



WEST HARTFORD SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY GROUP

Special Meeting (Virtual, webex)

November 16, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Video recording of the meeting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bj-JPUZ4_N4

The chat is attached at the end of these minutes.

MEETING MINTUES

Meeting started at 6:35 PM – 19 participants. Catherine Diviney (Town Energy Specialist) introduced that this meeting is a continuation of the Nov 3 meeting where we ran out of time to get through all the draft subgroup presentations.

1. Land Acknowledgement – presented by Kim Hughes
2. Sustainable CT News & Updates – see slides, presented by Catherine Diviney
3. Draft Subgroup Priorities Presentation – 5 remaining areas were presented, see slides
 - Climate Change – presented by Hendree Milward, mentioned that they are hoping to pass a Climate Emergency Resolution by Dec (Jan at latest). Catherine asked if the Climate Change Commission and the second iteration of the SAG were the same group or different groups. And, mentioned that (currently) students cannot be on Commissions (only WeHa electors/voters). Heidi indicated that sustainability belongs under Town Manger. Chris Feely thinks that Town should rethink youth on Commissions.
 - Organizational Structure – presented by Julia Farber. This group’s recommendations are still a work in progress. But the idea is that the SAG should continue. Ideally there would be a sustainability staff position which reports directly to Town Manager and, a Sustainable WH group or “team” (not commission) which would be a hybrid group with community members, staff, youth, and organizations. Some thought on gaps in commissions/staff were also presented. Catherine mentioned that the Town might be a good point in time with a new council, commission vacancies, and term ending, to do some commission clean up and ordinance revisions. Kim also emphasized the need for a connection to WHPS. Ed supported student representation. Chris like it as a start to get Council moving. Rachael asked if some of the Commissions were too narrow – Ped Bike should be Complete Streets. Mary wonders if there are too many Commissions which contribute to silos. Jay mentioned that Commissions are limited in their ability to be strong advocates. Chris mentioned that Clean Energy Commission would be less effective if it got dissolved or absorbed into something else. Johannes echoed

comments that some of the nitty gritty work would get lost without Commissions. Julia think that maybe this is outside scope of this group but maybe another subgroup meeting on this topic is warranted (she will set up). Heidi recommended that that Council make statement that sustainability is a priority to Town.

- Circular Economy – presented by Julia. Idea is to eliminate waste through design. Looking at processed and feedstocks, waste. Johannes asked if group talked about “local currency” idea of having money stay in local economy longer. Chris thought that WeHa did not have to reinvent wheel but copy actions done by other towns. Rachel thought Town could help publicize on their website local businesses already doing these things – Next Chapter, etc.
 - Accessible Energy Efficiency – presented by Chris Feely. General feeling was that this should be combined with other energy priority. Rachel asked if the important part was accessibility or efficiency. Julia thought maybe we move energy efficiency & accessibility next to equity in the presentation.
 - Public Transportation – presented by Mary Donegan. Stressed equity, economic, environmental and regional aspects, and provided short term and med/long term actions, including public transport solution and snow clearing. Linsey asked if there could be a focus on public transport for public events. Johannes noted overlap between this and complete streets slides was noted. There was talk of combining or presenting sequentially. Ed noted there are public transit schedules/connections through West Hartford, but sometimes they could be better. In response to additional comments about snow clearing and graffiti, Catherine mentioned that the Town does have a 311 system, but had heard feedback that it was difficult to register with initially to report problems. Chris Feely says they do site people for not clearing snow. There were questions about whether to add recommendations on rail?
 - Discussion circled back to Equity/access. There was additional discussion of whether Equity slide should focus on anti-racism or both and whether the two were connected or separate. Town Equity “Officer” position has not been posted yet. Equity group will take another stab at slide.
4. Next Steps – next meeting Dec 1. Groups will make revisions to slides. Another subgroup meeting will happen on structural organizational. Julia thought maybe we need a little more time and this is Feb presentation not Dec/Jan. Catherine suggested once recommendations are final draft maybe each group would like to meet with relevant Town staff or Director to get their input as well.
 5. Round Table - Q&A, Comments, and Announcements – West Hartford needs 300 Sust CT points to catch Greenwich. Maybe we should have a competition.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 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."

November 16, 2021 6:35 PM from Johannes Evelein to everyone: Sure, though I haven't seen the revised slide yet...

November 16, 2021 6:36 PM from Christine Feely to everyone: Thanks, Kim!

November 16, 2021 6:36 PM from Kim Hughes she/her to everyone: With pleasure!

November 16, 2021 6:39 PM from Dan Becerra to everyone: We also have priority 4 to revisit since we skipped it during the first meeting

November 16, 2021 6:44 PM from Kim Hughes she/her to everyone: Sign me up!

November 16, 2021 6:44 PM from Grace to everyone: Sounds great!

November 16, 2021 6:48 PM from WebEx Council to everyone: I agree with Heidi - Things that are priorities need to be put on the Town Manager or Town Council's work plate

November 16, 2021 6:57 PM from Ed Perzanowski to everyone: What?

November 16, 2021 6:57 PM from Kim Hughes she/her to everyone: Wow! 1972

November 16, 2021 7:00 PM from Rachael Virgin to everyone: Fantastic work, thank you!

November 16, 2021 7:01 PM from WebEx Council to everyone: Tether to WHPS

November 16, 2021 7:02 PM from Ed Perzanowski to everyone: It seems like an opportune time

November 16, 2021 7:02 PM from Lindsey Whitcomb to everyone: Agree w Christine and Ed

November 16, 2021 7:03 PM from Ed Perzanowski to everyone: Sustainable Transportation

November 16, 2021 7:07 PM from Mary Donegan to everyone: If anyone wants to know why we have this minority party thing, here you go: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/rpt/pdf/2017-r-0344.pdf>

November 16, 2021 7:12 PM from Ed Perzanowski to everyone: Yes

November 16, 2021 7:12 PM from jay stange to everyone: there will be a big city of hartford contingent there: bici co and nate gale and city transpo staff

November 16, 2021	7:12 PM	from Kim Hughes she/her to everyone:	yes
November 16, 2021	7:12 PM	from Dan Becerra to everyone:	yes
November 16, 2021	7:12 PM	from Lindsey Whitcomb to everyone:	yes
November 16, 2021	7:19 PM	from Rachael Virgin to everyone:	I think the tax breaks would be great! I know they're politically difficult, but at least worth the ask
November 16, 2021	7:20 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Consider the "Berk-Shares" program
November 16, 2021	7:20 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	helps encourage money to flow within the town and the region
November 16, 2021	7:20 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Town to pick out what's in the directory and identify 6-10 things that we could do and 6-8 for long term
November 16, 2021	7:22 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Create a webpage that lists businesses that are already part of the circular economy; sharing economy ; and other orgs
November 16, 2021	7:22 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Highlight them on the Why WeHa?
November 16, 2021	7:25 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Ithaca just sent a goal to be 100% carbon free by 2030. Perhaps we can review for the energy efficiency goal. .
November 16, 2021	7:25 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	0% interest loans for residents and commercial.
November 16, 2021	7:25 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	(for energy efficiency goal)
November 16, 2021	7:26 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Should we roll this into the clean energy focused priority?
November 16, 2021	7:26 PM	from Johannes Evelein to everyone:	Ithaca decarbonizes aggressively, fascinating!

<https://www.cNBC.com/2021/11/04/ithaca-is-first-us-city-to-begin-100percent-decarbonization-of-buildings.html>

November 16, 2021	7:27 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Accessibility might be worth its own conversation
November 16, 2021	7:28 PM	from Kim Hughes she/her to everyone:	Access is really an equity conversation, no?
November 16, 2021	7:30 PM	from Mary Donegan to everyone:	You can direct the town to be more active in PURA dockets around renewables and low -income energy.
November 16, 2021	7:30 PM	from Mary Donegan to everyone:	Towns can band together and request dockets too.
November 16, 2021	7:31 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Let's sequentially put renewable energy near energy efficiency and accessibility; and then discuss where accessibility works.
November 16, 2021	7:35 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Lindsey recommends shuttle programs for Priority 4
November 16, 2021	7:35 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	5K or Celebrate or the Holiday Stroll
November 16, 2021	7:37 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Lots of overlap with public transportation and complete streets; could be some combined work there?
November 16, 2021	7:37 PM	from WebEx Council to everyone:	Deisgnate a CTrides rep and partner on educational activities
November 16, 2021	7:45 PM	from Hendree Milward to everyone:	https://we-ha.com/west-hartford-launches-mobile-311-app-report-problems-public-works/
November 16, 2021	7:45 PM	from Kim Hughes she/her to everyone:	Great idea.
November 16, 2021	7:46 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Could / should we share any observations with the town, i.e. the lights are out here, or the sidewalk stops here, or the transfers are really long, or the snow creates barriers to take the bus etc. ?

November 16, 2021	7:46 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	Offer a recommendation to
the town / gap that there is no public transportation champion in the town			
November 16, 2021	7:46 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	and ... also that they
should hold community conversations on sustainability			
November 16, 2021	7:46 PM	from Ed Perzanowski to everyone:	New Haven uses SeeClickFix
November 16, 2021	7:47 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	CT RIDES liaison? could
that be part of the solution			
November 16, 2021	7:48 PM	from Mary Donegan to everyone:	I'd be fine with merging
November 16, 2021	7:48 PM	from Dan Becerra to everyone:	me too
November 16, 2021	7:48 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	No west hartford stop on
the hartford line			
November 16, 2021	7:48 PM	from Julia Farber to everyone:	could possible get off at
flatbush			
November 16, 2021	7:49 PM	from Town of West Hartford to everyone:	In the Public Works
page of the town website is a "Report a Problem" link on the right hand list.			
November 16, 2021	7:51 PM	from WebEx Council to everyone:	Town needs more Planning
staff.			
November 16, 2021	7:59 PM	from Christine Feely to everyone:	Thank you, Julia and
Catherine for the tremendous amount of work you do to advance the group's work!			
November 16, 2021	8:01 PM	from Mary Donegan to everyone:	Yes thank you Julia and
Catherine!!			
November 16, 2021	8:03 PM	from Ed Perzanowski to everyone:	That's a great idea
November 16, 2021	8:03 PM	from Kim Hughes she/her to everyone:	Yes, great idea
November 16, 2021	8:03 PM	from Lindsey Whitcomb to everyone:	thanks guys!

November 16, 2021
input.

8:04 PM

from Mary Donegan to everyone:

Bye y'all! Thanks for your

November 16, 2021

8:04 PM

from jay stange to everyone:

thanks!