

Sustainable Westport Advisory Team

Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Thursday, 07 November 2019, 7 PM

Westport Town Hall, Room 201

Members Present: David Mann(Chair), Pippa Bell Ader, Peter Boyd, Sam Carpenter, Nico Eisenberg, Sara Harris, Dawn Henry, Diana Mashia, Tony McDowell, and Peter Ratkiewich

Participating Public: Emma Alcyone, Ross Burkhardt, Tess McCormick, Lisa Mezoff, and Claire Redmer

David Mann recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

1. Public Comment – Ross Burkhardt asked about the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) approved by Planning & Zoning in 2016. Burkhardt commented that, while the POCD mentions sustainability goals, it gives few specifics. Team-members commented, regarding sustainable goals, there was much work to do prior to the passage of the next POCD in 2027.
2. The October 2019 minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.
3. Lisa Mezoff gave a very thorough description of the progress of the construction of a new Sustainable Westport website. Lisa is working with Dawn Henry and Greg Zola. Several of the highlights of the discussion included:
 - a. The Team reviewed the wireframe and designs for key website pages.
 - b. The website is being built using WordPress.
 - c. Photographer Shelley Burger is providing pictures for the site.
 - d. Several tagline options were presented. Given time constraints, we weren't able to discuss them, however, One tagline referred to "protecting" – this is a case of terminology we have to be careful – this is an advisory, not enforcement body. That tagline will be eliminated from consideration.
 - e. News items from the site should be shareable to social media. There were also discussions regarding the criteria for posting events, making sure the website has all necessary permissions and ensuring that all posts are properly archived (as per Town requirements).
 - f. The possible addition of a "Search" function was discussed.
 - g. Still working through the functionality of the calendar function.
 - h. The concept of testing the website was also discussed – should we do preliminary testing and get feedback before building a "final" website or should we build the "final", do testing and revise as necessary based on feedback. This is still an item for discussion.
4. Peter Boyd gave a thorough presentation regarding the establishment of a new 501 (c) 3 charity, Inspire Sustainable Westport (ISW). ISW is proposed to be

“housed” by Earthplace and act as an advisory (action/initiative/programmatic) group. Earthplace to discuss the proposition at their upcoming 20 November 2019 Board Meeting. If approved by Earthplace, David Mann, Tony McDowell and Peter Boyd will present the concept to the First Selectman’s office soon thereafter.

5. Westport’s Sustainable CT Bronze certification, received in September of 2018, has an expiry. Two topics discussed were:
 - a. What should Westport do for 2020/1 – attempt to become Silver? Maintain Bronze? Do nothing?
 - b. And, assuming Westport would attempt to get some certification, who will lead the efforts? In 2018, Sarah Harris, Pippa Bell Ader and Dawn Henry led the efforts. 2020’s efforts will require another considerable effort from a team of town employees (of which there are not presently any dedicated to this type of effort) and/or volunteers (who have not yet been identified).

While the spirit of Sustainable CT is to challenge towns to make positive changes to the way they operate, certification requires a significant effort in terms of documentation and metrics – effort that is nearly impossible without dedicated staff and/or volunteers. Agreed next steps are Sara Harris will share with the Team her spreadsheet from 2018 so we can get a better sense of what is required and Peter Boyd will check with a colleague (who is on the Sustainable CT Board) and talk about what other towns are doing to achieve Sustainable CT goals.

6. David Mann and Dawn Henry plan on attending the Resilient CT Climate Adaption Summit on 12 November 2019 and Pippa Bell Ader plans on attending the EV Deployment seminar on 13 November 2019
7. Progress by Pillar:
 - a. Community Engagement:
 - i. Tony McDowell presented the idea of doing a 50th Anniversary of Earth Day celebration in conjunction with the Westport Public Library and is looking for ideas and topics and to secure potential speakers. The celebration would be held in April of 2020.
 - ii. As the Maker Faire is also in April 2020, doing the above celebration will preclude Sustainable Westport from participating in that event. The Team will work with Maker Faire to encourage it to remain a “zero waste” & “sustainable” event.
 - iii. Discussion of Sustainable Westport awards and plaque design was tabled until the December meeting.
 - iv. The concept of assigning a Team member mentor to each student volunteering with Sustainable Westport was discussed. The idea is the mentors are to work with each student to understand what their interest

and goals are (within the 5 pillars) and help make sure each student gets a good learning experience while working toward any sustainable goals they might have.

- b. Discussion of Building and Infrastructure was also tabled until the December 2020 meeting.
- c. Renewable Energy
 - i. Westport has received an Additional 3MW of Virtual Net Metering Services for renewable energy produced outside of Westport from Eversource. Sustainable Westport is in discussion with the BOE regarding this additional VNM capacity.
 - ii. Efforts to install solar at the Westport Senior Center, Bedford Middle School and Staples High School continues. These projects will all require changes to the zoning regulations. The proposed text change and next two projects will have a pre-application meeting with P&Z on Dec. 5, 2019. The proposed text change is to exempt renewable energy systems on Town Property that are for public benefit from zoning restrictions .
 - iii. The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CLCV) has asked various community boards (including Sustainable Westport) to comment on their letter to Governor Lamont regarding Lamont’s climate change & resiliency goals. As the deadline for comment (08 November 2019) was forthcoming, it was agreed Sustainable Westport would send a letter concurring with the CTLCV.
- d. Transportation:
 - i. Department of Public Works (DPW) has been approached by a company called Juice Bar who is advocating making the Westport Transit District sustainable (smaller electric buses) and building upgraded EV charging hubs. This is very much in the beginning stages, but DPW hopes to progress the concept to a point where they could make a proposal to the RTM.
 - ii. Potentially using Volkswagen Grants, Dattco is looking at testing an electric school bus in Hartford and Fairfield has put out a “request for proposal” for 10 electric school buses over 5 years and has gotten 9 respondents.
- e. Waste:
 - i. Long Lots Elementary PTA as agreed to fund a composting effort.
 - ii. Pippa Bell Ader, Pete Ratkiewich and the head of the Westport Transfer Station (along with representatives from Fairfield, Norwalk, Weston and Wilton) plan to visit the Scarsdale, NY transfer station to see what they are doing with food waste.
 - iii. Greens Farm Elementary is building a pollinator garden
 - iv. It was noted that Westport’s ban on single use plastic straws and Styrofoam began today.

A motion to adjourn was approved unanimously at 9 PM.