

**CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2022
VIRTUAL MEETING**

1. Call to Order and Attendance

- Call to Order at 7:05 pm
- Commissioners Present: Emilee Mooney Scott (chairperson), Ted Newton, Kim Hughes, Jim Fishman, Emily Sexton. Rick Bush joined after the meeting was called to order. Roni Rodman has resigned from the Commission, effective earlier today.
- Guests: Nathaniel Goldschmidt, Chris Feely, Chris Eshleman, Catherine Diviney (WH Energy Specialist), and Dr. Rozena Haskins (Executive Director for Equity Advancement for WHPS and Town of West Hartford)

2. Public Comments

- Christine Feely asked whether there had been any response from Town Manager Rick Ledwith on the resolution the Commission passed earlier this year with regard to gas-powered lawn equipment. As there not been, Ms. Diviney offered to see where it stands.

3. Old Business

- Approval of Minutes
 - September meeting minutes: Commissioner Sexton motioned to approve, Commissioner Fishman seconded approval. All voted in favor of approval.
 - June meeting minutes (amended): Commissioner Newton motioned to approve, Mr. Fishman seconded. All voted in favor of approval.
 - July meeting minutes (amended): Commission Sexton motioned to approve, Mr. Fishman seconded. All voted in favor of approval.
- Dr. Haskins introduced her work and how it may intersect with town commissions (e.g., diversifying commission members, commissions' efforts impact on town's ESG goals and vice versa).
- Continuing discussion of opportunities for coordination with the Clean Energy Commission and Bike Ped Commission.
 - Ms. Diviney provided an update of whether the other two groups are in their discussions, which in August were to separately discuss the three options discussed in the larger group meetings in June and July. Clean Energy Commission members are firmly behind merging all sustainability efforts into a larger commission. Ped/Bike Commission decided they'd prefer to stay on their own, but would like to hear more from Ms. Diviney at their next meeting (on the 11th).
 - Ms. Diviney asked for the commission to open discussion. A discussion ensued which mostly centered around the benefits of having a larger model, and the consensus clearly was to merge with any other commission that would like to do so.

- Chairperson Scott motioned that we adopt a resolution to initiate the process of merging with Clean Energy Commission and/or Ped/Bike Commission to form one Sustainability Commission. Newton seconded. All voted in favor.
- Ms. Feely discussed her August 29 proposal to the commission around replacing selected municipal grassy areas with environmentally sound uses (e.g., native trees, bushes, and flowers). Commissioner Hughes said she's a part of a working group that has had discussions with the town staff about how such areas are maintained, including pesticide use and converting grass to other plants. A discussion ensued about how best to proceed with this proposal. Ms. Hughes will go back to her group and ask for their feedback, and the commission will discuss at our next meeting.

4. New Business

- Ms. Diviney presented a joint letter from the two commissions to support \$140,000 ARPA funding of three sustainability projects (tree canopy survey, pollinator gardens, rainwater runoff gardens) currently on the town's proposed project list. After discussing how these projects were identified and the proposed project list created, the commission agreed to support the letter but also add a point that we'd like to be involved in the future as sustainability-related projects are being discussed for putting on the proposed project list.
- Ms. Scott introduced the various topical areas that had been brought up at our previous meeting, including the composting information that Mr. Goldschmidt brought to the committee's attention at its last meeting. Regarding waste management (particularly food waste), Ms. Diviney mentioned that the town has recently received a grant to look into additional ways to reduce it. Scott suggested that the commission learn more about these topics to lay the groundwork for more informed discussion during future meetings, including discussing them with John Phillips, director of Public Works. Ms. Diviney also suggested coordinating with the CEC, as they have also been looking into these topics as well.
- Ms. Scott will coordinate with the Clean Energy Commission for our next meeting, which hopefully will take place the week of October 24.

5. Adjournment

- Chairperson Scott moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Fishman seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.