

Sustainable Westport Advisory Team  
June 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 7:30 -930pm  
Zoom – As Provided by Town of Westport

FINAL MINUTES

**1. Check-In / Welcome**

- Chair Peter Boyd opened the meeting at 7:32 and welcomed everyone in attendance.
  - Present: Peter Boyd, Dawn Henry, Pete Ratkiewich, Tony McDowell, David Mann, Greg Zola, Sara Harris
  - Absent: Nico Eisenberger, Steve Smith, Diana Mashia, Chris Breyan
- Peter Boyd 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>

**2. Public comment**

- a. None

**3. Approval of Minutes**

- a. Approved by consent

**4. To-Do List Follow-ups**

To-dos were reviewed from May's minutes. The status was updated on the screen in real-time as per bullet points below.

- *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)*
- *Peter – conduct budget review with Pete R and email tree warden if/when material relevant and available from Tony (item #8 below)*
- *Dawn to draft stakeholder survey and work with Peter and Diana for proposal next month how to action*
- *Continue to work on / expand Environmental Learning Series and broader partnership with library (Tony and Peter)*
- *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*
- *Diana/Peter – post volunteer job description for website administrator*
- *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)*
- *Tony – work on wording for tree ordinance to add Native species reference, get artwork and research MA*

**5. Special Items For Discussion**

- a) Social Equity statement (this item was added and prioritized in response to current events)  
David Mann read an intelligent and powerful draft statement in support of Black Lives Matter and racial justice. Following a discussion, and strong support of the concepts presented, the consensus was to work with David to revise, circulate for comment, and publish a statement on our Instagram site (the revised statement is below)

*The murder of George Floyd and countless others before expose the ubiquitous and insidious institutional racism in our country. We are grieving and deeply shaken. ☹️*

*George Floyd's death comes at a time when minorities disproportionately bear the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis and climate change.*

*The system has not worked - in Westport or anywhere else in the country. By not doing enough we've been complicit.*

*We are deeply interested in change. We need to better understand the issues. We are committed to this difficult work and willing to get uncomfortable. We have a lot of work to do: To reach out beyond our normal circles, to learn and to increase diversity of our team. Our next meeting is in July, and this will be at the top of the agenda - please join us.*

**b) Review of organizational structures from other towns: Sustainable Princeton**

Objective – Look at what other towns have done and learn from them as we think about structure.

Dawn Henry spoke to Executive Director of Sustainable Princeton on March 26, 2020. What follows are some key learnings from that discussion.

History/Snapshot:

- Princeton, New Jersey – population 30k (Westport 28k)
- 8 years ago – enthusiastic volunteers convinced Town to spend \$30k to pay a part-time person
- Worked inside Planning Department
- “fee for service contract”
- Supplemented by volunteers
- Today – 501c3 with 3 person staff
- Annual budget \$300k, Town still contributes \$30k of that, rest comes from grants, foundations, and members of the public.
- Non-profit team physically located inside a Town building “office is the size of a broom closet but it works”

Key learning #1:

Our ability to influence has more to do with relationships, ability to add value, and physical proximity than our structure/reporting relationship.

Key learning #2:

Having influence in a Town is NOT just about top-down influence and making new governmental policy.

Key Learning #3:

The Climate Action Plan drives everything.

Key learning #4:

The best way to attract volunteer help – particularly high skill/high impact experts - is to be incredibly specific and time-bound in the request.

Key learning #5:

It takes a certain temperament to succeed as a staff member in a 501c3 like ours.

**c) Stakeholder Discussions**

- Original objective discussed in May meeting - get feedback from people outside of the Advisory Team on the idea of being a 501c3 vs. Town Body, in terms of attracting volunteers and having influence in the Town.
- NEW objectives – as long as we're having the meetings, let's use it as an opportunity to also:

- Continue building relationships between Sustainable Westport (SW) and key stakeholders
- Understand what the current perceptions of sustainability in Westport are
- Check awareness and attitudes about Westport’s Net Zero by 2050 goal
- Establish baseline perceptions of Sustainable Westport
- Assess impacts, if any, on whether SW remains a town body or becomes a 501c3

Next steps: Agreed to focus stakeholder meetings on relationship-building rather than asking for opinions on our structure (town body vs. 501c3).

d) **Website Framework**

Objective: Decide on a framework for organizing our “what you can do” and “resources” content.

**Two Target Audiences:**

**Seekers:** People who already know what they want, and likely already knowledgeable about sustainability.

Resources menu:

- Energy Efficiency | Reduce consumption & save!
- Renewable Energy | Shift from fossil fuels
- Food Waste | Reduce to zero
- Single-Use Plastics | Reduce then eliminate
- Recycling | Increase recycling
- Pesticides | Eliminate pesticides & green your yard
- Public transportation | Increase adoption
- Electric Vehicles | Increase adoption
- Buy local
- Equity | Promote equity in environmental solutions

**A Survey for Browsers:**

For people who are just taking a look around. Skewed more “entry-level” when it comes to sustainability. They would have pop-up windows to engage with questions, like:

- Hi there, what brings you here today?
- Which sustainability issue are you most interested in?
- Where do you want to have an impact?
- What volunteer activities are you interested in?
- How much time/money do you want to invest?

This would give us:

- Ability to track what people are most interested in
- Route people to mailing list signup – and others who are interested in the same thing
- For those who opt in, helps build a database for future contacts by topic

Next steps: Move forward with Resources tab idea, and get feedback from Diana and Nico who weren’t able to attend meeting on other categories to include. Hold off on survey framework for now.

**6. Team Member Updates**

- a) Review of overall progress & priorities:

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

b) PROGRESS TRACKING

Land & Natural Resources

- Tony recapped limited progress on Leaf blower issue, but no leader yet
- Pippa provided Food waste update – presented the Zero Food Waste Challenge and the three ELS webinars for June including the training for compost site volunteers –all held in conjunction with Earthplace and the Town Library.: Plan to hold webinars between now and July; Starter Kits available mid-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 (food scraps tips and recycling center July 1 – July 11)
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

Respectfully submitted by Tony McDowell (with a lot of help from Peter's slides)