



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

May 18, 2026

7:00 PM, Room 407, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order – 7:02 pm

- *Commissioners – Present: Dave Sagers, Blake Ellavsky, Maura Beaudreault, Kelly Kennedy, Ted Newton, Ally Schoenhorn, Pat Wilson, Andrea Yuliano, Lianne Allen-Jacobson. Absent: Jonathan Ferrigno, Stephen Sack*
- *Staff Liaisons – Katherine Bruns*
- *Members of the public – Sarah Bignami, Kim Hughes, Parker Walsh, Dan Walsh, Madeleine Hexter*

2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – *approved (9-0)*

3. Administrative – *Ally S. volunteered to be secretary for meeting. The Commission agreed to continue holding monthly meetings throughout the summer.*

4. Communications & Community Comment

Leaf Blower Ban Discussion

- *A community member suggested revisiting a leaf blower ban.*
- *The Town previously reviewed the issue several years ago, but commercial landscaping companies opposed the proposal.*
- *The topic may be brought forward to the Public Works meeting for further discussion.*

Craft & Hobby Material Swap Event

- *The Library-hosted Craft & Hobby Material Swap was successful, with approximately 250 attendees.*
- *About three-quarters of the materials were redistributed.*
- *Another event is planned for the fall at the Library.*

Urban Forestry Needs Assessment

- *Bill Gleason of the West Hartford Tree Group registered and filled out the Urban Forestry Needs Assessment sent by Nature Conservancy.*

Trees for Suffield Event

- *Members discussed the Trees for Suffield event hosted by the Suffield Garden Club.*
- *The event highlighted projected tree loss by 2040 if no action is taken.*
- *A fundraiser was also held for historically appropriate trees for homes.*

Recycling Coordinator Position

- *The Town has a part-time Recycling Coordinator opening as Katherine Brunn transitions out of her role.*
- *The Commission recognized Katherine for her years of dedication to the Town, including her leadership on the composting bin installation initiative over the past year.*

“More Lawn, More Life” Event

- *The event at the Library was well attended, with approximately 80 residents participating.*

Leaf Removal Budget Discussion

- *Members noted the Town currently budgets approximately \$400,000 annually for leaf removal.*
- *Discussion included the possibility of redirecting some of these funds toward additional environmental initiatives.*

Commission Advocacy Process

- *The Commission discussed confirming with Corporate Counsel and the Town the appropriate process for advancing Commission-supported initiatives.*
- *Members agreed community organizing and public education efforts can continue independently.*
- *Initial sustainability efforts may focus on municipal operations before expanding to broader resident-facing initiatives.*

5. Ongoing Business

- *Student & Working Group reports – Commission reviewed working group reports, attached*
- *Planning for Celebrate! West Hartford - The Commission discussed plans for participation in Celebrate West Hartford, with a focus on tree canopy loss and recommended tree species for planting. Planned outreach materials and activities include:*
 - *Posters highlighting the value of trees and local canopy loss trends*
 - *QR codes allowing residents to view canopy loss information specific to their properties*
 - *Information on recommended tree species and tree planting opportunities*
 - *A QR-code questionnaire for residents to ask questions and access additional resources*
 - *Community engagement prompts such as:*
 - *Favorite tree memories*
 - *Concerns related to tree removal*

Additional action items:

- *Reach out to Bill Gleason and the West Hartford Tree Project regarding collaboration*
- *Recruit additional volunteers to host table at the event*
- *Sust CT Action Recommendations – The Commission discussed its sustainability checklist priority list. The checklist of suggestions will be presented to the Public Works Group on Wednesday, May 20. The list was updated to include an item for reducing gas-powered landscaping and lawn equipment.*
- *Finalizing Report to Town Council – not discussed*

6. New Business

7. Calendar Updates:

- *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. Event details: [Film Screening Information](#)*
- *Sa/Sun 6/7 & 6/8/26 – Celebrate! West Hartford*
- *Volunteers are needed to help weed the pollinator meadow at Walcott, installed in 2025 by the Nature Working Group.*

8. Agenda for Next Meeting – 6/29/26

- *Presentation on gas-free lawn equipment initiatives and how other towns have implemented similar resolutions*

9. Adjournment 8:53 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.

Energy Working Group – met 5/13/26, 5:30 pm

TEN Updates

- Lianne will continue to look to refine PowerPoint and based on availability share at next month's meeting.

Municipal Energy Usage Update

- Catherine shared figures that WH Municipal grid energy usage has decreased approximately 30% from 2008 to 2025.
- Discussed old Eversource Clean Energy Communities program, where towns encouraged to adopt clean energy – RECs vs direct ownership of solar assets.
- Reviewed an Energy Improvement Project opportunity using an Energy Savings Performance Contracting model.
- In the past, town has had engineers conduct building walkthroughs to identify efficiency improvements and recommended upgrades. Opportunity to do so again in the future based on budget/priorities.
- Current state, the priority for the budget for building improvements does not account just for energy improvements
- Fuel oil usage is minimal (~5,000 gallons annually), primarily at Westmoor Park, Rockledge, and the Brixton warehouse.
- New IEC building code requirements will increase solar integration requirements for new construction and major renovations.

Next Meeting

- Catherine will present her current recommendations for the Town for municipal building energy efficiency improvement projects

Nature Based Solutions Working Group – did not meet.

- Held Less Lawn, More Life workshop on May 13. Video: <https://youtube.com/live/HfFmiCbTbPA>



Waste Working Group – did not meet.

~ 160 pts

SUST WH'S RECOMMENDATIONS

(ALIGN WITH COMMISSION PRIORITIES & ONGOING TOWN COMMITMENTS/WORK)

- Annual tracking and public reporting on status of POCD implementation [Action 5.1.1c](#)
- Work with Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy to preserve open space on corner of Albany & King Philip [Action 3.4.4a](#)
- Hold urban forest management discussions with partners/stakeholders and complete a review of your municipal policy, priorities, and practices [Actions 3.9.2c](#) along with Tree Canopy Assessment and *in-progress* Tree Inventory [Action 3.9.2a & 3.9.2c](#)
- Developing sustainability checklist to promote sustainable development (not just code compliance) in planning/permitting process [Action 5.2.1](#)
- Outreach program about waste contamination coupled with monitoring/enforcement already provided for in Town code §94-9 & §94-12 [Action 9.5.2](#)
- Adopt Dark Night Skies lighting regulations [Action 3.13.2](#)
- Update the Town's energy plan [Action 7.5.1 & 7.5.2](#)
- Adopt Solar App+, contributes to Streamline Solar Permitting for Small Installations [Action 5.6](#)
- Adopt a municipal fleet improvement plan [Action 6.6.1b](#)
- Develop LID/stormwater management regulations [Action 3.8.2b](#)
- Ground treatment best management practices (BMPs) and/or native planting and pruning policies [Action 3.11.2 & 3.11.4](#)



Model Outdoor Lighting Regulations for Connecticut

TREE CANOPY ASSESSMENT

WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
OCTOBER | 2025

PlantU Geo

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Pesticide Applied On: _____
By: _____
COMPANY NAME _____
COMPANY PHONE # _____

© THIS SIGN MUST REMAIN FOR 24 HOURS AFTER PESTICIDE APPLICATION



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