FINAL MINUTES

Sustainability Committee Meeting - VIRTUAL MEETING

October 15, 2020

Attendance: Jill Oberlander, Committee Chair; Elizabeth Dempsey; Julie DesChamps; Ali Ghiorse; Myra Klockenbrink; Aleksandra Moch; Cheryl Moss; Michael VanderBrug; Allison Walsh; and Svetlana Wasserman.

1. **Call to Order.** Meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m.

2. **Minutes.** Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes from the September 30, 2020 meetings were approved.

3. **Status Updates:** Highlights from the sector status updates include:

   a. **Food Sustainability:** Ms. Ghiorse distributed several reports for background and information (Food Systems Sector Report; Sustainable CT: Proposed Program Revision 2021; GC3 draft report on Working and Natural Lands, Agriculture and Soil; Pathways to Engagement, Regenerating a Resilient CT Foodshed). In January 2021, Connecticut Food Systems Alliance will convene a steering committee to guide work of the CT FSA and help develop a food action plan. CT faces different food system challenges in different parts of the state: farm land is vulnerable to development; urban communities face food and land access challenges; suburbs are removed from food system issues. Ms. Ghiorse noted that while CT has healthy farms, the state has lost production capacity as it has centralized infrastructure out of state. For example, as the cost of land increases and there is a loss of smaller production facilities/infrastructure, it is increasingly difficult for dairies to make added value products such as butter, yogurt and ice cream.

   b. **Waste Reduction / Diversion:** Ms. DesChamps reported that a Save the Food Challenge would kick-off in November with the screening of a film, “Just Eat It” and a panel discussion. Textile recycling is going well with an increase of 1,000 lbs. collected between August and September. Ms. Klockenbrink is getting restaurants to sign-on to a cork recycling program. Further discussion on expanding the food scrap program through either curb-side pick-up or a second pick-up location is under discussion. **Next steps:** Ms. DesChamps highlighted the need for more insight into recycling and composting at the Greenwich Public Schools and the status of Tools for Schools.

   c. **Transportation:** Ms. Moch reported that the Transportation and Air Quality Subcommittee is working on initiatives, including electric vehicle charging stations and updating the Town’s bicycle master plan. **Next Steps:** Ms. Oberlander and Ms. Moch to collaborate on (1) fundraising for the local match for Sustainable CT grant funds related to a consultant to work on the Bicycle Master Plan; and (2) identifying projects that might qualify for a DERA (diesel emissions reduction act) grant.

   d. **Enhancement:** Ms. Oberlander referenced the written report sent by Ms. Cole and highlighted the planting of Chestnut Allee on November 4th. The project is in need of volunteers and Ms. Oberlander asked the Committee to reach out to their networks. **Next steps:** Ms. Oberlander will send an email asking for volunteers to help with the
planting project. Ms. Oberlander will also ask Ms. Cole if she would attend meetings of the Re-Imagine Greenwich Committee to update the Sustainability Committee on the enhancement ideas being discussed.

e. Water and Land Use: Ms. Klockenbrink is working on a bi-weekly column for the Greenwich Free Press on environmental matters with a goal of raising awareness. She is writing for herself, not as the Committee. **Next steps: Committee to discuss how and whether to link to these media pieces to further raise awareness.**

f. Legislative: Ms. Dempsey and Ms. Wasserman reported on several initiatives at the state level, including: Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM); Governor’s Committee on Climate Change (GC3); and several green bills signed into law (CT Property Transfer Law; and enhancements to CT Environmental Justice Law). **Next Steps: Ms. Oberlander to investigate the official point of contact is between the Town of Greenwich and CCSMM. All members were encouraged to read the reports posted on-line.**

g. Energy: Ms. Oberlander advised that First Selectman Camillo agreed to the idea of an Energy Committee, established by the Board of Selectmen, under the provisions proposed for the Energy Commission. **Next steps: Ms. Oberlander to advise on progress.**

h. First Selectman Waste Management Committee: Ms. Moss, co-chair of the Waste Management Committee, advised that they have identified sub-groups to evaluate (i) financial impact; (ii) collection systems; and (iii) business impacts. The goal is to finalize a report for the RTM before March 2021. Data indicates that waste collected at Holly Hill Transfer Station is 50% the amount of waste collected before tipping fees were instituted. It is not anticipated that there will be any requests for capital improvements this budget year.

4. **Letter dated August 13, 2020 to CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection on rejection of Material Innovation and Recycling Authority’s (“MIRA”) Annual Plan of Operations.** Ms. Oberlander summarized Ms. Sesto’s report from her meeting with First Selectman Camillo. It is unlikely that this item will be presented to the BOS for endorsement and, therefore, the Committee should decide whether it wants to issue its own endorsement. **This conversation was deferred until Ms. Sesto was present.**

5. **Update on Sustainability Plan:** Ms. DesChamps presented the survey prepared for sector chairs to help develop a Sustainability Plan and future actions. At the request of Ms. Ghiorse, the Committee considered whether this item should be delayed until the Committee had broadened its representation and input with respect to equity and diversity. Without the input of less advantaged community members, the Committee’s recommendations do not adequately reflect all constituencies and could be received as contributing to a paradigm of environmental injustice. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to pursue two paths simultaneously. **Next steps: (1) it is critically important that the Committee attempt to diversify representation and to have support from various constituencies to address environmental equity; (2) sector chairs are asked to respond to the survey distributed by Ms. DesChamps to try to advance the development of a Sustainability Plan / Summary.**

6. **New Item:** Discussion of media / public relations strategy. Ms. Dempsey raised the question of developing an email / contact list for the Sustainability Committee to leverage reach. **Next**
steps: Committee members are asked to consider this request. It will be an agenda item at our next meeting.

7. **New Item: Sustainable CT.** Ms. Moch advised that work on the Town’s renewal of its Sustainable CT ranking will begin shortly and asked for the help of Committee members. Ms. Moch will break down action items by sectors and share with the Committee. The sectors can then evaluate what action items they are able to provide support for.

8. **Next Steps:** In addition to the items referenced above:

   a. **Holdover:** Sustainability Committee outreach to the Conservation Commission (next meeting is November 5\textsuperscript{th}), Department of Public Works, Planning & Zoning (re: POCD and Sustainability Plan).
   
   b. **Holdover:** update on Town Hall’s waste reduction plans.
   
   c. **Google Drive:** Ms. Oberlander to check with Town IT about using a Google Drive for document sharing. Ms. Dempsey to assist.
   
   d. **Next meeting:** The proposed next meeting is: Thursday, October 29th, 2020 from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

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Jill K. Oberlander  
Co-Chair & Recording Secretary