

Sustainable Westport Advisory Team
May 7th 2020 7:30 -930pm
Zoom – As Provided by Town of Westport

FINAL MINUTES

1. Check-In / Welcome

- Town intro from Patty Strauss covering online format and process for all Town meetings conducted online
- Patti Strauss handed meeting over to Peter Boyd as chair.
- Peter ran meeting on screen-share but anyone from home / listening in to a recording could follow on the normal link for PowerPoints for Sustainable Westport Advisory Team meetings: <http://bit.ly/SustWestPpt>
- Check-ins on everyone's health and what is going on around town
 - Present: Peter Boyd, Dawn Henry, Pete Ratkiewich, Steve Smith, Diana Mashia, Tony McDowell, Nico Eisenberger, David Mann
 - Absent: Chris Breyan, Greg Zola, Sara Harris

2. Public comment

- None

3. Approval of Minutes

- Approved subject to correction of spelling for resident Sherry Jagerson

4. To-Do List Follow-ups

- a) To-dos were reviewed from March's minutes (as April meeting was cancelled on advice of the Town). The status was updated on the screen in real-time as per bullet points below, recognizing that the situation was much changed since the last time we met in person:
- i. *Done* - Sara will redirect the WeGreen website to the new site
 - ii. *Coming up* - Nico will follow up on the superintendent as contact details available
 - iii. *In progress* - Pete R will work on a training program for food waste drop off at transfer station volunteers – Library up for partnering
 - iv. *Postponed*- Steve is doing a library walk through
 - v. *Done some more to do* - Greg will work on the website fixes and post for volunteers
 - vi. *Started and gathered leads* - Diana will research municipalities [Dawn spoke to Sustainable Princeton]
 - vii. *Not Yet Done* - Tony will work on wording for the tree ordinance, get artwork and research MA,
 - viii. *Done but plaque on hold* - Dawn will research Princeton, work on plaque prototype and compile list of structure pros and cons
 - ix. *Not Yet Done* – Peter Boyd will send emails to the Tree Warden and do a budget review
- b) Biosphere2 – Suggested by Nico Eisenberger that this might be a good film for library

5. Special Items For Discussion

a. Town update – Pete R & Steve

- i. Dealing with the effects of the virus on the town obviously taking up a huge proportion of all Town staff time
- ii. Infrastructure update from Pete R
 1. Sidewalk impetus continues as a stimulus to the economy (and people are walking around)
 2. EV charging – proceeding according to plan and new ideas received in meeting with Juicebar
 3. LED street lights 95% complete
- iii. Buildings update from Steve S:
 1. some limited building work has continued / restarted. Unfortunately not all positive for the environment (eg expansion of swimming pool projects and more heating of pools as people ‘rest in place’)
- iv. Comments & Discussion:
 1. Usage of natural spaces – connecting to public/ natural spaces. There was a discussion about the potential connection of the appreciation of these spaces and a realization that our town should be sustainable more broadly
 2. Increase in online education on sustainability – everything from home builders to education institutions
 3. Pandemic borne most by those least able to handle it (disadvantaged populations)
 4. In the absence of a strong federal coordinated strategy on what intelligent recovery might look like – there is a guidance opportunity for citizens
 5. There was a concern raised that these stressful times are causing some to opt for convenience as people just try to get by – more disposables
 6. But rays of hope also noted – environmental health, air quality, people slowing down, people enjoying parks and nature centers who may not have in the past (e.g. Earthplace); and new people becoming aware and potentially more sensitive to environmental issues overall
 7. More Generally – how do we "make lemonade out of lemons" eg during COVID – posting pics on appreciating the environment / connecting us with our improved air quality
- v. Leaf-blower update / Quiet Communities – new Harvard study – linking fine particulate matter exacerbating COVID19
 1. Tony reported on a recent National conference call on Quiet communities – showcasing strong thought leadership from a Westport resident. He also noted interest in regional collaboration from Weston
 2. It was noted that the Westport resident was helping drive the material and thinking behind the movement, but there remains a vacancy for a project leader.
 3. Linkage to health – consider the broader effects and benefits like reduced noise while people are staying home
 4. The meeting discussed various ways to help encourage this new interest/working group – including promoting relevant articles & resources, and enabling / hosting as appropriate, group zooms.

5. TODO – investigate a small-group interest discussion and whether that can be convened informally within the town committee structure or wait until 501c3 established

b) Structure discussion cont.

1. David voiced a concern if the ‘town side’ did not have any expert voluntary representation from citizens. If Sustainable Westport Advisory Team retained Ex officio voting membership of the Town committee, that would alleviate his concern
2. Nico was in favor of pursuing “hybrid models” that retained formal links with the Town.
3. Pete R noted that the vast majority of town staff’s days were taken up by COVID - the structure of this committee, and creation of the 501c3 has support but does not make priority list for now
4. In the meeting, there was widespread support of building out the 501c3 so we can then start to explore what hybrid models may exist (of formal town-appointed committees and separate but partnered 501c3 non-profits)
 1. David and Pete R: does make sense to build this out – as this
 1. Not crossing lines that should be crossed
 2. Individuals on this team could act in private capacity to help found the 501c3
 3. The Link between the two entities would be the challenge to navigate down the line
 2. Nico summarized “Lets ripen the right hand side of the structure diagram” (the 501c3)
 3. David indicated he would be "happy to work on this" – in 2 weeks time when freed up from teaching responsibilities
 4. Diana and Dawn suggested that we could conduct an audience analysis to understand impacts of town body vs. 501c3 structure (e.g. ability to recruit volunteers, have influence with key stakeholders, etc) . It was agreed Dawn would draft a stakeholder questionnaire that we could distribute eg via interviews at next meeting
 5. David pointed out that the development of Green Village Initiative and Green Task Force back in 2006 had parallels we could learn from.
5. Agreed ACTIONS:
 1. Help ripen / form 501c3 while working to retain the association with the town. David Mann volunteered to rejoin the small structure team with Tony and Peter, and the three would ensure all opinions are incorporated (though others welcome to join and/or provide feedback throughout)
 2. Work to continue to foster close relationship with town government and hybrid models of non-profits and town working to help each other achieve the important overall goal of Net-Zero by 2050

c) [Website Framework tabled to next meeting]

6.Team Member Updates

- a) Review of overall progress & priorities:
- b) AWARE & ENGAGED COMMUNITY
 - i. Peter/Tony/Pippa – recapped the webinar held in conjunction with Earthplace and the Town Library on Earth Day. Zero Food Waste Challenge tied in to the topic but launch of compost bins and recycling center initiative postponed

- ii. Peter covered an evolving partnership with the library with the Library potentially interested in stepping up to become partners across marketing, production and content; and also voiced willingness to become a 'Net-Zero by 2050' library.
- iii. Zoom integration for future - confirmed that we intend to be 'zoom-integrated' for the long-term future; including when in-person meetings return. It was agreed that this was an important principle for access, especially as there will always be immune-compromised members of our community. Pippa was going to contact the ReOpenWestport committee to ensure that this would be widespread across interest group meetings

c) LEADER DEVELOPMENT

- i. Student update - Emma has been working well with Pippa
- ii. Agreed we would post a Volunteer job description for website administrator (Diana and Peter)

d) PROGRESS TRACKING

- i. Buildings?
- ii. Energy?
- iii. Transport?
- iv. Land & Natural Resources
 - a. Pippa provided Food waste update: Plan to hold webinars between now and July; Starter Kits available – delivery June

7.Wrap-up and Agreed action list

1. Peter to drive coordination / creation of 501c3 with Tony and David in their personal capacity (and any others who would like to feed in, also in their personal capacity)
2. Peter – conduct budget review with Pete R and email tree warden if/when material relevant and available from Tony (item #8 below)
3. Dawn to draft stakeholder survey and work with Peter and Diana for proposal next month how to action
4. Continue to work on / expand Environmental Learning Series and broader partnership with library (Tony and Peter)
5. Pippa - Zero Food Waste Webinars – between now and July on 1. Eating more with less, 2. Home Composting basics, 3. Town of Westport Food Scraps Recycling Drop-off area
6. Diana/Peter – post volunteer job description for website administrator
7. Peter/Tony – Discuss convening of a small group to discuss quiet communities initiative (determining whether it has to wait until 501c3 structure created or whether it can go ahead)
8. Tony – work on wording for tree ordinance, get artwork and research MA