



WEST HARTFORD SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY GROUP

Special Meeting (Virtual, webex)

September 22, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Recording of meeting available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzZp0zt_288

Meeting called to order at 6:43

1. Land Acknowledgement
2. Follow Up: Sustainable CT, TCI-P, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

Town Council passed resolution to support TCI-P on 9/14

Leaf Blowers to be discussed at Cons & Env't Commission meeting on 9/27 (see slides)

3. Guest Speaker: Matt Hart, Town Manager – outlined Town's top priorities

Strategic Initiatives

Covid-19 response

Community and Economic Development

Affordable housing

Bicycle facilities master plan

Ideanomics property

New Park TOD Zoning

North Main Street road diet study

Outdoor dining and retail (best summers ever for WH Center restaurants)

Permitting software

Stormwater study

Community Services

Panhandling

Programming (culturally sensitive programs for the community)

Social Services

Youth council

Finance and Budget

ARPA - plan to use American Rescue Plan funding

Budget development

Pension obligation bonds

HR & Labor Relations

Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative

Hired a full-time equity officer, one of only a few towns in CT with such a position

Hendree asked about the Elmwood project - relocating the ECC to the former St. Brigid School at 100 Mayflower St. The group will be comprised of key stakeholders, i.e. SAG, Environment, and Cons. and citizens at large.

Preeti asked about programming for schools - Catherine Diviney and Katherine Bruns have good relationships at schools wrt to recycling programs. The role of the SAG is how do we educate people of means about the impacts of their lifestyle and reduce their carbon footprint.

Kim asked how to get the message out into the community, especially to people who make the largest footprint? Build out our recycling facility at Brixton and then have a conversation at some point over the next few years. We need to obtain buy-in from the community.

Christine wanted information on more sidewalks and dangerous neighborhoods that are missing sidewalks entirely. ARPA funds that we receive will be used to fix/implement sidewalks in commercial areas to make them more ADA accessible.

Mary asked about affordable housing in town and raised concerns about the Elmwood project moving off of NB Avenue, and the local bus service.

Council has established an AH working group, which has held two orientation meetings. Will present a roadmap for an AH plan.

4. SAG Vision Goals & Objectives Discussion

Comments on Mission Statement

Enables West Hartford - too soft, needs a more direct approach

Needs to include a nod to economically viable, or economic development as WH is not just a place to live, but a place to work.

To become most sustainable indicates that you've arrived, it should be stated that the town is constantly aiming higher

Vision Statements

The group will not vote tonight, as changes to the Mission Statement will affect the Vision Statement

A working group will work on further refining the vision statements

5. Priority Action Items Discussion

Julia indicated SAG/resident's priorities may not be same as Town's - some as visible, some are not.

Matt Hart said building out stormwater and drainage system is important, as wastewater eventually ends up in CT River.

Revising local zoning to support more solar, i.e. ground mounts

How do we educate and incentivize residents and businesses to commit doing something and making sustainable choices

6. Round Table - Q&A, Comments, Announcements

7. Next Steps

Execution Plan

Six sub-committees to be established to work on refining goals and objectives

Identify who needs to be at the table

Matt Hart on how/when to talk to town council members about the SAG recommendations. A presentation before the end of the calendar year to a council committee would be helpful. There is more discussion and engagement on the committee level.

Dates for next meeting

10/13, 11/3

Meeting adjourned at 8:49

"ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING SHOULD CONTACT SUZANNE OSLANDER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, 860-561-7580 SEVEN DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING."