Webster Library (drop-off Fri 5/1) - <https://westhartford.librarymarket.com/event/craft-and-hobby-supplies-swap-shop-nwl-100006>
 - W 5/13/26 – NBS WG / Sust WH “Less Lawn, More Life” Workshop, 6:30 PM @WHPL - <https://westhartford.librarymarket.com/event/less-lawn-more-life-nwl-95799>
 - Th 5/14/26 – PWF&S Meeting
 - Tu 5/19/26 – Old Forest or Young Meadow – the Marvel of Seeds (w/ Traprock Ridge). Film & Discussion. 7:00 PM @ Bishops Corner Senior Center
 - Sa/Sun 6/7 & 6/8/26 – Celebrate! West Hartford
8. Agenda for Next Meeting – 5/18/26
- Planning for Celebrate – visual, materials, etc.
 - Finalize Report to Town Council?
9. Adjournment 9:10 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 – for 4/27/26

The Waste Working Group met on April 23.

We discussed developing metrics for trash, recycling and food scraps so we can publish our own data visualization dashboard. We plan to capture these and develop a ratios between the three metrics that will help us better understand progress toward reducing waste.

We plan to apply some of the town's nip bottle money toward the purchase of SWH car window decals and refrigerator magnets that show what materials should be recycled or otherwise diverted from the waste stream (e.g., plastic bags, textiles).

After meeting with a representative of town real estate agents, Katherine and Ted will explore creating pdfs of recycling information currently on the town's website that agents can add their logo or other branding elements to and then send to their clients moving into town. These pdfs will be distributed to agents via a monthly message and possibly included on an agents association website or Cool West Hartford.

We discussed what other towns might be doing to encourage their businesses to become more sustainable. Ted will approach the town's Economic Development Coordinator and Chamber of Commerce to see what interest they may have in promoting sustainable businesses and, if so, how the criteria should be developed and applied so the Group has a better sense of next steps to pursue this idea.

Ted Newton

Energy Working Group, 4/15 Meeting Minutes

Thank you for joining today here are the meeting minutes from our conversation this evening:

TEN Updates

- Lianne presented an overview of TEN and outlined next steps for introducing it in WH (presentation here: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/14xO_NpNMZJkl1EM86wGaUc2wLlnkZdU79G4dmPrNz0U/edit?usp=sharing_eil_se_dm&ts=69e01204) .
 - Previously evaluated grants focused on town resilience planning; TEN could potentially be incorporated into these efforts.
 - Edits suggested to presentation:
 - Include a clear “bottom line” cost upfront
 - Start with a concise ask of Town
 - Add potential funding sources, including grants and tax credits
 - Explore and point out to town opportunities to align TEN with the 2050 net zero goals (e.g., integrating with street repaving projects).
 - Next step: Lianne will present during WH Sustainability Commission Meeting 4/27, to receive sign off to go to Town Council.
-

2050 WH Municipal Net-Zero Goal

- Identify peer/competitor towns to benchmark technology adoption and track emissions progress/gamify to incentivize the town council
 - Scope is municipal operations only:
 - Define approach for municipal buildings to calculate emissions v. Offsets from solar etc.
 - Ask for Catherine to compile emissions data across all municipal buildings to assess progress toward net-zero
 - Consider policy/standard for solar installation (e.g., adding solar with every new roof).
 - Explore:
 - Green Bank financing options
 - SolarAPP+ to streamline and improve the permitting process for residential solar
-

Other Updates

- Bernie meeting with the League of Conservation Voters on Monday to discuss balcony solar (Bill 5340).
- Request: draft a letter of support for town representatives.
 -

April 20, 2026

Nature Based Solutions Meeting

Roll call: Pat Wilson, Chris Feely, Nancy Cooner, Madeline Hexter, Suzanne Sayers, Kim Hughes, Andrea Yuliano

Old Business:

1)Less Lawn, More Life Presentation 5/13/26-Brief overview by Suzanne. Discussion about what is available at the library for presentation. Pat will request books for resource table. There was a question if this will be broadcast on WeHa public television? Need to ask library. Also to reach out to Ronnie Newton for more visibility.

2)Tree Canopy-updated the group that we are trying to get a "Tree Summit" together with Bill Gleason and other stakeholders at Westmoor Park. Date TBD. Trees/pesticides/pollinators overlap-we can try to include all of these topics as we tackle the tree canopy crisis with the town.

3)Planting policy-Discussion about why we have not had a breakthrough with the town about the policy. Going on 3 years of attempting discussions. Not sure what next step should be since several of us spoke at the last Parks and Rec Advisory Committed meeting. Chris will find out if it's possible to get on a future Parks and Rec agenda to be able to educate the rest of the committee aside from Helen.

New Business:

1)Celebrate West Hartford: We need to decide what materials to have with us at table. Mosquito bucket was decided since we will be in mosquito season. It will not be a live demo-we will have materials there (dunks from Nancy Cooner, bucket from Suzanne) to demonstrate how to put one together. We will also have Less Lawn, More Life info, and possibly an interactive poll about pesticides or trees etc. To be continued at next meeting.

2)Fall presentation: to follow up on Less Lawn, More Life. Maybe about leaves? (More leaves, More \$\$?)

3)Programming goal: 1x/quarter to continue to drive engagement with the town residents

Public Works Facilities & Sustainability Town Council Committee 04 09 26

Dave Sagers briefly presented the Commission's 2025 accomplishments, 2026 priorities and 2026 asks, as reviewed and approved at our last meeting. An emphasis was placed on creating action plans for accomplishing what is already in existing plans (POCD, Clean Energy, Climate Resolution, etc.)

7 of the 9 Council members were present, and the Committee expressed appreciation for all the Commission's volunteer effort

The Committee seemed engaged, including questions about the costs and benefits of food scrap diversion, plans for tree canopy restoration, opportunities for bioswales in the Center infrastructure project, and acknowledgement of the Wolcott Pollinator Garden event. There was a suggestion that we create branded signs for homeowners to post in their pollinator gardens.

Dave indicated we would continue to bring Sustainability topics to the Committee.

Later feedback from the Town Manager indicated the Committee appreciated the brevity of the presentation.

State of the Town Presentation 04 15 2026

Mayor Shari Cantor and Town Manager Rick Ledwith shared town accomplishments (which reflect priorities) through an interactive panel format. Highlights from memory:

- Public Safety (police, fire and Vision Zero)
- Education
- Housing attainable at all income levels

Sustainability was mentioned, with recognition of the recent solar array rooftop installation at the Public Works facility (including the statement that West Hartford is the only CT municipality that has declared a Net Zero carbon emissions goal by 2050), and the success of the food scrap diversion program.

Tree Canopy Update

Dave Sagers met with Bill Gleason, who is leading this effort and previously presented to the Commission on the implications of the Town's Tree Canopy Study.

As mentioned previously, Bill is drafting an outline of a plan (Replant West Hartford) to distribute to interested groups (SWHC, Garden Club, Tree Action Group, WH Tree Project, Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy, etc.) for comment, followed by a Tree Summit. The focus is on private property and effort, since private property represents the significant

majority of the acreage. The plan will likely include potential town ordinance and incentive action, public education and outreach, a volunteer “tree corp”. a variety of tree planting events and programs, and need for funding.

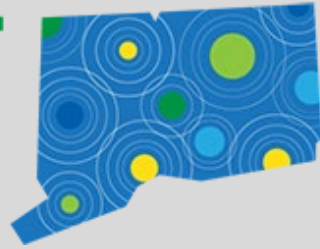
Bill sees the Commission very much as a partner in this effort. Ways the Commission can get involved (very much a draft, including to provide ideas):

- Support an annual fall event for subsidized tree distribution
- Education on HOW TO PLANT, WHAT TO PLANT, etc. seminars, workshops, etc. Including CELEBRATE WEST HARTFORD.
- Join the newly conceived TREE CORP - boots-on-the-ground volunteers
- Input and maintenance to the website REPLANTWESTHARTFORD.ORG.
- Serve as point for Town Council and key participant communications.

As a related project, Bill is organizing groups to perform tree identification on different properties in Town.

Sustainable CT

Local Actions. Statewide Impact.



[Sustainable CT](#) is a voluntary certification program to recognize thriving and resilient Connecticut municipalities. Sustainable CT provides a menu of best practices (or actions) that promote economic well-being, enhance equity, and respect the finite capacity of the natural environment.

Municipalities choose Sustainable CT [actions](#), implement them, and earn points toward [certification](#).

Sustainable CT also provides technical assistance, [funding](#), and encourages partnership, peer learning, collaboration.

13 Action Categories

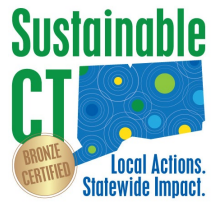
1. Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts
2. Thriving Local Economies
3. Well-Stewarded Land and Natural Resources
4. Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems
5. Dynamic and Resilient Planning
6. Clean and Diverse Transportation Systems and Choices
7. Renewable and Efficient Energy Infrastructure and Operations
8. Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education
9. Strategic Materials Management
10. Optimal Health and Wellness Opportunities
11. Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing
12. Effective, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention
13. Innovative Strategies and Practices

WHY SUSTAINABLE CT?

<https://sustainablect.org/actions-certifications/why-participate>

- Recognition
- Roadmap, Best Practices
- Action
- Peering Learning
- Funding and Other Resources
- Partnership, Collaboration
- Track Data, Progress
- Inspiration
- The Future
- Economic Benefit
- Social Benefit
- Environmental Benefit
- Community Building
- Innovation

WEST HARTFORD'S SUSTAINABLE CT JOURNEY



Deadline:
August 2027
16 months to go!

2018

2021

2022

2024

2027

2030

Certification is good for 3 years.

No plans to add additional certification level for 2027

New: \$100,000 split between Climate Leaders

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS



Certification Requirements

2025 Bronze Certification

2025 Silver Certification

2025 Gold Certification

Number of Equity Toolkits required to complete in Action 1.1, Optimize for Equity	1	3	4; Including ALL actions in Category 1, Inclusive and Equitable Communities
Total Action point requirements	200	500	750
Complete at least 1 action in each of the Categories 1-12.	required	required	required
Achieve the Climate Leader Designation	optional	optional	required
Complete Action 8.6, Collaborate with Other Municipalities on Sustainability Actions .	optional	optional	required

Note: Actions, points, and certification point thresholds are for **2025** and may change for future certification cycles.

SUST WH'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- [Action 3.4.4a](#) Acquire new preserved open space – 15 pts (NE Corner of Albany/King Phillip)
- [Action 3.9.2b&d?](#) Manage Woodlands and Urban Forests – 10 pts each
 - a. Evaluate tree cover/canopy – *assessment done*
 - b. Complete a review of your municipal policy, priorities, and practices (???)
 - c. Complete a tree inventory – *in progress*
 - d. Complete a Forest Management Plan
- [Action 5.1c](#) Engage in intentional, ongoing public outreach and participation on planning issues – 5 pts each
 - Create an implementation scorecard of POCD actions and review through multiple public forums on an annual basis (In existing POCD, Section 9. Implementation Summary)
 - Create a series of fact sheets on pertinent planning topics for web posting and dissemination
- [Action 5.2.1](#) Develop sustainability checklists to promote sustainable development in planning and permitting process – 5 pts
- [Action 5.6](#) Streamline Solar Permitting for Small Installations – 20 pts (Solar App+)
- [Action 6.6.1b](#) Adopt a municipal fleet improvement plan – 10 pts
- [Action 7.5.1 & 7.5.2](#) Develop a Municipal & Residential/Biz Energy Plan – 20 pts (update 2020 Energy Plan)

OTHER SUST WH-LED ACTIONS

- Action 3.12.1 Provide Education to residents and local Biz to improve pollinator habitat (e.g., Less Lawn, More Life) – 5 pts
- Action 3.12.2 Create Pollinator Gardens (Wolcott Children's & Wolcott Meadow) – 15 pts
- Action 3.14.1.b Host event or workshop to education about sustainable snow operations (Sustainable Snow Ops) – 5 pts
- Action 8.1 Hold a sustainability event (Celebrate! WH Booth and others) – max 20 pts
- Action 6.4.1 Host a ZEV promotional event (Electric Showcase) – 5 pts



Sustainable West Hartford

Our Town, Our Planet, Our Future



reduce.
reuse.
recycle.

Less Trash = Lower Costs & Cleaner Planet



STOP! KEEP OUT

- NO Food or Yard Waste
- NO Plastic Bags in recycling
- NO Lithium Batteries

DO THIS INSTEAD

- **FOOD SCRAPS:** Use Town Bins
- **PLASTIC BAGS:** Recycle @ Retailers
- **BATTERIES:** Recycle @ Town Recycling Center
- **YARD WASTE & MORE:** SCAN for more info



Catherine Diviney

From: Julio Duarte <julio_duarte@whps.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 12:43 PM
Subject: Think Before You Print: Small Changes, Big Impact

With Earth Day (Wed, April 22) and Arbor Day (Fri, April 24) so close together this year, we have decided to promote an oldie, but goodie: **Think Before You Print.**

According to [data](#) from the IT Department's PaperCut application, which tracks *networked* printers/copiers only:

- In FY25, the Town and WHPS printed a combined total of **22,024,447 pages** (1 page = 1 side of a sheet of paper with printing on it)
 - At a **cost of ~\$660,000**, including printing and paper,
 - Using **15,177,195 sheets of paper**,
 - Equal to **1,821 trees** worth of paper used or **424,961 lbs of CO2** emitted to produce that paper.
- This year (FY26 Jul-Mar), WHPS printed pages are up **+8.9%**, while Town is down **-5.3%**.

No doubt certain things must be printed (e.g., for records retention, equitable access, specific educational practices, etc.). But, it's 2026! Much of our work can, and should, be **paperless**. Let's **Think Before We Print**. Let's work together to bring these numbers down. Making small changes in our printing habits will save money, conserve resources, and lower our organization's environmental footprint – for ourselves and on behalf of West Hartford taxpayers.

Here are some ideas:

1. Check your print settings: print double-sided and in B&W. Use color only when needed; color printing costs 5-15 times more per page than B&W.
2. Use recycled content paper. This can cut some environmental impacts by 30-40%.
3. Use your ID badge, coded for Follow-Me-Print, at central copiers to avoid unwanted print jobs. Approximately 17% of all print jobs go unused.
4. Give up your desktop printer. Desktop printing costs twice as much as central copiers; desktop printers also cost more to operate and maintain, and some do not print double-sided.
5. Make your margins narrower. Going from 1" margins to 0.5" margins can reduce paper use by 14%.
6. Adjust your font or font size to fit more on a page.
7. Use email, shared drives, and other technologies to minimize hardcopies.
8. Save documents and files electronically, unless required by law.
9. Look for workplace efficiencies that eliminate paper-based processes. Share your ideas with your co-workers.
10. Check out the IT Department's resources, tech tips, and FAQ – [WHPS](#)
11. And, if you throw any paper away – please recycle it in a blue bin.

Thank you for your support. We look forward to sharing an update next month.

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