



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

AGENDA

West Hartford Clean Energy Commission

April 15, 2019

7:00 PM

Rm 422

1. Roll Call 7:07 PM

Member	Present	Alternates	Present
Catherine Diviney	Yes	Robert Palmer	No
Chris Nelson	Yes	Dave Mello	No
Joe Campanella	Yes	James Capella	Yes
Bernie Pelletier	Yes		
Max DuBuisson	Yes		
Total	(3 needed for quorum)		
Additional Attendees	Samantha Dynowski, Katherine Bruns, Ted Loewenthal, Steve Sacks, Chris Feely, Mark Hatch, Julia Farber		

2. Approval of Minutes - Approved

- a. March 11, 2019

3. Communications/Administration

4. Upcoming Events

- a. April 20, Drive Electric EV Event at Whole Foods, Blue Back
- b. April 23, 6PM, St. James Church, WH – West Hartford Energy Discussion
- c. May 28, 6PM, St. James Church, WH – Sierra Ready for 100 Discussion
- d. May 30, CTGBC tour at Legrand, \$10, <https://ctgbc.org/calendar.php>
- e. June 1 and 2, Celebrate West Hartford.

5. Business

- a. CEC participation in Celebrate West Hartford

The Commission agreed by unanimous vote of those present to host a booth at Celebrate WH. It was agreed that part of the theme of the booth would be to “celebrate our clean energy accomplishments”. There was discussion of what outreach theme would be the focus – and several ideas were discussed – to be resolved next meeting:

- *Use Sustainable CT as an outreach bridge to connect with residents*
- *Focus on educational material to help residents recycle properly (Catherine will reach out to Paine’s to see if they have booth this year)*

- b. “TED” talk – James Capella – Socially Responsible Investing

James provided a general overview of the different ways that investors can make their financial choices consistent with their personal values. He noted that there is an increasing awareness of, and demand for, this type of investment.

- c. The Connecticut Fund for the Environment has drafted a letter to the governor (attached) and requested sign on from the WHCEC. It was voted on as follows:

*Catherine Diviney, Yes
Chris Nelson, Abstain
James Capella, Yes
Joe Campanella, Yes,
Bernard Pelletier, Yes
Max DuBuisson, Yes
Dave Mello and Bob Palmer, not present.*

- d. Report on discussion with town Engineers regarding fugitive methane

At the March meeting we discussed the Sierra Clubs findings in Hartford. Natural Gas (about 93% Methane) is leaking at higher than presumed levels. Catherine was to talk with the town engineers about their ability to check for this in WH. At the current time they do not have a plan, equipment, or bandwidth to do this checking. However, we intend to discuss with Sierra Club to see what is involved. This problem can be serious for the following reasons:

- *Safety -high levels of leakage can pose a fire/explosion risk*
- *Financial – currently ratepayers pay for gas entered into the pipeline – whether it is delivered OR escapes*
- *Global Warming – Methane has 100x more global warming effect than CO2 (pound for pound).*

- e. Discussion of creating a business advisory committee to assist the CEC with outreach to business

We were fortunate to have 3 business people in the room – Mitch Hatch (French's Dry Cleaners, Steve Sacks (Sack Energy), and Julie Farber (employee from LeGrande). There was general agreement that formation of such a group would be useful to the business community in the town. However, the exact construction of the group needs additional discussion. Some ideas:

- *It could be a subcommittee of the CEC*
- *It could be a committee at the Chamber of Commerce with the CEC joining the group there.*

- f. Sister City Task Force report

The task force has met twice and developed a list of potential towns in Europe and the US (4 in the Netherlands, 3 in Norway, 1 in Germany, and 3 in the US). The task force is planning to narrow the list, and begin communicating to the towns. Furthermore – the desired relationship may not be a sister city relationship – but rather a partner for a dialogue – with learning on both sides. We need to determine how the town wants to engage.

- g. Community Energy Plan – No discussion

- h. Ongoing Campaigns – Status:

- *Business outreach – the Energy Resources letter has gone out. So far not a lot response – often because restaurants (the first group of businesses to be contacted) have already done some measures such as LED's*
- *Solar for All – The last formal event has concluded with only limited success in West Hartford (7 contracts), however Posigen will remain available.*
- *Solvview – We are working on getting the final touches on the flyer. The Corporation Counsel has given appropriate disclaimer language*
- *Recycling – food waste – Blue Earth Compost will deliver next TED talk at May meeting*
- *Community TV – No discussion*
- *Sierra Ready for 100/100PercentCT – Brief discussion of the RF100 campaign and the goal to provide educational sessions to WH residents.*

- Plastic Bag Ban /Schools Trex Plastic Challenge – *Program ending soon. Some discussion of the potential for a statewide plastic bag ban. At this point it seems to be a remote possibility. Town Council **Community Planning and Physical Services Sub-Committee** still needs to follow with Sedgwick students.*
- Potential combination of the Cons & Env't Committee with the WHCEC -*was not discussed but remains a possibility.*

6. AOB

- a. Dave Mello attend a Freedom of Information Act seminar put on by the town. The purpose was to make sure that board and commissions are following proper protocol. Dave was not at this April meeting and will update the group in May. Catherine's unofficial judgment is that we are following proper processes*
- b. For next meeting a discussion of the "Agora Ballroom" property as a potential community solar site will be placed on the agenda*
- c. As noted above we will continue the Business Advisory Board discussion, and settle what the CEC will present at Celebrate West Hartford.*

7. Adjournment 9:06 PM

Next meeting May 13, 2019 Town Hall Room 422

April 18, 2019

Dear Governor Lamont,

As you know, the environmental decisions we make today shape the future of our air, land, and water—and those in turn set the stage for a vibrant economy and more secure, healthy citizens.

We applaud your statements from the campaign trail, as those statements indicated bold leadership for policies that protect our environment and human health, save ratepayers money, and spur Connecticut's green economy:

“Nothing is more important than the Environment. Everything I do in the next four years, I'm going to do looking through an environmental lens. The key to achieving the goal of a zero-carbon-emissions state in the future is making the right decisions now about developing renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. It makes little sense to invest \$6.6 billion for a gas pipeline.” (*Hartford Courant*, 7/16/18)

Your energy, environment, and transportation transition committees worked tirelessly to outline policies that lower our dependence on fossil fuels and expand green initiatives. This year, the Connecticut General Assembly has also indicated broad, enthusiastic, and bipartisan support for increasing offshore wind, keeping solar power competitive, stopping natural gas waste, and increasing energy efficiency.

However, we are concerned by recent indications that agency leadership of your administration is pushing a far more conservative approach that does not reflect the need for urgent climate action. Without these important initiatives, not only will we lose existing jobs, Connecticut's green economy will slow and we will not meet the state's 2020 and 2030 greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The undersigned leading environmental and energy organizations ask that you continue your vocal support for Connecticut's clean climate and green economy. Please encourage your agency leaders to work towards bold, concrete action for a green and vibrant Connecticut.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLEAN ENERGY FUNDS

As a top priority, we ask that you protect the Connecticut energy efficiency and clean energy funds and right the wrongs the legislature made in 2017 when they broke public trust by raiding the funds. The ratepayers already pay for these programs, which lower energy waste and energy expense, spur the green economy, and create jobs.

The Conservation and Load Management programs are cost effective programs that help close the affordability gap in our state and lower energy burdens on our environment while protecting human health and strengthening our energy grid. They are tremendous job and economic drivers—direct service energy efficiency has a 7-to-1 return on investment in economic activity.¹ These programs should be equal access for all Connecticut ratepayers, regardless of their energy source, and should not be continually raided for budget gap or to pay other bills.

We ask that you take action to protect the energy efficiency and clean energy funds for the long term, and halt the ongoing damage by preventing the pending June 2019 diversion of \$54 million.

¹ Efficiency for All: <https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Efficiency-First.pdf>

OFFSHORE WIND

There is bipartisan and industry support for the procurement of 2,000 MW of offshore wind energy. Massachusetts, Maryland and New Jersey already have aggressive legislative mandates, and ratepayers in Rhode Island and Massachusetts are projected to reap substantial savings from their states' offshore wind contracts. A robust long-term commitment to offshore wind will ensure that Connecticut secures maximum benefits from this emerging industry, including increased reliability of Connecticut's electric grid, energy at critical times to help meet winter peak demand, reduced reliance on natural gas, and achievement of the state's Global Warming Solutions Act targets.

HB7156, *AAC Procurement of Energy Derived from Offshore Wind*, would produce \$3 billion in new economic growth for Connecticut, at least 4,000 new jobs, and significant long-term utility bill savings for electric ratepayers.²

We ask that you support legislation that mandates solicitations for 2,000 MW of offshore wind by 2030 and includes strong labor and environmental protections to keep Connecticut from falling behind our neighbors in the race for in-state investments in supply chain activities and local jobs.

SOLAR ENERGY AND NET METERING

Despite its advantages, solar penetration levels in Connecticut are still very low compared with neighboring states.³ Connecticut must focus on increasing solar deployment, rather than terminating policies that achieve bill savings for residents and reduce climate pollution.

The Energy and Technology Committee has shown bipartisan commitment to address the problematic changes to Connecticut's solar programs enacted last session—including saving net metering, the elimination of which has had devastating impacts on solar deployment and solar jobs in other states.

Specifically, we ask you to support the provisions in H.B. 7251 that would delay the end of our current net metering programs by expanding the Green Bank's residential solar incentive program (RSIP) by an additional 100 MW and extending the commercial solar incentive program (ZREC) for an additional two years^[MS1]. RSIP, which provides rebates and performance-based incentives to residential solar PV installations, has been a critical solar deployment tool and ensures the state is able to grow solar parity across all race, ethnic, and income groups.

We ask that you help advocate for increased solar development, net metering, and extensions for RSIP and ZREC. In addition, conducting a mandatory Value of Solar study would affirm the need to continue in-state programs for projects of all scales from residential to commercial to industrial.

² Acadia Center, Building a Stronger Connecticut, online at https://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Acadia-Center_CTGovernorMemo_2018.pdf

³ Barbose G., Putting the Potential Rate Impacts of Distributed Solar into Context, January 2017, Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory, <https://emp.lbl.gov/sites/all/files/lbnl-1007060.pdf>. Similarly, the Brookings Institute reviewed several solar valuation studies by regulators in over 10 states, and concluded that many show that net metering benefits all utility customers when all costs and benefits are accounted for. M. Muro and D. Saba, Rooftop Solar: Net metering is a Net Benefit, Brookings Institute (May 23, 2016), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/rooftop-solar-net-metering-is-a-net-benefit/>.

LEAKING GAS INFRASTRUCTURE AND PIPELINE TAX

Leaking gas infrastructure is a serious concern for the climate and human health. Methane is 100 times more effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere over the short term. Health impacts include higher rates of asthma, cancer, and birth defects in people living near gas infrastructure such as power plants. A recent report by the Sierra Club⁴ details the extent of the problem in Hartford, Danbury, and New London, finding as many as four leaks on average per mile—much higher than reported by PURA.

S.B. 232, *An Act Concerning The Allowable Percentage Of Leakage From Gas Pipelines*, will address gas leaks by forbidding gas companies from charging ratepayers for leaked gas, and will lower the leak tolerance threshold from 3% to 1%, requiring repair at 1% of leaked gas.

We ask for your support to address gas leaks for a cleaner, safer, environment.

PLEASE SUPPORT THESE CRITICAL CLEAN CLIMATE INITIATIVES

There has been remarkably widespread bipartisan cohesiveness and support for these initiatives among the transition teams, legislators, environmental organizations, and industry leaders. We ask that you advocate for these initiatives with the agency leadership of your administration, so they will join the long list of proponents of a clean energy future. You have the opportunity to be Connecticut's climate champion and help make our state a green energy leader, to not only meet our climate mandates, but to be competitive in the race to a green and healthy future.

Thank you for your support of these critical initiatives and policies.

Sincerely,

- 350 CT
- Ashford Clean Energy Task Force
- Clean Water Action
- Citizens Campaign for the Environment
- Connecticut Citizen Action Group
- Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound
- Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
- Consumers for Sensible Energy
- Efficiency For All
- Energy Efficiency Solutions
- Green Eco Warriors
- People's Action for Clean Energy
- Portland Clean Energy Task Force
- Sierra Club Connecticut
- West Hartford Clean Energy Commission

⁴ Connecticut Mobile Methane Leaks Survey and Analysis Results, April 2019
https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/66f28e_7e62af04d87a40568aaff9327695532.pdf