MINUTES – Approved
Sustainability Committee Meeting – Virtual MEETING
October 7, 2021

Attendance: Committee members: Jill Oberlander, Co-Chair; Pat Sesto, Co-Chair; Sarah Coccaro; Ashley Cole; Elizabeth Dempsey; Julie DesChamps; Ali Ghiorse; Myra Klockenbrink; Aleksandra Moch; Urling Searle; Joan Seguin; Silvina Skverer; Svetlana Wasserman. Other: Margarita Alban, Chair, Planning & Zoning Commission; Peter Schweinfurth, Chair, Energy Management Advisory Committee.

1. **Call to Order.** Meeting was called to order at 11:08 a.m.

2. **Minutes.** The minutes from the September 10th, 2021 meeting were approved as proposed via consensus.

3. **Pollinator Pathway Mural Update.** Director of Environmental Affairs Pat Sesto thanked all those who helped with education, outreach and spoke at the RTM meetings to advocate for the pollinator pathway mural, especially Myra Klockenbrink and Aleks Moch for pulling people together, and Svetlana Wasserman for her help with RTM. The mural was approved by a 2:1 margin. Final steps are heading to the BET. Pending BET approval, Ms. Sesto was unsure if the mural would get painted this year due to cold weather and the muralist’s schedule. Aleks Moch echoed her thanks to those that contributed to the efforts.

4. **Energy Management Advisory Committee.** Peter Schweinfurth, Chair, presented on the efforts underway from the Energy Management Advisory Committee (EMAC), including: the committee’s origins, purpose, first annual report, and future areas of focus. These areas include:

   - **Energy management, accounting and budgeting:**
     i. Expand Energy Star Portfolio Manager (ESPM) accounts to include majority of building portfolios and what does it tell us. By and large, all the town’s buildings are above the reference levels for energy usage intensity of similar nature.
     ii. Capital budgeting and energy management software: comparing utility bills cost vs usage.
   - **Solar PV (photovoltaics):** rooftops, including Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, parking lot canopies, municipal and commuter lots.
   - **Electric Vehicles (EVs):**
     i. EVs for town fleet and police cruisers
     ii. EV charging infrastructure- municipal and public used
     iii. Electric school buses
   - **Building efficiency codes and Planning & Zoning regulations:** embed conscious guidelines for future buildings. Opportunity to work with GSC, Conservation Commission and P&Z to build for future buildings.
- **Other projects:** potential for biogas or biofuel at the waste water treatment plant.

Committee members asked questions about the following topics:

- **Selective energy providers and lighting regulations:** Ms. Dempsey inquired about resident’s utility bills and an energy provided specifically by a renewable source and also the legal requirements about lighting a building from a safety perspective and what liability there is that influences that and ways to revisit? For example, Greenwich High School is always lit-up, are there ways to save on energy? Mr. Schweinfurth explained how to select your own energy provider online (such as a renewable energy provider) and GHS could install motion-detectors to address unnecessary lighting. Ms. Alban explained there is a town ordinance no light intrusion beyond the property line. She will follow up with Zoning Enforcement.

- **Federal funding:** Ms. Klockenbrink asked if there was a plan in place for some of the federal funding, were to be made available from the infrastructure bill, to be funneled into Greenwich? Mr. Schweinfurth said yes, but it wasn’t something they focused on. There are funds available for water and sewer infrastructure projects. Funding also available through “F-Fold” – Federal funding opportunities for local urbanization.

- **Electric buses and EV charging stations:** Ms. Moch explained how the transportation and air quality sector has been working on exploring electric school buses for Greenwich. This is complicated because the town doesn’t own the school buses. Ms. Moch also explained how Greenwich has two new EV chargers at Town Hall. The transportation and air quality sector also wants to work with P&Z on regulations regarding multifamily and commercial development to establish some sort of parameters on how many charging stations should be installed. Finally, Ms. Moch explained her idea about looking to install EV charging stations at gas stations.

- **Anaerobic digester:** Ms. DesChamps inquired about the anaerobic digester. Mr. Schweinfurth explained working with Amy Thompson at UCONN helps get our buildings into ESPM. UCONN is also part of a consortium of public universities that offer “industrial assessments” for free, which we might be able to include the WWTP.

- **Collaboration with other town entities:** Chair, Ms. Sesto asked how has EMAC been received as a catalyst to make changes within our town hall within design specs for our town community projects? Mr. Schweinfurth described that EMAC has several new liaisons from various areas of the town, including P&Z. If they can ingrain their goals of energy reduction into P&Z thinking and into building codes, then hopefully it will trickle through other departments. Jay Domeseck from Fleet is already involved, and they are hoping to have someone from the Board of Education join. In the GPS 45% of the town electricity, 68% of the natural gas, so 52% of the total BTU are consumed by the GPS.

- **EMAC collaboration with the GSC:** Ms. Oberlander asked how can the GSC help EMAC with some of these initiatives? Mr. Schweinfurth stated he intended to work with Aleks and her efforts (EV charging stations and electric buses) and in terms of the POCD, what were the goals in terms of building and development goals.

- **Healthy and safety:** Ms. Cole echoed the need for electric buses for a health and safety standpoint. Mr. Schweinfurth recommended speaking with RTM members and Board of Education.
• **GHS solar, exterior lighting and multifamily energy and water usage:** Ms. Coccaro inquired about the non-functioning solar panels on GHS. Would the HS solar be part of the Phase 2 projects? Keeping in line with the SCT application, Greenwich is deficient in having an inventory of efficient exterior lighting and tracking energy and water data in multifamily housing. Would these be something EMAC looks at, or another town committee? Multifamily energy and water is out of their purview. P&Z launched a new study for lighting regulations.

5. **Discussion of GEAC Climate Resolution.** Delayed until next month’s meeting to give Ms. Oberlander time to speak with Isabelle Harper.

6. **Sector Updates.**

• Ms. DesChamps updated the Committee on the Greenwich Food Waste Initiative, GFWI, an off-shoot of the First Selectman’s Waste Management Committee. GFWI has three premises: prevent food waste, rescue uneaten and unused food, and recycle what’s left. There are several projects, including Save the Food Campaign, the First Selectman’s Food Saver Challenge (restaurants and hospitality businesses), expanding the school educational events, as well as expanding the Food Rescue US presence in town (expand the base of donors) and continuing the municipal food scrap recycling program. GFWI is looking to partner with town departments and community groups, Center for Eco Technology and the NRDC. GFWI is looking at sources of funding through CT DEEP. Last month, Waste Free Greenwich, DPW and Greenwich Green and Clean launched the “Waste Wizard” search engine app.

• Ms. Ghiorse updated the Committee on the Greenwich Food Alliance. Per the SCT application, building healthy food networks is to establish a food policy council is a target area for municipalities. Ms. Ghiorse is reengaging food system stakeholders to convene an alliance. GSC-FSS convening a Greenwich Food Alliance. The idea is to meet for roundtable discussions every other month, which will all be public, and to build connectivity among those in the food system sector. Ms. Ghiorse is also doing bridge work at the state level, bringing in guest speakers. Connecticut is the only state in New England that does not have a food action plan. CFSA Food Systems is spearheading this initiative. The GSC-FSS is convening a meeting on November 5th at Coffee for Good.

• Ms. Cole is looking for additional help with the Beautification and Enhancement Sector. Ms. Cole also commended Ms. Alban for her work advocating for the Affordable Housing Trust. **Action item:** Ms. Cole offered to draft an article, with the help from this Committee, on why affordable housing and this initiative and how it passed and how it can help Greenwich.

• Ms. Skverer is looking to get the Committee’s support to promote sustainable practices in the business sector. Ms. Skverer is looking to engage with the Chamber of Commerce and is looking for partners for collaborators. Ms. DesChamps said the food waste initiative would dove-tail nicely with Ms. Skverer’s initiative.
• Ms. Moch announced a meeting tonight at 7pm in the Town Hall Meeting Room to discuss a bike lane in Byram from New Lebanon School to the beach. Looking for people from Byram that would be willing to speak for the need of bike lanes.

• Ms. Klockenbrink asked the committee to reconsider the seal of approval logo. **Action item:** Ms. Klockenbrink to distribute proposed criteria and seal of approval. Ms. Klockenbrink asked if the GSC could issue a statement of support of preserving the Remington Woods Preserve in Bridgeport, CT. **Action item:** Ms. Klockenbrink to distribute her statement to the Committee.

• **Action item:** Ms. Coccaro to distribute to flyer for tonight’s virtual program hosted by the Bruce Museum on climate change and flooding.

7. **New Business / Next Steps.**

• See item 5 above related to GEAC Climate Resolution.

• Ms. Klockenbrink to distribute GSC “Seal of approval” and criteria.

The Committee agreed that the next meeting will be scheduled on Thursday, November 4, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m.