

## CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION

July 24, 2023

7:00 PM, Room 217, Town Hall

### MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening / Call to order 7:03 PM
  - a. Roll call – **Commissioners:** *Bernie Pelletier, Catherine Diviney, Steve Sack, Joe Campanella. Members of the Public:* *Kim Hughes, Ted Newton, Emilee Scott, Chris Feely, Pat Wilson, James Fishman, Martha Banks, Gary Banks, Joanna Mallary, Beth Ann Loveland Sennett, Leah Berlin, Town Staff:* *Katherine Bruns, Brief Introductions were made around the room.*
  - b. Approval of minutes – June - *approved*
  
2. Old Business:
  - a. Working Group Updates
    - i. Sustainable Land Care (ongoing) – *Kim summarized the WG “mission” as: looking to be a representative voice, to promote restorative land care practices on publicly-owned grounds (incl. schools), gardens, parks – with a focus on climate change, increasing resilience, and environmental justice/equity. Anyone interested in participating should contact Kim.*
      1. Meet with Leisure & Grounds – Th Aug 3, 2 PM rm 217 – *at this meeting they plan to present the vision and draft plan, which includes looking at some fundamental principles associated with management of Town-owned property as well as an emphasis on educating the public. Kim mentioned a recent experience at Charter Oak school with pesticide application that is representative of the norms they would like to change.*
      2. Community Conversation – *The idea of having a Town Hall conversation or community conversation around climate change was probed by Kim. Katherine Bruns had reached out to CTCLV about their Coffee and Climate Conversations program and potentially bringing it to WeHa. Catherine Diviney mentioned the Town itself w/ Noah Webster House held a similar “conversation” with Policing and Equity a few years ago. There was discussion about whether it should be resident, or Town, or student- driven. People agreed this might be a valuable thing for the new Commission to organize and maybe a dedicated short-term working group should be setup. There was also discussion of having Sharon Lewis lead a discussion on environmental justice.*
    - ii. Waste (ongoing)
      1. DEEP pilot project – *Katherine Bruns said the pilot is ongoing and they are learning a lot The food waste collection successful with*

*about 60% participation and XXX Tons collected to date. The orange bag - PAYT (PAY AS YOU THROW) part is not as successful. As part of the DEEP grant/pilot, they will soon need to make a decision whether the Town is going to roll the program out Town-wide. There was general discussion about the need for change, the waste crisis, and what it will take to get people to move. Martha Banks mentioned that in Darien (where they moved from), the Town has a voluntary food waste collection with a centralized drop-off.*

2. *Create Waste Plan for West Hartford? Bernie reiterated that he would like to see an "Energy Plan light" for each new topic area under Sust WH new commission – e.g., Waste, Land Care, Transportation, etc.*

iii. *Energy (ongoing)*

1. *Drive Electric Week Sep 22-Oct 1, 2023 (Sun 9/24 event)*
    - a. *Planning meeting Wed Aug 2, 9 AM zoom (Sierra Club)*
  2. *Business Outreach Proposal – Steve Sack, Bernie and Catherine are hoping to do another Business webinar. Kristen Gorski (Town Econ Dev Specialist) thought it might be too soon, but many programs have changed. As interim step, Catherine circulated a Non-Residential Solar Webinar that Eversource is holding on Wed 7/26 @ 9 AM. She posts many info sessions on Sust WH Facebook.*
  3. *GHG Inventory – Bernie and Catherine have a start on an inventory. They are hoping to make it easy for other Towns to replicate. As part of this process, they are engaged with Sust CT, ICLEI, MDC, DEEP, and CRCOG and believe the data gathering exercise and model will be valuable, inform other planning exercises, and potentially help with federal funding applications.*
- b. *DRAC/1700-1800 Asylum Ave project – moving fast, how to get aligned on this? Jim Fishman has reached out to Todd Dumais (Town Planner) several times with no response. We don't want to miss this opportunity. The project information posted online in TPZ documents is very technical and difficult to understand. It appears that the developer has made some revisions but has not responded to many of the staff comments. There is supposed to be a hearing on Sept 6? which this group may want to attend. We could also write a formal letter – but would like some advice from Todd as whether this would be effective and when/to whom we should address it. People are concerned the Council is prioritizing development and grand list growth over residents' opinions, character of the Town, the Plan of Conservation and Development.*
- c. *Sustainable West Hartford Commission update – Aug 22 Council mtg – Catherine indicated that she and Katherine Bruns were asked to review and provide recommendation to the mayor (Shari Cantor) and Minority Leader (Mary Fay) for the new commissioners. The new Commissioners would be appointed Aug 22*

3. New Business
  - a. Sharon Lewis speaker discussion (Kim). *General consensus that Sharon Lewis (Hartford environment justice speaker) would be a good choice. Decided to target October for this. Catherine will check in with Sust CT to see if any interest in co-sponsoring with Commission and maybe WeHa Library.*
  - b. Town DPW fuel storage tank RFP - biofuel opportunity? *Steve Sack was contacted by DPW with regard to new fuel station that Town plans to install at DPW/Brixton to replace the current system whereby Town fleet fill up at gas stations with fuel cards. This would be a good opportunity to push the idea of increasing % biofuel used in Town fleet.*
4. Staff Report – *Catherine mentioned she has a solar RFP out for replacing the array on DPW roof. She is also going to look for a new utility bill/database provider as her provider was acquired 2 years ago and the service/quality has gone downhill.*
5. Public Comment (limit 3 min each) – *Chris Feely spoke again about the urgency of doing something on the UConn property development. Pat Wilson talked about wanting to get involved and an initiative called Cool Boulder that was working well out west and she would love to see here.*
6. Agenda for Next Meeting – *Next meeting will be the last Clean Energy Commission meeting.*
7. Adjournment 9:10 PM

Anyone requiring auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or modification of policies or procedures to participate in a meeting, service, program or activity of the Town of West Hartford, should contact Suzanne Oslander, ADA Coordinator, at [suzanneo@westhartfordct.gov](mailto:suzanneo@westhartfordct.gov) or (860) 561-7580, as soon as possible, preferably seven days beforehand.