



CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION

Virtual Meeting

November 17, 2021 at 7:00 PM

This meeting of the Clean Energy Commission was conducted as a virtual meeting. A recording of the meeting is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7Xc2IX2jWA>

MEETING MINUTES

1. Meeting Opening – *Called to order 7:02 PM*

- Roll Call -- *Commissioners present: Bernie Pelletier, Catherine Diviney, Steven Sack, Max DuBuisson, Joe Campanella*
- Approval of September 25, 2021 meeting minutes - *Approved*
- Administrative
 - James Cappella resignation – *James has resigned; need to fill with someone other than a “D”.*
 - Youth representatives – *Hall Environmental Club President Alyson Booth will be joining – was notified but not attending tonight. Conard has not designated anyone. Catherine also mentioned that according to Corporation Counsel, Commissions can only be made up of “electors (voters) of West Hartford”*

2. Old Business

- Commission reports (standing agenda item)
- Sustainable CT / SAG update –
 - *Catherine updated the group that Town achieved Sustainable CT Silver certification on Nov. 1. Several news articles have been released.*
 - *The SAG has been meeting frequently; they are focused on pulling together their presentations for Town Council with recommendation in different priority areas. Presentation date is TBD – either before Feb or after March (budget). They are also discussing some ideas about whether the Town/Commission organizational structure could be revised to more adequately deal with sustainability topics to avoid “silos.” Catherine can provide more info at the next meeting.*
 - *Catherine mentioned the Town clerk’s office is implementing a new documents management system called CiviClerk.*
 - *Steve mentioned the Town clerk’s office has already done some review of committee/commission structure.*

- HeatSmart West Hartford – *Bernie gave an update that this program is a reality and things are moving.*
 - *MOU Status – This needs to be updated with specifics and then signed by Town and PACE.*
 - *Partner status (HES – HVAC – IHMH) – Energy Efficiency Solutions and New England Smart Energy are the HES partners. Bernie will start outreach to HVAC partners in West Hartford – He is looking for two heat pump installers; he is also looking for 2 geothermal partners – potential King and Dandelion. I Heart my Home will also partner as an energy concierge service – although they are very busy.*
 - *Funding/CPEEEI – Catherine thanked Bernie for hard work on Eversource grant that was approved for \$20K towards HeatSmart. PACE will be the fiduciary.*
 - *Volunteer Team – We will need to recruit volunteers to conduct outreach for HeatSmart. Catherine suggested that they send a public recruiting announcement out from the Town. 5 volunteers would be ideal. This is 1 year-long campaign with regular meetings. We should also meet with Social Services.*
- Climate Emergency Resolution
 - *Catherine provided update that a draft resolution was presented to Public Works & Facilities Standing Committee. It was well received but some edits need to be made, including the wording around a “Climate Commission” – because of restriction that Commissions cannot have voting youth representation.*
 - *Steve expressed frustration that the group ignored the feedback provided by the Clean Energy Commission. Others were in agreement that the Resolution was ultimately not the Commissions’ document and the group could take our feedback or not.*
 - *Catherine explained also that according to Corporation Counsel there is no set path to get to Town Council, and the purpose of bringing something to a Commission is to get feedback and/or endorsements. Town Manager can recommend a path or bring something directly to Council himself.*
 - *Steve suggested that we ask Matt or someone to come to our meeting and explain how it works. There was mention that Matt attended the Leaf Blower Ban that was in front of the Cons & Env't Commission. No action had been taken yet of leaf blowers, since the Cons & Env't Commission did not have a quorum at their last meeting. Catherine said they can invite Matt to the Clean Energy Meeting if they choose; Hope is that the Council and Town Manager refer relevant items back the appropriate Commissions and/or seek input from them.*
 - *Bernie thought maybe a quarterly reports from Commission might help.*
- New Elmwood CC/St. Brigid Building –
 - *Catherine reported that the Town took ownership of this property and they will conduct a feasibility study to decide if the building will stay or go.*
 - *Catherine wrote talking points for the Mayor for a press conference, stressing that the building would be sustainable and net-zero.*
 - *Bob Palmer, Director Facilities will be the project lead.*
 - *Net zero would be more difficult to achieve with an existing building. Elmwood CC and potentially Faxon Library will be moved into the new facility.*
 - *There will be a building committee with a representative from Clean Energy Commission*
- EVSE - VW settlement, ARPA, Eversource Make Ready
 - *Catherine mentioned these are 3 funding sources that the Town is looking at for EV charging infrastructure. \$300K in ARPA fund is allocated to this. Eversource has a new program starting in 2022 to help fund the infrastructure (i.e., everything except the station). The VW settlement program webinar has not happened yet. Catherine is also working with Public*

Works to look at different implementation models and participates in an EV Ready Communities initiative through Sust CT and Great Plain Institute in MN.

- *Bernie asked if the Town would be charging for power. Catherine believes that “yes” in the future- this would be the model. Currently, the EV charging stations owned by the Town are free but that is not a requirement.*
- *BEV – CMAQ grant proposal (Town Fleet) – not dead yet. CRCOG has appealed and is still seeking approval at the Federal level. *

3. New Business

- *Winter energy price forecast –*
 - *Bernie reminded everyone that winter energy prices are forecasted to go up drastically. Eversource: from 7 cents per kWh to 11.4 cents. Gas expect to increase 30%, etc. Social Services and Operation Fuel have programs to assist residents.*
 - *Joe mentioned a MA article that mentioned winter heating bill shock and what you can do about it. Maybe we can pitch something similar to a local reporter. Bernie also thinks the Town could promote basic advice. Catherine mentioned she is planning to let Town Manager/Mayor know about rate increase and update information on the Town’s website.*
 - *Steve thought we should craft an announcement and send out. Other agreed this is a good idea.*
- *2022/2023 – Action Steps review. This review will assess status of planned activities, remove completed projects, and add new ones.*
 - *See attached summary – Commission went through each item on the list and assessed status.*
 - *There was also discussion about bio-diesel pilot for Rockledge and Westmoor Park stalling – don’t know how to move forward against maintenance resistance*
 - *First episode of Energy Matters (on bioheat) recorded by Bernie and Steve should be available thru WHCi soon. Bernie noted that bio-diesel is mandated by state to go up to 50% by 2035, so eventually, they will get there.*

4. Staff Report

- *Energy Updates - deferred*
- *Sedgwick Env't Club meeting – Students had asked if Sedgwick could get solar? Catherine gave energy presentation on energy use, solar, and other potential projects for club – letter to BOE, school night audits, residential solar campaign, etc. Worked with Ted Goerner, science teacher on SAG.*

5. Public Comment - none

6. Adjournment – 9:08 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."

Next Steps

	2021-2022	Beyond 2022
General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt resolution to support 100% by 2050 and new Energy Plan. 2. Give regular updates to Town Council, Public Works & Facilities subcommittee. 3. Develop effective network or means of reaching community on energy issues. 4. Re-think connection with Sustainable West Hartford. 5. Revamp Town's clean energy website. 6. Invite youth/high school representatives to join WH Clean Energy Commission. 7. Conduct heat pump education campaign. 8. Work with Social Services, to design and implement an energy outreach campaign focused on equity (e.g., LMI residents, renters). 9. Conduct outreach for Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign – goal of 2021 adoption. 10. Hold or partner on an electric vehicle event. 11. Identify public transit champions. 12. Recruit more community involvement in Sustainable CT. 13. Explore desire to create a broader Sustainability Plan, Climate Action Plan, Climate Justice, or Climate Resiliency Plan (to include a greenhouse gas inventory, transportation, waste/materials management, open space, etc.) with Town Council, and other appropriate Commissions; identify greenhouse gas inventory tool. 14. Update Energy Plan in 2022. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Join Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign. 2. Investigate potential for a microgrid in town. 3. Adopt policy to enable community choice aggregation. 4. Conduct energy saving tips or Energy Star appliance campaign. 5. Work with Town staff and zoning and planning commissions to explore how efficiency and clean energy adoption could be accelerated through municipal policy, building, zoning, and/or tax codes. 6. Adopt policy or promote zero-energy or no fossil fuel use in new construction. 7. Inventory brownfields for alternate use. 8. Restart Small Business Energy Advantage (SBEA). 9. Promote C-PACE financing of commercial projects. 10. Promote a top 10 sustainable things-to-do list. 11. Conduct a solarize campaign, including a community discussion of responsible and sustainable solar development in town and options for all. 12. Promote alternative mobility options to reduce vehicle-miles travelled. 13. Collaborate with other commissions to complete a greenhouse gas inventory and/or develop a municipal Climate Resiliency Plan. 14. Support focus on energy efficiency and clean energy industry and jobs as part of economic stimulus, development, and growth.
Municipal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disseminate quarterly communication on building performance. 2. Work with Recycling Coordinator; hold quarterly meetings with schools. 3. Review schedule of upcoming municipal capital improvement projects in conjunction with energy data; implement additional energy efficiency projects. 4. Analyze interval data for municipal buildings; develop plan to reduce peak demand; participate in demand response curtailment. 5. Update municipal fleet plans to include strategy for fuel reduction, fuel switching (e.g., biodiesel) and/or electrification. 6. Achieve Sustainable CT silver certification. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidate municipal facilities and programs into newer or renovated facilities that are more energy efficient, and do not rely on fossil fuels. 2. Reinstate WHPS Energy Challenge or explore additional ways to reduce municipal energy use (e.g., treasure hunts, night audits, town vs. town energy competition, project fund). 3. Develop a sustainable purchasing policy. 4. Expand policies to reduce miles travelled and fuel use in municipal fleet. 5. Additional municipal solar or virtual net metering projects. 6. Complete assessment of EV charging infrastructure and needs.

Next Steps - tracking

2021-2022

General

- ~~1. Adopt resolution to support 100% by 2050 and new Energy Plan. **DONE, passed June 22, 2021.**~~
2. Give regular updates to Town Council, Public Works & Facilities subcommittee. **NOT DONE – Would like to be a standing agenda item with committee**
3. Develop effective network or means of reaching community on energy issues. **IN PROGRESS – Grew Sustainable WH Facebook members: 250 → 328. Utilizing Renee and WeHa and made connection with WH Library. HeatSmart campaign might open up additional channels. Can we encourage Town to ramp up communication, utilize other channels?**
4. Re-think connection with Sustainable West Hartford. **IN PROGRESS – Could there be an external organization (non-profit?) to focus on education/advocacy? Or just encourage other groups/commissions to post. Is page duplicative of other groups?**
5. Revamp Town's clean energy website. **NOT DONE - Catherine to focus on in Dec/Jan – needs to be maintenance-free, all updates done by IT.**
- ~~6. Invite youth/high school representatives to join WH Clean Energy Commission. **DONE – invitations send thru Hall/Conard Env't Club: Hall responded, Conard did not.**~~
7. Conduct heat pump education campaign. **IN PROGRESS - HeatSmart campaign is a reality. \$20K grant from Eversource. Bernie working on this – agreements need to be signed and volunteer team formed.**
8. Work with Social Services, to design and implement an energy outreach campaign focused on equity (e.g., LMI residents, renters). **NOT DONE - Can be a focus of HeatSmart. WH-CEC should also investigate assisting Social Services with outreach in face of winter 2021 price increases.**
- ~~9. Conduct outreach for Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign – goal of 2021 adoption. **DELETE – adoption of energy plan enough. Sierra Club published article recognizing West Hartford commitment to 100%**~~
- ~~10. Hold or partner on an electric vehicle event. **DONE - Held EV Show June 20, 2021 in Town Hall Lot. Also, EV Q&A Session with WH Library, Oct 7, 2021.**~~
11. Identify public transit champions. **NOT DONE – Still a gap, but needs to be taken up by someone else – Ped Bike, SAG?**
- ~~12. Recruit more community involvement in Sustainable CT. **DONE – SAG created. WH-CEC is a contributor.**~~
13. Explore desire to create a broader Sustainability Plan, Climate Action Plan, Climate Justice, or Climate Resiliency Plan (to include a greenhouse gas inventory, transportation, waste/materials management, open space, etc.) with Town Council, and other appropriate Commissions; identify greenhouse gas inventory tool. **IN PROGRESS – If Climate Resolution passes, it includes assigning a group to this action. WH-CEC is a contributor.**
14. Update Energy Plan in 2022. **NOT DONE – yet.**

Municipal

1. Disseminate quarterly communication on building performance. **NOT DONE**
2. Work with Recycling Coordinator; hold quarterly meetings with schools. **NOT DONE - Started in 2020, but did not reconvene in 2021. Schools seem to be more interested in recycling/waste and garden then energy. Would like to do additional presentations with WHPS.**
3. Review schedule of upcoming municipal capital improvement projects in conjunction with energy data; implement additional energy efficiency projects. **IN PROGRESS – COVID put a damper on energy efficiency with increased ventilation. Projects identified and presented but no ARPA funding allocated to schools/buildings.. Idea that major facility renovations are needed has started to take hold. Fire stations priority. New construction – Eisenhower Pool, Dog Pound, Mayflower St are good opportunities.**
- ~~4. Analyze interval data for municipal buildings; develop plan to reduce peak demand; participate in demand response curtailment. **DONE – 4 sites enrolled in demand response. Investigating battery storage program.**~~
5. Update municipal fleet plans to include strategy for fuel reduction, fuel switching (e.g., biodiesel) and/or electrification. **NOT DONE – Pubic Works prioritizing EV chargers.**
- ~~6. Achieve Sustainable CT silver certification. **DONE**~~

Next Steps - tracking

Beyond 2022

General

1. ~~Join Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign.~~ **DONE – unofficially joined; listed on Sierra Club website.**
2. Investigate potential for a microgrid in town. **NOT DONE - Microgrid typically about more than just energy – PR/desire to have one, emergency operations, grid modernization, clean energy etc. Potential for new construction?**
3. Adopt policy to enable community choice aggregation. **NOT DONE**
4. Conduct energy saving tips or Energy Star appliance campaign. **NOT DONE – combine with website #5 2020-1.**
5. Work with Town staff and zoning and planning commissions to explore how efficiency and clean energy adoption could be accelerated through municipal policy, building, zoning, and/or tax codes. **NOT DONE**
6. Adopt policy or promote zero-energy or no fossil fuel use in new construction. **NOT DONE – trying to implement with Town new construction**
7. Inventory brownfields for alternate use. **NOT DONE**
8. Restart Small Business Energy Advantage (SBEA). **NOT DONE – website?**
9. Promote C-PACE financing of commercial projects. **NOT DONE – website?**
10. Promote a top 10 sustainable things-to-do list. **NOT DONE – combine with website #5 2020-1.**
11. Conduct a solarize campaign, including a community discussion of responsible and sustainable solar development in town and options for all. **NOT DONE – Full campaign too much with HeatSmart. But needs to move to 2022. Solar programs changing and some action could be folded into website, or presentation/webinars by Eversource.**
12. Promote alternative mobility options to reduce vehicle-miles travelled. **NOT DONE – website? WH-CEC not lead.**
13. Collaborate with other commissions to complete a greenhouse gas inventory and/or develop a municipal Climate Resiliency Plan. **NOT DONE – duplicative with #13 2020-1**
14. Support focus on energy efficiency and clean energy industry and jobs as part of economic stimulus, development, and growth. **NOT DONE – not top priority for WH-CEC. ARPA funds were not allocated to energy efficiency projects. Action not clear; should be re-written.**

Municipal

1. Consolidate municipal facilities and programs into newer or renovated facilities that are more energy efficient, and do not rely on fossil fuels. **IN PROGRESS – Being driven by Town Manager, new construction.**
2. Reinstate WHPS Energy Challenge or explore additional ways to reduce municipal energy use (e.g., treasure hunts, night audits, town vs. town energy competition, project fund). **NOT DONE – should explore more classroom presentations. WHPS communication connection with parents also on SAG radar. Students/Youth WH-CEC reps could potentially help.**
3. Develop a sustainable purchasing policy. **NOT DONE – Requires Purchasing Department. Purchasing did attend trainings.**
4. Expand policies to reduce miles travelled and fuel use in municipal fleet. **NOT DONE**
5. Additional municipal solar or virtual net metering projects. **IN PROGRESS – On hold until additional roof replacements.**
6. Complete assessment of EV charging infrastructure and needs. **IN PROGRESS – With Public Works.**