



WEST HARTFORD SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY GROUP

Special Meeting (Virtual, webex)

October 13, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Video recording of meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6Xq0iH4ZfM>

Meeting started at 6:39 PM – 16 participants

Julia Farber reviewed the agenda.

1. Land Acknowledgement – presented by Kim Hughes, Rachel Virgin volunteered for next time. Julia Farber acknowledged that Oct 12 was Indigenous People’s Day.
2. Sustainable CT News & Updates – see slides, Catherine Diviney shared link to new CT Town Equity Data Reports produced by Data Haven. Also, West Hartford MLK mural profiled in CPTV segment, and reminder to people to take advantage for Sust CT offerings for trainings/webinar.
3. Recap Priorities & Presentation to Town Council – See slides, Julia provided recap on past activities, gap analysis and timeline for potential path forward, including recommendations to Council on what next iteration of SAG looks like and timeline for presentation to Council in Jan 2022.
 - Rachel expressed interest in being involved in future SAG group and her desire to actually “do” stuff not just make recommendations. She also emphasized need for sustainability screen or “check” for everything the town does.
 - Vanessa Borkowski agreed.
 - Johannes Evelein expressed concern that Town Manger “is a partner, until he’s not” and that Town already has a plan/priorities in mind and will not deviate or take SAG recommendations seriously. SAG should not be rubber stamping what Town wants.
 - Catherine commented that organizational structure and communication flow needs to be looked at in addition to 11 priorities. Town need mechanism to incorporate expertise of community members. Julia said this would be a 12th area.
 - Kim emphasized need for education and working with external organizations.
 - Mary Donegan commented that an external group might be better able to “influence” the Town and a 2-pronged approach may be best.

- Julia asked “Where does Town Manager get advice on Sustainability?” Catherine said it really depends on the topic; but, it is not always clear or well-coordinated across departments.
4. Breakout Discussion – SAG members volunteered for 1 or multiple subgroups (based on 12 priority areas) which will meet and develop 1-2 draft slides for Council presentation (template will be provided). Draft slides will be presented at next meeting for feedback. (Note on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) – per 1st SAG meeting and Town’s Corporation Counsel – subgroups ok as long as what is discussed is reported back to main SAG group). A google sheet will also be posted so that people not in attendance can sign up for a subgroup/priority.
 5. Next Steps
 - Next meeting 11/3
 - There was discussion about use of SAG email group for events, etc. People are generally ok with that.
 6. Round Table - Q&A, Comments, Announcements – highlights of what member shared below.
 - Chris Feely recapped two successful events: the “Electric Powered Lawn Brigade” marching in Park Road Parade and a WH Library Zoom Q&A session on Electric Vehicles hosted by Clean Energy Commission. SAG members participated in both.
 - Catherine mentioned the SAG as a group could organize their own events or partner with Town or other Commissions on events, like Celebrate WH.
 - Jay shared his initiative for car-free LaSalle Rd/WH Center.
 - Link to WeHa article about planned use of \$37 Million ARPA funds: <https://we-ha.com/west-hartford-plans-use-of-arpa-funds/#:~:text=West%20Hartford%20will%20be%20receiving,Manager%20Matt%20Hart%20outlined%20an>
 - Katherine Bruns announced town is doing another discounted backyard compost bin sale. There was discussion about whether backyard composting is even legal in WH
 - Hendree Milward said that Climate Emergency group (including kids) are presenting to Council subcommittee on Oct 21.
 - Ed Perzanowski mentioned “Along the Lines” podcast with CTDOT Bureau Chief of Public Transportation Rich Andreski: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/along-the-lines/id1527622832>
 - Rachel mentioned two excellent CT Pubic Radio podcast in last 2 weeks: 1 about native plants and 1 about Pay-As-You-Throw

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM

"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."