MINUTES - APPROVED

Sustainability Committee Meeting - VIRTUAL MEETING

September 10, 2021

Attendance: Committee members: Jill Oberlander, Co-Chair; Sarah Coccaro; Elizabeth Dempsey; Julie DesChamps; Scott Falciglia; Ali Ghiorse; Isabelle Harper; Myra Klockenbrink; Urling Searle; Joan Sequin; Silvina Skverer; Svetlana Wasserman. Other: Janet Stone McGuigan

1. Call to Order. Meeting was called to order at 11:06 a.m.

2. Minutes. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes from the July 1, 2021 meeting were approved.

3. Sustainable CT Update. Ms. Coccaro reported that the Greenwich application for Sustainable CT recertification was submitted on August 24th with documentation of actions accruing over 1300 points. This represents three times the actions points documented in the 2018 submission. Actions initiated by the Planning & Zoning Commission and/or the Planning Department accounted for 20% of the total actions. Greenwich should be notified of the result at the end of October. Next steps: Ms. Coccaro will work with Ms. Calcano to prepare a press notice for release after Greenwich receives the results from Sustainable CT, which release will identify the Greenwich Sustainability Committee’s top priorities in the upcoming years.

4. State of Sustainability Report. The Committee agreed to carry over the action step from the July meeting, with a goal of publishing the report by September 17th. The Committee discussed the timetable for updates, agreeing to target January 1 and mid-June. Next steps: Ms. Searle will finalize the report and will work with Ms. DesChamps and Ms. Calcano to develop a press release announcing the report, along with an explanation of the process used to develop it. Ms. Oberlander will work with Angelina Kaether to publish the report on the Sustainability Committee webpage.

5. Sector Updates. Ms. Klockenbrink updated the Committee on the work of the Land and Water sector, and concerns raised by the presence of beech leaf disease in area trees. In addition to the impact on canopies and tree coverage, Greenwich can expect to see more invasive species taking root. An increasing array of needs and pressures on Greenwich parks and protected open spaces, coupled with existing staffing level caps, exacerbate these concerns. The Committee agreed that more public education on all of these issues is needed.

6. Business Outreach. The Committee agreed to take up Ms. Skverer’s agenda item out of order. Ms. Skverer reported on her efforts to establish a business outreach sector, including her conversations with Heather Burns from the CT Sustainable Business Council and her outreach to Marcia O’Kane from the Greenwich Chamber of Commerce. The Committee discussed various “certifications” that could be awarded, including recognition of building enhancements, employee health, etc. Ms. Ghiorse and Ms. DesChamps talked about the Greenwich Food Waste initiative. Next steps: Ms. Skverer to work with Ms. Oberlander and others from the Committee
to establish a blueprint on how to proceed. Ms. Klockenbrink to circulate a draft “seal of approval” for consideration at the October meeting.

7. **GHS Liaison: Isabelle Harper.** The Committee agreed to take up Isabelle Harper’s agenda item out of order to accommodate her school schedule. Ms. Harper and the Greenwich High Environmental Action Group are developing a climate emergency resolution and are working to obtain comprehensive buy-in from like-minded organizations and groups. Ms. Harper explained the draft resolution and stated that virtually every other country has similar resolutions already in place. The Committee agreed to both consider it and to propose modifications that would help ensure its passage. Ms. Harper stated that her group would like to see a draft finalized in the next 2 to 3 months. **Next Steps:** Ms. Oberlander will distribute the existing draft resolution and will reach out to Ms. Harper with some additional comments.

8. **Review GSC Committee List and Statement of Purpose.** Held over to next meeting.

9. **New Business / Next Steps.**
   - Pollinator Pathway mural to be discussed at the upcoming RTM meeting.
   - Ban on Gas Leaf-Blowers: Ms. Oberlander asked whether the Committee was interested in taking up the issue of requiring all-electric leaf blowers. The Committee recommended starting this discussion with Town Departments first, before raising it town wide. **Next steps:** Ms. Oberlander will reach out to Parks & Recreation Director Joseph Siciliano to begin discussions about a pilot project.
   - Upcoming Events: Screening of Sacrifice Zone; September 28th discussion on waste justice; September 18th coastal clean-up; September 25th community bike fest.
   - Committee recommended inviting new Energy Management Advisory Committee Chair Peter Schweinfurth to an upcoming meeting. **Next steps:** Ms. Oberlander to follow up with Ms. Walsh and Mr. Schweinfurth.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 7th, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

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Jill K. Oberlander
Co-Chair & Recording Secretary