



SUSTAINABLE WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION

July 27, 2026

7:00 PM, Room 407, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order 7:04 PM
 - **Commissioners Present:** Blake Ellavsky, Ted Newton, Steve Sack, Ally Schoenhorn, Andrea Yuliano, Pat Wilson, Dave Sagers, Maura Beaudreault, Kelly Kennedy. **Not Present:** Lianne Allen-Jacobson
 - **Staff Present:** Catherine Diviney (Staff Liaison)
 - **Public Attendance:** 1 member of the public.
2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – approved (9-0)
3. Administrative – One appointment pending, 8/12 Town Council meeting.
4. Communications & Community Comment
 - **Farmer's Market Partnership:** Expression of interest in partnering with the Sustainability Commission or Public Works for community outreach, including running an information table.
 - **Wolcott Park Compost Bin:** Concern raised regarding insufficient publicity for the new compost bin at Wolcott Park.
 - **Branding:** Resident suggested working with Fresh Ink to offer official Sustainability Commission logo options and t-shirts
5. Ongoing Business
 - Finalize Annual Report to Town Council - attached
 - The final report was presented. The report was approved unanimously by the Commission (9-0). Thank you, Kelly!
 - The report will be submitted to the Town Council PWF&S Committee for review ahead of their August 20 meeting. There was some discussion about how to ensure it reaches the entire Town Council.
 - Working Group Reports
 - Nature-Based Working Group**
 - **Westmoor Park Event:** Update provided on the two-hour guided walk-through Westmoor Park with Master Gardener Suzanne, highlighting the park as a key sustainability model. Met with the new naturalist and director of the park to build connections for future programs and initiatives.
 - **Tree Canopy:** Discussion regarding the decline in local tree canopy, strategies for improvement, and recruiting volunteers for the Tree Action Group (TAG) / West Hartford Tree Canopy initiative. Noted support for the Traprock fundraiser.
 - Energy Working Group**
 - **Grant Application:** Currently drafting a grant proposal focused on increasing Home Energy Solutions audits via Eversource. Proposed budget items include targeted brochures, event refreshments, graphic design services, and sponsored social media posts.
 - **ESCO RFP:** Commissioners may join the group reviewing RFPs starting in September.

Waste Working Group

- **Community Outreach:** Discussed methods to better reach new homeowners to promote recycling and household food waste diversion via municipal compost bins.
- **Data & Metrics:** Emphasized gathering hard waste metrics to demonstrate tax savings to the town (e.g., tonnage diverted) and highlighting secondary benefits like energy generation from composting.
- **Composting Visibility:** Evaluated strategies to encourage town leadership to expand composting conversations and improve overall program visibility.
- Priority Tracker for 2026–2027 Strategic Priorities:
 - Commission is adopting a new format for tracking in-flight working group efforts and progress.
 - The framework will serve both retrospective and forward-looking functions to ensure year-end accountability.
 - A shared document will be established for working groups to review and update ongoing initiatives.

6. New Business

- Update on Environmental Sustainability Coordinator (formerly, Recycling Coordinator) position
 - There is a delay in the hiring b/c revised position needs Council approval for pay increase.
 - **Motion:** To send an email to John Philips (Public Works) and the Town Council advocating for continued recycling and food waste outreach, and requesting the town engage Katherine Bruns on a temporary basis until a new hire is made. **Action:** Passed unanimously (9-0).
- WH Tree Summit – agenda, participants, dates, who wants to be involved
 - **Core Pillars:** Planting, Promotion, Policy, and Trade Outreach.
 - **Upcoming Actions:**
 - Planning a fall joint meeting with TAG and town leadership to outline next steps.
 - Addressing the Mayor's recommendation for a public, action-oriented event.
- Commission visibility / community involvement – There was continued discussion about engaging more residents and making them aware of Commission.
- Recommendations for Council – next PWF&S Committee Thursday 8/20 @ 8 AM
 - Recycling and Waste Updates
 - Tree Canopy Management
 - Bear Management Awareness
 - Gas-Powered Equipment Restrictions (Catherine Diviney recently forwarded Sust CT webinar on this topic)

7. Calendar Updates – WH Tree Summit – mid-Sept or early-Oct; WH Electric Showcase – Sept 12 – Oct 12; Westmoor Park Fall Education Series – TBD; HES events – pending CEB grant

8. Agenda for Next Meeting – 8/31/26

- Commission will review template ordinance language at the upcoming August meeting to prepare actionable proposals.

9. Adjournment – 9:11 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.

Nature Based Solutions Working Group – in lieu of meeting the NBS working group took a guided tour of Westmoor Park on July 22.

The Energy Working Group met July 15, it was Ally, Catherine, and Bernie Pelletier. We discussed

- Potential activities for the Community Energy Boost Grant Application. Ally and Catherine have a meeting scheduled with Devan Williams of Eversource on July 16. Unfortunately, the EnergizeCT Smart Energy Living display is not available many dates this fall. Maybe we should plan ahead and book it for Celebrate WH! in June 2027?
- Dates for the WH Electric Showcase. Drive Electric week is Sep 12-Oct12. Sierra Club is organizing Climate Fest event in Hartford, Sept 17, so it will likely be in Oct.
- CPower is a “battery as a service” company that Bernie recently met with and might be a good candidate for municipal facilities. See attached flyer.
- Bernie has also found some WH businesses that have recently done energy efficiency projects through Energy Resources USA (qualified contractor). We might want to interview these local companies and use it for promotion in the Econ Development Newsletter.

OnDemand Energy Storage

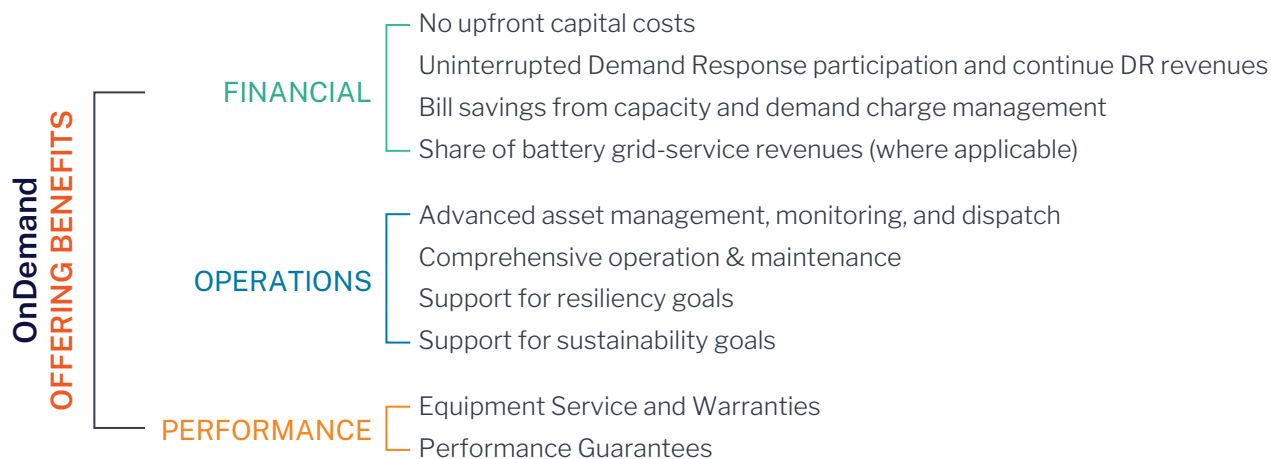
Turn-key Optimized Energy Storage Solution

CPower will install a no out-of-pocket cost advanced battery energy storage solution at your facility with our OnDemand Energy Storage as a Service (ESaaS) program.

CPower takes responsibility for financing, implementation, and operation of the energy storage asset, while you keep the savings on your electric bill. In some cases, we can even pay you.

CPower's OnDemand Offering Includes:

- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) design, construction, and commissioning
- Permitting, interconnection and metering with your local utility and the grid
- System and component warranties
- Ongoing operations, maintenance, and asset management
- Regular performance reporting
- Complete financing with no out-of-pocket costs
- Additional opportunities for Backup Power, Resiliency, and other Demand Response programs



Why CPower?

We understand your DR plan:

We size and operate the battery to optimize all of your DR programs

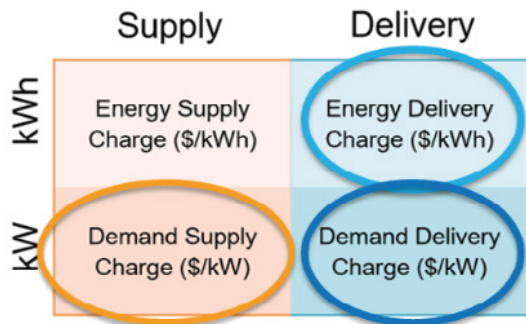
We are a trusted energy manager:

We manage your energy needs holistically, not just at the battery asset level

Industry-leading battery experience:

With our owner LS Power, we are a leading installer and manager of batteries with hundreds of MWs deployed in the US

Energy Storage Value Streams

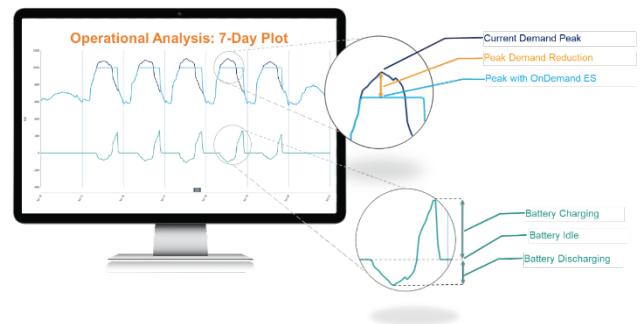


Capacity Pass-through (Cap Tag)

Many Supply bills include a substantial capacity charge (a.k.a “Cap Tag”). By predicting when the system-wide peak hour will occur and discharging the battery to reduce your facility’s energy usage during this hour, CPower’s OnDemand energy storage solution can reduce your electric supply bills for the entire year...all automatically, without any monitoring or intervention required from your facility.

Demand Charge Management

Depending on your facility’s specific load profile, the On-Demand battery may be able to reduce your peak demand each month, yielding savings on your utility bill. nDemand uses historical and real-time data to predict monthly peaks and will automatically schedule charging and discharging to reduce monthly peak demand whenever possible.



Grid-Services Revenues

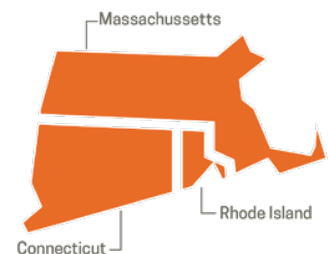
The electric grid needs to balance the generation intermittency that comes with increasing amounts of renewable generation assets. Batteries are ideally suited to help address this need. By discharging during Summer Peak windows, most importantly between 2-7pm, batteries can earn revenue from grid operators. As an OnDemand host, a portion of these payments may go to you, while the balance remains with CPower to finance and operate the battery.

Regional Opportunities in New England

Connecticut – The Connecticut Green Bank’s Energy Storage Solutions Program (ESSP) may financially support a battery at your location, providing you with on-bill savings and/or lease payments. Contact CPower to see if this program might work for you – if so, as a Certified Contractor in the ESSP, CPower can submit an application on your behalf to enroll in the program and install and operate the battery at no cost to you.

Rhode Island – For many facilities, a battery can be provided at no up-front cost and with no service fees. You keep all of the on-bill savings, and grid-services revenues go to CPower to pay for the cost of installing and operating the battery. For some larger facilities, CPower can pay a portion of grid services revenue directly to you.

Massachusetts – On-bill savings from Demand Charge Management can be substantial for facilities over 250 kW in MA. While facilities gain substantial on-bill savings, in some cases CPower will charge a monthly “ESaaS Fee” to operate the battery. In all cases, we guarantee that savings will exceed payments, and there are never any up-front costs.



Contact your **CPower New England Team** to learn more.

844.276.9371

The Waste Working Group met on July 23. We discussed:

- Our experience at Celebrate West Hartford last month and the varied conversations around waste reduction we had with people there.
- Creating compelling recycling and other waste-reduction materials to send to new homeowners in town and/or residents at large, and whether nips revenue might be able to cover related costs.
- The economics of implementing curbside pickup for food scrap diversion (and thus lower town tipping fees) at scale in future years.
- Creating a public dashboard for waste and food scrap metrics, with data from town. These metrics would measure residential, school and municipal efforts, and might help the town create goals to increase or decrease these metrics.
- Developing waste-related recommendations for businesses in town. For example, can restaurants benefit economically by separating food scraps?
- Promoting better recycling and food scrap removal at apartment and condo complexes.

Sustainable West Hartford Commission 2026 Priorities

	Action (as seen in 2025 Commission report)	2026 Progress/Status	Next Commission Steps	Town Asks
End goal: Embed sustainability efforts in decision-making across all departments (planning, budget and procurement).				
Strategies				
	The ideal solution is to formally establish a Sustainability Office, which will work with all departments to establish sustainability priorities and budgets, like proven models in Groton, New Haven, and Bridgeport.	Many initiatives are outside the influence of our staff liaisons, or require changes to staff priority and department budgets.	Propose Sustainability Director again for 2026-2027 Budget	
	To broaden department engagement, collaborate with Town's Sustainable CT 2027 Certification Committee to identify and implement actions within the Sustainable CT framework.	Many Commission priorities on work plan for implementation prior to August 2027 submission.	Monitoring progress on actions	
	To increase Commission impact, allocate a modest annual budget (suggested \$5,000–\$10,000) for public education events. This eliminates the need for volunteers to pay for supplies out-of-pocket.	Funding identified for Clean Energy and Waste Management. Town Manager will reimburse expenses for Nature-Based.		
	Via PWF&S Committee, present recommendations for Council consideration. To the extent possible, identify statistics, costs, best practices and funding sources	Kicked off engagement effort during April Committee meeting. Met w/PWF&S chair.	PWF&S Committee ready for Commission's specific topics in their monthly meetings.	
Specific Priorities				
Expand tree canopy	Promote to Town and educate residents to reverse the significant long-term loss of tree canopy. Trees are a valuable part of town infrastructure, ereducing the heat island effect, mitigating flooding, increasing habitat, etc.	Bill Gleason presented to Commission in February. Contact w/Bill Gleason, WH Tree Project, Tree Action Group, Town. Contacted foundation that supports TRLC (not their focus). State grants investigated.	< Provide feedback on outline, dates and invitation list for summit. < Action on most likely DEEP grants.	Specific asks can include ordinances and supporting private organization plans.
Expand native habitat	Educate and work with residents and the Town to expand native plantings through mechanisms such as Less Lawn, More Life, and Pollinator Pathways. It is one of the 2 issues raised most frequently by residents.	Passed Pollinator-Friendly Resolution, Town hosted Doug Tallamy's Homegrown National Park, and Commission hosted More Lawn, Less Life event	< Prepare summary on elimination of pesticides for Commission review and PWF&S Committee < 2027 Garden Walk planning and Sustainable CT match application	Phase out the Town's use of pesticides. This is a budget issue.
Reduce and divert waste	Expand and further promote the town's food scraps drop-off program.	Additional drop off bins have been installed. The program's growth continues to divert food scraps from the waste stream.	Monitor statistics and trends	
	Explore the economic case for the town offering and/or negotiating curbside food scrap pickup.	Conversations with town officials on projected increasing costs for waste disposal have laid the groundwork for implementing curbside pickup for food scrap diversion, and thus lower town tipping fees at scale.		Town to consider curbside options.

Sustainable West Hartford Commission 2026 Priorities

	Action (as seen in 2025 Commission report)	2026 Progress/Status	Next Commission Steps	Town Asks
Increase efficiency and shift to clean energy	Educate and encourage residents and businesses to adopt efficiency and clean energy technologies (e.g., electric vehicles, heat pumps, solar)	Commission approved application for Power Boost Grant	Submitting application for Power Boost grant	
Activate existing plans	Work with appropriate commissions and staff to track and implement specific conservation goals in the POCD.	Prioritize goals in the Conservation section of the POCD, partner with Traprock Ridge on land conservation.	Establish meeting between Mayor, Town Manager and TRLC's new ED, Kathy Blachowski	
	Update Town's Clean Energy Plan	Establish an action plan for the implementation of the Clean Energy Plan, working toward Town's Net Zero 2050 goal		
	Integrate sustainability scorecard or checklist into Town's planning/permit process		Forward alternate versions to Town Planner, or get sample of desired format from Town Planner	Support to integrate sustainability into decision-making
Climate resilience	Promote Town and residential use of green infrastructure (e.g. trees, bioswales, rain gardens) to reduce stormwater flooding and heat island effect.	Worked with Community Development (toured bioswale in Bristol).	Opportunity to collaborate on Kane and Kennedy Brook Flood Study	
Reduce and divert waste	Identify the most common contaminants in waste and recycling and create a resident education campaign to avoid them.			
Increase efficiency and shift to clean energy	Hold community education events (Electric Vehicle Showcase, Climate Change Talk)			
	Explore opportunities for geo-thermal networks (TEN4WH)			
Launch "Cool West Hartford"	Promote sustainability practices for residents, businesses, and institutions.	Town has provided staff and IT support to implement content. Not launched.		

Draft Communication re: Continued Outreach on Recycling and Food Waste

We are writing on behalf of the Sustainable West Hartford Commission and its Waste Working Group.

We understand that the hiring on the new Environmental Sustainability Coordinator (formerly, Recycling Coordinator) is in process, but somewhat delayed. Continued outreach is vital for waste education and diversion and reduction efforts in West Hartford and resulting savings to the town for waste tipping fees. There has been no outreach on West Hartford Recycles FB and Instagram social media since June 9, when Katherine Bruns left. New food scraps drop off locations have been added without timely publicity (e.g., Wolcott Park), and new registered Metrokey users have been tapering off.

We strongly recommend that Katherine be hired on a temporary, limited consulting basis to keep up a basic level of outreach until Public Works makes a new hire, and to assist during their initial transition.

Dave Sagers, Commissioner and Chair

Ted Newton, Commissioner and head of the Waste Working Group

Replant West Hartford: Project Outline

Section	Description	Organization	Notes
Background	Tree Canopy Loss 2010 - 2023		
Introduction	Solving the Tree Canopy Crisis		
Table of Contents			
1. The Initiative	The Replant West Hartford Initiative - Overview		
1a.	CREATE: Replant West Hartford		
2. Planting	SUPPORT: West Hartford Tree Project		
2a.	CREATE: Annual Fall Planting Event		
2b.	CREATE: “TREES FROM SEEDS” Annual Project		
2c.	CREATE: Tree Ambassadors		
2d.	CONTINUE: Tree Inventory, Planting Plan Efforts		
3. Trade Outreach	CREATE: Program for Arborists & Landscapers		
4. Promotion	CREATE: Website, ReplantWestHartford.org		
4a.	CREATE: Social Media Network with SM Managers		
4b.	CREATE: Speakers Bureau, Content Network		
4c.	CREATE: Series of Public Education Events		
4d.	CREATE: Annual Tree Festival, Other Events		
5. Policy, Govt.	EXPLORE: Preservation, Tree Ordinances		
5a.	OVERVIEW: The Impending Public Tree Crisis		
5b.	REVIEW: R.O.W. Planting Policy, Inventory		
5c.	REVIEW: Town Stem Replacement Policy		
5d.	REVIEW: Eversource Zero Replacement Policy		
5e.	EXPLORE: Insurance Firms Forced Cutting		
6. Appendix			

The Problem - Loss of Tree Canopy

Between 2010 and 2013, West Hartford lost 21% of its tree canopy. Approximately 45,000 trees have been lost, more than 18,000 with a diameter of 18" or more, the majority on private property.

The causes are many (aging trees, storms, drought, development, utility trimming, insurance)

The impacts of this loss are also many, particularly economic, to residents, Town, businesses.

The General Solution – Replant West Hartford

Any solution will require multiple approaches and audiences to slow further loss and replace tree canopy, including new planting and preservation of mature trees. The first step is to convene interested parties and agree on a plan, structure, and funding.

The First Step: Planning a Tree Summit Develop an Action Plan

Step	Status	Next Steps
Determine what groups will engage	In progress (see table below)	Commission feedback on list below
Complete initial outline (Bill Gleason)	Met on July 15, provided outline for feedback	Commission feedback
Determine location and date of summit	Westmoor willing to host	Finalize commitment
Send out invitations for date		
Prepare agenda and materials	See draft for feedback below Who will present/moderate?	

Summit: Possible Partners and Status of Outreach

Organization	Status	Interest
Sustainable West Hartford Commission	Communicating with potential partners	Tree canopy is a priority for some members.
West Hartford Tree Project	Spoke with Tom Martin, Chair	Interested in expanding planting efforts
West Hartford Tree Action Group	Not meeting often	Bill reached out to individual members, and there is interest
West Hartford Garden Club	Best point of contact?	
Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy		Will make efforts on properties (replanted Wojan Woods)
Town (Leisure Services, Public Works, Engineering, Westmoor)	Identify Town point of contact	
National Groups (Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, Arbor Day)	Contacted Sierra Club of CT (Samantha Dynowski)	
Connecticut DEEP	Contacted Danica Doroski, Urban Forestry Coordinator	Would send a rep to meeting. Will inform on grant opportunities and ordinances.
CT Urban Forest Network		
Eversource		
Arborists	Luna Tree Care (Liz Pang) would be a good resource	

Summit: Preliminary Draft Agenda/Key Issues to Discuss/Decide

- Agree on Major Work Streams (see Bill Gleason's outline)
 - Planting
 - Promotion
 - Policy (public, preservation)
- Define initial focus between major work streams
- Define initial audience focus i.e. Private versus Public (where and who)
- Articulate Planting Goals Over Time (what – see below for example)
- Identify needs by year for
 - Volunteers and level of effort
 - Leadership/Roles
 - Entity/Structure
 - Budget/Funding Sources
- Assign next steps
 - Develop short term Plan, including identifying and incorporating models that work
 - Communication strategy, needs and messaging
 - Work on longer-term items

Goal Concept					
	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Total	1,000	1,500	2,000	3,000	4,000
Private	100%	100%	??	??	??
Business			??	??	??
Public			??	??	??