

**CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022  
IN PERSON MEETING**

1. Call to Order and Attendance
  - Call to Order at 7:03 pm
  - Present: Emilee Mooney Scott (chairperson), Ted Newton, Kim Hughes, Rick Bush, and Jim Fishman
2. Old Business
  - Tabled approval of minutes to forthcoming meeting.
3. New Business
  - Joint discussion including the Conservation and Environment Commission, Clean Energy Commission and Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission regarding coordination of efforts of the three commissions, facilitated by Catherine Diviney.
4. Adjournment
  - Chairperson Scott moved to adjourn the meeting. Rick Bush seconded.



# Conservation & Environment Commission Meeting

June 27, 2022, 7-9 pm

Invited: Clean Energy Commission & Pedestrian Bicycle Commission

# Agenda

- Introductions (5)
- Meeting Purpose & Objectives (10)
- Background – Sustainable CT, Sustainable Advisory Group & more (10)
- Commission Summaries (10)
- Break Out Session 1 – Initial Thoughts (30)
- Discussion on Commissions & Q&A (15)
- Break Out Session 2 – Re-Envisioning (30)
- Next Steps (10)

# Meeting Purpose & Objectives

Rick Ledwith, Acting Town Manger

# Purpose

Why are we here?

- First, **thank you** for your service and dedication to the Town!
- For several years, there has been **ongoing discussion** at the leadership, staff, and commission levels about **how to most effectively organize around sustainability to address needs of town and its residents.**
- A joint meeting of the “sustainability commissions” was **one of the Sustainability Advisory Group’s recommendations** to Town Council (March 3, 2022).
- Legally, commissions must be by ordinance and comprised of electors of West Hartford. It has come to our attention that **Clean Energy and Ped & Bike are currently not in compliance.**
- Town has decided that **wetlands permit application pre-screening function provided by Cons & Env’t does not need to be continued.** (TPZ is the Town’s designated IWWA.)

# Purpose

Why are we here?

## BIGGER PICTURE

- There have been recent **dramatic changes** in the world and our way of thinking about things: **racism, equity, pandemic/COVID, public health, climate change, environmental justice, electrification, resiliency, etc.**
- **Now more than ever: Sustainability is important.** Sustainability is important to the Town, its residents, and its **future residents.**
- As “sustainability commissions” your role and work will be increasingly important in the coming years to help accelerate sustainability goals and community education & engagement. **The Town and your residents need you.**
- It’s time to take stock of where we are, but more importantly, where we want to go, and how we can work together to get there. **We are doing a lot! But, we can do more; we can do more, better.**

# Objectives

What do we hope to accomplish?

1. Understand and agree that sustainability is a priority for the Town and its residents.
2. Recognize that – for legal compliance reasons – changes **must** be made to some commissions, but that also presents an opportunity...
3. Keep an open mind – with an eye on the future, not the past – what is best our community and its future?
4. Increase interaction & awareness between commissions
5. Take stock of existing commissions' structure & scope
6. Review key sustainability topics to identify potential gaps and/or overlaps
7. Gather input on the creation of a Waste Reduction & Materials Management Working Group or Task Force
8. Outline steps forward – as individual commissions and as a group

# Background: Sustainable CT, Sustainable Advisory Group, & more...

Catherine Diviney, Energy Specialist



Gen. Stat. §13-153f. Connecticut's **Complete Streets law** requires pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users to be routinely considered in the planning, designing, construction and operation of all roads.



Public Act 21-29, expands the **responsibility of zoning commissions in protecting the water quality of Long Island Sound** from 24 coastal municipalities to **all 169 municipalities**.

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A COMPLETE STREET  
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED...that the a  
adopted and shall **be applicable to the planning and design of a**



Gen. Stat. §8-30, requires all Connecticut towns to **create an Affordable Housing Plan by spring 2022**.

**MS4 General Permit Requirements** for Municipal Stormwater

The 2020-2030 POCD reflects a vision for the next ten years to sustain, enhance, and celebrate the Town of West Hartford. But it can only come to pass through continued **dedication and participation by all of our community stakeholders**.

Town of West Hartford



Plan of Conservation and Development

Plan of Conservation & Development

Complete Street Policy

Bike Facilities Plan

Stormwater Management Plan/MS4

Climate Crisis Resolution

Energy Plan

MSW / Nips bottle fee

Equity Officer (coming)

Affordable Housing Plan (coming)

Sustainable CT Resolution

More...



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that **it shall be the policy of the Town to assess the climate change impacts of all future Town actions**, to achieve net-zero carbon emissions from Town operations, and to encourage residents to do the same;

RESOLUTION DECLARING A CLIMATE CRISIS

WEST HARTFORD

Connecticut commits to **100% carbon neutrality by 2040**.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD THAT the Town Council adopts the Energy Plan attached hereto and directs the Town Manager to implement such plan; and

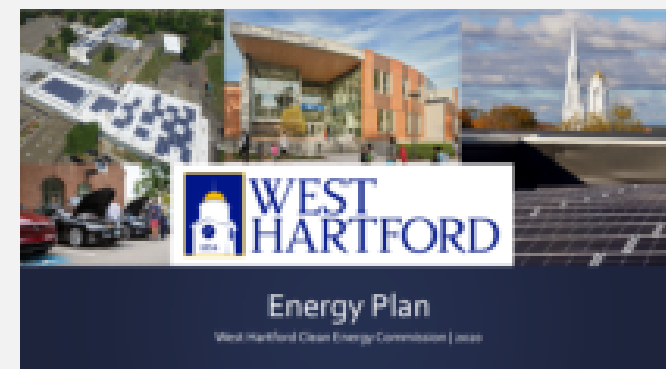
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Town Council extends its appreciation to the West Hartford Energy Commission for its good work, dedication and commitment to the protection of energy efficiency and conservation and efforts of vision and sustainable energy resources in the Town of West Hartford.



I certify this to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Town of West Hartford on June 20, 2023, which remains unchanged and in effect as of this date. June 28, 2023.  
Ernest S. Labrec, Town Clerk

RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

goals and objectives to assess progress and capitalize on **racial equity**.



We aspire for our entire community to use **100% clean energy by 2050**.  
RESOLUTION IMPLEMENTATING THE WEST HARTFORD ENERGY PLAN



Sustainable CT is a voluntary certification program that fosters inclusive, resilient, and vibrant Connecticut municipalities by providing a menu of sustainability actions that build local economies, support equity, and respect the finite capacity of the environment.

Municipalities choose Sustainable CT actions, implement them, and earn points towards certification. The program also provides training, technical assistance, funding, and encourages opportunities for partnership, peer learning, and collaboration at all levels.

[www.sustainablect.org](http://www.sustainablect.org)

## 13 Action Categories

1. Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts
2. Thriving Local Economies
3. Well-Stewarded Land and Natural Resources
4. Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems
5. Dynamic and Resilient Planning
6. Clean and Diverse Transportation Systems and Choices
7. Renewable and Efficient Energy Infrastructure and Operations
8. Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education
9. Strategic Materials Management
10. Optimal Health and Wellness Opportunities
11. Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing
12. Effective, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention
13. Innovative Strategies and Practices

# West Hartford's Sust CT Progress



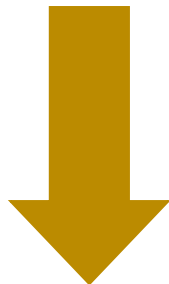
**2018**  
Bronze  
200 pts



**2021**  
Silver  
400 pts



**2022**  
Climate Leader  
140 specified pts



**2023**  
Gold  
600 pts?

## More Potential Actions...

- 3.1.1a Sponsor or host a program to educate residents and business owners about the value of watersheds and the importance of protecting and restoring them
- 3.4.4d Establish an open space acquisition fund. (e.g., X% of wetlands permit fee).
- 3.9.2 Conduct a tree canopy study.
- 3.13.3 Develop a dark night sky policy for exterior lighting fixtures.
- 6.4.1 Sponsor or host a zero emission vehicle ZEV promotional event or education workshop (?EVs, E-Bikes, electric lawn equipment?)
- 6.3 Encourage smart commuting options and participate in CTRides Transportation Leaders Program.
- 8.3.1 Send commissioners from your community to a training on a sustainability topic that is relevant to their commission

# Sustainability Advisory Group

[www.westhartfordct.gov/government-services/boards-commissions/sustainability-advisory-group](http://www.westhartfordct.gov/government-services/boards-commissions/sustainability-advisory-group)




- Created by Town Council resolution on February 23, 2021 to
  1. Assist in completing the Town's 2021 Sustainable CT application
  2. Make recommendations and propose strategies and objectives for sustainability related initiatives
- Over 60 people applied, 25 people selected.
- Presented recommendations on March 3, 2022, which included
  1. Push forward on sustainability and Sustainable CT
  2. Provide continued, visible support and leadership
  3. Create appropriate organizational structure(s) to foster progress, communication & collaboration
- Held last meeting March 10, 2022 – decided their mission was fulfilled and it was time to move on from recommending to DOING.

# NEW! Sustainability Webpage




[www.westhartfordct.gov/town-departments/sustainability](http://www.westhartfordct.gov/town-departments/sustainability)



Town of West Hartford COVID-19 Updates | [Click Here](#)



WEST  
HARTFORD



SITEMAP   CONTACT US

VISIT US   GOVERNMENT   RESIDENT   DEPARTMENTS   BUSINESS   EDUCATION   HOW DO I...

## SUSTAINABILITY

The Town of West Hartford is committed to sustainability.

We strive to lead by example.

In today's world, sustainability is not optional: we must push forward with a sense of urgency. Sustainability must be embedded into the everyday decision-making, actions, and operations of our Town and its citizens.

The Town does not have a specific Sustainability Office or Department. It is the shared responsibility of all departments and of all employees.

Many of the Town's volunteer [Boards & Commissions](#) play a key role in our sustainability efforts. In 2021, the Town formed a temporary [Sustainability Advisory Group](#), which presented its final recommendations to Council committee on March 3, 2022. Consideration and implementation of these recommendations is ongoing.

The Town also collaborates with the broader community – seeking to educate, encourage, and enable residents and businesses to make their own sustainable choices.

### Coming Soon!


Below, in alphabetical order, we list some sustainability topics that might interest you. For each topic, we will provide a description of what the Town of West Hartford is doing, what you can do, and some resources to get started.

If there are additional topics that you would like to see listed, please let us know by emailing: [TownManager@WestHartfordCT.gov](mailto:TownManager@WestHartfordCT.gov).

- Affordable Housing
- Climate Change
- Complete Streets
- Electric Vehicles
- Electric Vehicle Charging
- Equity
- Energy Efficiency
- Food
- Food Waste
- Green Building


- Landscaping
- Multi-Modal Transportation
- Parks & Open Space
- Pollinator Gardens
- Recycling & Solid Waste
- Solar & Renewable Energy
- Sustainable CT
- Trees & Forests
- Water Conservation
- Watershed Protection

### Current Initiatives



Sustainable CT


Sustainable CT is a voluntary certification program to recognize inclusive, thriving, and resilient Connecticut municipalities. Sustainable CT provides a wide-ranging menu of best practices. Municipalities choose Sustainable CT actions, implement them, and earn points toward certification.




Sustainable development must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- Our Common Future, Brundtland Commission Report, 1987

Sustainable actions support the three pillars of **Social Equity, Environment, Economy** – also referred to as the three E's, the triple bottom line, or the three P's: People, Planet, Profits.



Join us on Facebook!



# Sustainable West Hartford Facebook

[www.facebook.com/groups/SustainableWestHartford](https://www.facebook.com/groups/SustainableWestHartford)

The screenshot shows the Facebook group page for 'Sustainable West Hartford'. At the top is the group's logo, which features a stylized green tree inside a yellow and green circle, with a blue wave at the bottom. To the right of the logo, the text 'Sustainable West Hartford' is written in a large, bold, black font, followed by the tagline 'Our Town, Our Planet, Our Future' in a smaller, italicized font. Below the logo and text, it says 'Sustainable West Hartford' and 'Public group · 364 members'. There are buttons for 'Joined' and 'Invite'. The navigation bar includes 'About', 'Discussion' (which is highlighted), 'Featured', 'Topics', 'Events', 'Media', 'Files', and 'People'. Below the navigation bar is a text input field with a placeholder 'Write something...' and buttons for 'Photo/video' and 'Poll'. The 'Featured' section shows two posts by Catherine Hardy Diviney. The first post is titled 'HEAT PUMP TECHNOLOGY – MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU!' and includes a diagram of a heat pump system. The second post is titled 'On March 3, 2022, West Hartford's Sustainability Advisory Group presents...' and includes a logo for 'WEST HARTFORD SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY GROUP'. The 'Newest Activity' section shows a post from 'West Hartford Recycles' about a Household Hazardous Waste Collection event. On the right side of the page, there are sections for 'Changes to public groups', 'About', and 'Recent media'.

**Sustainable West Hartford**  
Our Town, Our Planet, Our Future

Sustainable West Hartford  
Public group · 364 members

About Discussion Featured Topics Events Media Files People

Write something...

Photo/video Poll

**Featured**

Catherine Hardy Diviney  
2h · 🌐  
HEAT PUMP TECHNOLOGY – MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU!...

Catherine Hardy Diviney  
March 21 · 🌐  
On March 3, 2022, West Hartford's Sustainability Advisory Group presents...

**WEST HARTFORD SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY GROUP**  
WESTHARTFORDCT.GOV  
Sustainability Advisory Group - Town of West Hartford

**Changes to public groups**  
Learn about key updates to your group

**Membership**  
People can join right away, but you control who can post.

**Visitors**  
By default, people who haven't joined can post.

**New tools**  
There are now more ways to keep your group safe.

Watch video

**About**  
Sustainable West Hartford is a citizens' group whose members live, work, or play in West Hartford. The group's mission is to help West Hartford ... See more

**Public**  
Anyone can see who's in the group and what they post.

**Visible**  
Anyone can find this group.

**General**

**Recent media**

There is also **WH Recycles** Facebook!

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for 'West Hartford Recycles'. At the top is the page's logo, which features a blue recycling symbol with a green leaf inside. To the right of the logo, the text 'West Hartford Recycles' is written in a bold, black font, followed by the tagline '@whrecycles · Education website'. Below the logo and text, there are buttons for 'Home', 'About', 'Photos', 'Videos', and 'More'. The 'About' section is highlighted. It includes a description of the group's mission: 'Bringing together residents to reduce, reuse, recycle, compost and foster a sustainable community #recycle #rethinkwaste #saynotosinglereuse #sustainabl... See more'. It also shows that 964 people like this, including 6 of your friends, and that 1,081 people follow this. At the bottom, there is a link to the group's Facebook page: 'https://www.facebook.com/pg/West-Hartford-Recycles-110567523909584/about/?ref=page\_internal'.

**West Hartford Recycles**  
@whrecycles · Education website

Home About Photos Videos More

**About** See all

Bringing together residents to reduce, reuse, recycle, compost and foster a sustainable community #recycle #rethinkwaste #saynotosinglereuse #sustainabl... See more

964 people like this including 6 of your friends

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# Sustainable West Hartford

*Our Town, Our Planet, Our Future*

24 people



- A Sustainable West Hartford team would be a **mix of leadership, staff, commission reps (residents) and residents at large, including youth.**
- It would **meet 4 times a year** (manageable).
- It would have a community (external) Chair (TBD), and a municipal (internal) Chair (Town Manager).
- It would be responsible (every 3 years) for preparing the Town's Sustainable CT application.
- It would provide a **forum for communication and collaboration between members on current action items and or gaps / opportunities for future work.**
- It would maintain a master list of action items and work cooperatively together (and with extremal partners) to implement or enable implementation of items. These items could be Sustainable CT actions or others -- see Action Recommendations (appendix).
- It would be responsible for tracking **2 metrics: (i) Sustainable CT certification and (ii) GHG Inventory(?)**.
- It would NOT replace any commissions; commissions and departments would still be where a lot of the “work” happens.
- It would serve as an additional community outreach arm (e.g., Sustainable West Hartford Facebook, etc. ).

## COMMISSION REVIEW / REFRESH – IDEAS

- **Conservation & Environment** Commission is by statute, but has not been revised since 1972. Potential to realign focus on natural resources and land/water based issues, such as watershed, water conservation, landscaping, open space, gardens, green infrastructure, local healthy food systems, forests.
- **Clean Energy** Commission is by resolution and has 2 staff members, which needs to be corrected.\* Potential to expand membership and maybe add “Climate?”
- **Pedestrian Bicycle** Commission is by resolution which needs to be corrected.\* Potential to rename and expand focus to include a complete streets, multi-modal approach that includes public transportation (current gap). Also, examine relationship with external organizations (e.g., Bike West Hartford).
- Create a **Waste Reduction & Materials Management** Commission. Recycling, food waste diversion/composting, SMART/PAYT, etc. are increasingly important issues and we need a group to take responsibility for them. There is staff already (Recycling Specialist).

\*Per Corporation Counsel, commissions must be by ordinance and comprised of electors of West Hartford.



# Commission Summaries

Bernie Pelletier, Clean Energy Commission

Emilee Scott, Conservation & Environment Commission

Ed Pawlak, Pedestrian & Bicycle Commission

# 2 Minute Overview

Clean Energy

Conservation & Environment

Pedestrian & Bicycle

- What are you currently working on? e.g., What's on your recent meeting agendas – projects, issues, research?
- What would you LIKE to be working on? Priorities?
- Who are you working with? e.g., outside partners, other commissions, Town staff, other towns
- How is it going?
- How could the Town help?

# Break Out Session 1

Initial Thoughts

# Questions

## Break Out Session 1: Initial Thoughts

Instructions: Mixed tables, 20 min  
to discuss, 10 min to report out.

- Share your experience - general thoughts on commissions and/or sustainability?
- How are commissions working and/or areas for improvement?
  - Administration
  - As individual commissions, With other commissions
  - With Town staff, With Town Council
  - With community partners or other organizations or municipalities
  - With residents
- Are the members diverse, representative, knowledgeable? Do you have enough staff support?
- In today's environment, What do you see as a commission's role? Where can it add the most value?
- How do commissions decide what to work on? Are there gaps?
- Are commissions advisory only or do they do "work"? Are they proactive or reactive? Are they consulted on relevant matters?
- Other comments, questions, concerns?

# Commission Discussion and Q&A

Essie Labrot, Town Clerk

Cynthia Lauture, Asst. Corporation Counsel

	Cons & Env't	Ped & Bike	Clean Energy
<b>Established</b>	By ordinance, not substantively revised since 1972 .	<b>By resolution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bicycle Advisory Committee, 2011</li> <li>• Pedestrian &amp; Bicycle Commission, 2017</li> </ul>	<b>By resolution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean Energy Task Force, 2005</li> <li>• Clean Energy Commission, 2015</li> </ul>
<b>Members</b>	11	9	5 members, 2 alternates (incl. 2 staff) "with interest or expertise in the energy field"
<b>Vacancies</b>	2 – no restrictions	1 – must be a Republican	1 – must be a Republican
<b>Staff</b>	None regularly attending	As needed , upon request (typically Engineering or Planning)	Energy Specialist
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>To develop and conserve natural resources and protect the integrity of the environment within the territorial limits of the Town. To investigate pollution problems within the Town.</p> <p>POLLUTION—Refers to but is not limited to the contamination by any means of the air or water, the disposal of solid wastes, the use of pesticides or herbicides, offensive odors, excessive noise, litter, junked automobiles, the control of rodents, vermin and insects, the protection of fish, wildlife and trees, the preservation of historical, cultural, educational and aesthetic values, the maintenance of public health standards and the protection of recreational facilities.</p>	To promote bicycle and pedestrian safety through education and advocacy and to recommend facility and rights-of-way improvements.	To promote the use of clean energy and assist the West Hartford Town Council in achieving subsequent energy consumption reduction goals, and recovering any financial benefits from doing so.

# Commission Q&A

- Why do we have them? What can commissions do? e.g., educate, advocate, develop policy, lobby, implement projects, fundraise, connect people, etc.
- What is their relationship to Town Council? Do they have any authority? e.g., Planning & Zoning vs. these 3
- Should commissions be proactive or reactive? i.e., develop their own agendas or wait for someone (Council? Staff?) to assign work
- Who decides or what makes it a commission (vs. task force, working group team, council, etc.? What's the difference?
- How are vacancies filled and/or advertised to the community?
- There are requirements for political representation but what about – knowledge/expertise, gender, age, income, neighborhood?
- How is a quorum calculated? What happens if members regularly don't attend?
- Can a commission request that staff attend their meetings on a regular basis?
- How difficult is it to change an ordinance, resolution, etc.?
- Can Commissions use Google drive?

# Break Out Session 2

Re-Envisioning



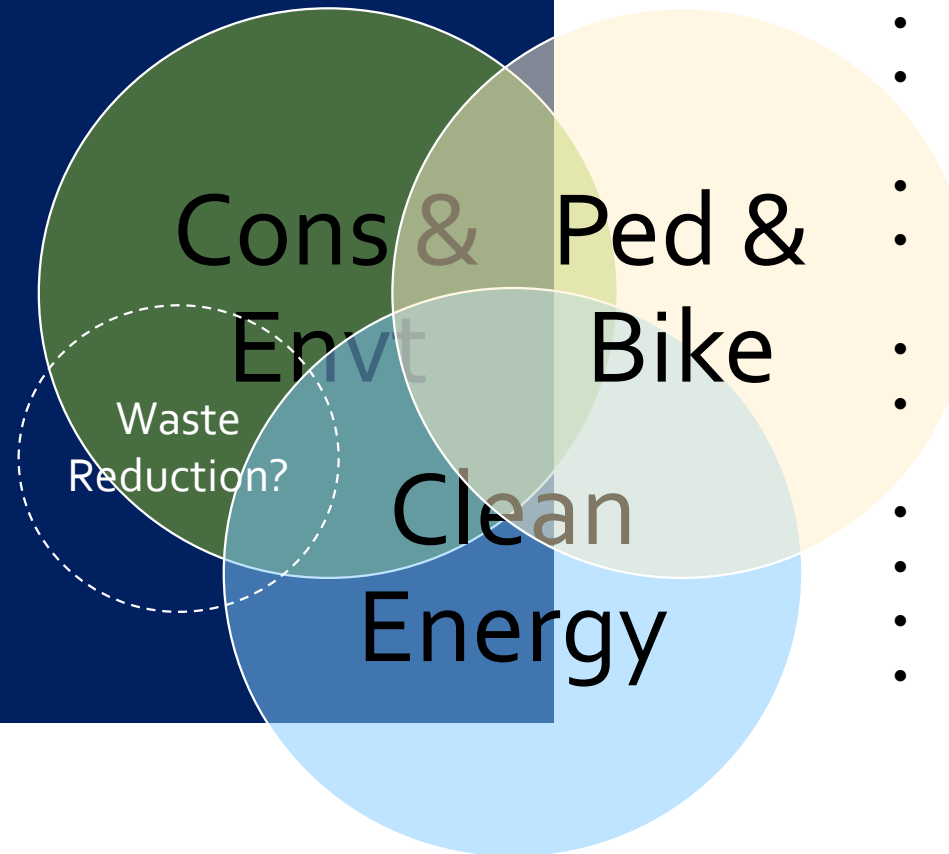
# Directions

## Break Out Session 2: Re-Envisioning

Instructions: Mixed tables, 20 min  
to discuss, 10 min to report out.

- On the next few slides, we have provided:
  - A list of sustainability topics
  - The SAG's ideas on reorganizing to enhance communication, collaboration, and progress on sustainability
- Please review/discuss and then develop your own suggestions
  - This can be a few "tweaks" or a complete re-envisioning
  - This can involve formal or informal changes in organization, membership, scope, duties, meetings, communication channels, etc.
  - Currently, there are no plans for additional Town staff
  - Remember to "keep an open mind" and think about what is best for our community and its future.

# Sustainability Topics



- Electric Vehicles / E-Bikes
- EV Charging Infrastructure
- Complete Streets
- Multi-Modal Transportation
- Public Transportation
- Smart Commuting
- Vehicle Idling
- Watershed Mgmt & Protection
- Green Infrastructure / Pervious Surface
- Brownfields
- Water Conservation – incl. irrigation
- Rain Barrels
- Sustainable Landscaping - incl. plants, materials, equipment
- Green Grounds
- Noise Pollution
- Air Quality – Indoor / Outdoor
- Methane Gas Leaks

- Open Space / Land Acquisition
- Wildlife Inventory & Protection
- Dark Skies / Light Pollution
- Tree Canopy
- Pollinator Pathways
- Invasive Species
- Gardens
- Sustainable Food Networks
- Food Waste / Composting
- Recycling
- Waste Reduction
- Solar / Renewable Energy
- Energy Efficiency
- Green Buildings
- Electric School Buses
- Affordable Housing
- Equity
- Climate Change
- GHG Inventory / Action Plan
- More...

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- It would serve as an additional community outreach arm (e.g., Sustainable West Hartford Facebook, etc. ).

# Next Steps

Planning a Path Forward

# Waste Reduction & Materials Management Working Group

- There is an impending waste crisis.
  - This is an area that the Town needs to focus on.
  - There is no group currently focused on this.
- Creation supported by Director of Public Works, Recycling Coordinator, Town Manager. Also, positive feedback from Public Works, Facilities, & Sustainability Standing Committee.
- Draft purpose/scope: to work with Dept Public Works to educate residents about the impending waste crisis, assess different options for the Town, build public consensus/support for best option, assist in any transition or change in program/services.
- Available staff support – Recycling Coordinator (hired in 2020),
- Sustainable CT Action 9.2

Cons & Eenvt	Ped & Bike	Clean Energy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cons &amp; Eenvt is not the Town's IWWA and will no longer pre-screen wetlands permit applications</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should expand to 9 members (no staff).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should specify members with "interest or expertise in subject"?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should specify members with "interest or expertise in subject"?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill vacancies – publicly advertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill vacancies – publicly advertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill vacancies – publicly advertise</li> </ul>

- Sustainable West Hartford Team?

# Conservation & Environment

\*No action required.



# Pedestrian & Bicycle

\*Action required - to continue as Commission, ordinance required.

# Clean Energy

\*Action required - to continue as Commission, ordinance required & 2 staff members removed.

Sustainable  
WH