MINUTES
SUSTAINABILITY TEAM MEETING SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026
6:30PM
MEETING ROOM 3

1. Call to Order 6:43 by Amalia Shaltiel
    a. Present in person: Amalia Shaltiel, Jay Fortner, Tom Sevigny. Via Zoom: David Oakes, Alan Ponanski, Amber McDonnell, Tanya Bourgoin
2. Approval of Agenda
    a. Dr. Fortner made a motion to approve, Mr. Sevigny 2nd. All in favor, agenda approved.
3. Approval of January meeting minutes – will be done at next meeting, Ms. Shaltiel asked Ms. Bourgoin to share her notes with Ms. McDonnell
4. Co-Chair Reports
    a. Ms. Bourgoin – nothing pressing
    b. Ms. Shaltiel: has been meeting with Todd Gelston once a month to keep him informed of Sustainability Team efforts, including Civic Lift for free to coordinate and promote events. Also discussed different ways to use $12K from SustainableCT. Shelves were purchased and installed aththe MOC display collateral next to the water fountain, they are deeper than we thought so we need extra shelves for brochures, energy campaign, etc. Todd Gelston suggested having a meeting of all the different organizations' captains and create a 2 year plan. Also visited the middle school and spoke with Shalene Thody to help with creating a walkway through the woods into the middle of town, her students will work with her. Also involved are Jim Ventres, Rob Smith, Conservation Commission, Open Space. Looking at creating a budget and using SustainableCT grant funding. Sustainability Team is a supporting entity, not an initiating entity.
5. Membership and Admin
    a. Still need another member. Amalia spoke with Mr. Gelston, would be nice if we had the same structure as Conservation Commission so some members can be alternates to prevent quorum issues. Mr. Gelston will bring this up at BOS meeting. Ms. Bourgoin suggested asking BOS to create another resolution that includes a change in mission. Ms. Shaltiel suggests Ms. Bourgoin draft something up. Mr. Sevigny does not think this will be a big deal.
6. Old Business: Report on activities since last meeting (Ms. Shaltiel)
        i. Report on Regional Waste Initiative by River COG: met with Portland, East Hampton, Lyme/Old Lyme to find out what was working in the towns, what wasn't. Ms. Shaltiel will share a summary of the meeting with team members and include a copy with these minutes. The next meeting is in March and should include town officials for decision-making purposes.
        ii. Report on Regional Cooperation Initiative for Pollinator Pathways: spoke with East Hampton, Lyme and Chester and Portland to exchange ideas, one of which was creating a map of all pollinator gardens in town, laminating it and putting it on the wall at the MOC and use pins to mark for every garden in town. Land Trust is getting medallions for each of their properties. Additional meetings planned to continue the conversation. Mr. Ponanski picked up an invitation for a presentation by the CT College Arboretum who will be doing a program on Lyme Public Library, he will send to Ms. McDonnell for distribution via email. Both Lyme and Old Lyme have their own pollinator pathway email account: Lymepollinator1@gmail.com Something we should consider.
        iii. Report on Winter Planting of Native Plants workshop and other initiatives (Mr.

Ponanski): on Sunday we had a highly successful native plant seeding workshop at First Church run by Susan Kinsman, certified master gardener. She provided info on native plants and invasive plant remediation. Well received, Dr. Fortner and Ms. Shaltiel attended. Feedback was positive and future workshops are planned.

7. New Business: New initiatives
    a. Theme (Mr. Ponanski): these will be tabled for another time
        1. Community Safety
            a. Home Safety & Wellness – East Haddam Fire & Rescue
        2. Protecting Our Environment
            a. Complete Tree Protections – Alan Ponanski
        3. Establishing Teen Center
            a. Consult HR High School – Youth & Family Services
    b. Articles for East Haddam News – we have been approved for a Sustainability Corner in the East Haddam News every week. Ms. Nora Myers wrote the first article, Ms. Shaltiel wrote the second. Need people to write articles, about 300 words long, due on Tuesdays focused on any of our initiatives. Mr. Ponanski volunteered to write one about a townwide No Mow May initiative, suggests making all articles focus on how initiatives benefit East Haddam. Send to editor@easthaddamnews.org
    c. Spring Fling participation: 3/22 Sunday 12PM-3PM at Machimoodus State Park, looking for participants, let Ms. Bourgoin know when you can.
    d. Earth Day preparation (Event, Town Cleanup, Composting Workshop etc.): Ms. Shaltiel reached out to the scouts, Ms. McDonnell reached out to Superhero Training Corps and trying to connect with Elementary School Garden. Would like to involve other town organizations like Lions, Sportsmans Club like we used to and offer a prize to the strangest find. Mr. Ponanski suggests focusing on required community hours, encouraged safety. The grange has been reserved for 4/18. Ms. Shaltiel suggests making a week about Earth Day in East Haddam, lots of activities happening throughout town. Invite the Garden Club and Land Trust. Ms. Bourgoin will follow up with Dr. DeBrito and Dr. Northcutt at the middle school.
    e. Repair Cafe Spring preparation – there is one in Chester at end of February, in March in Haddam, ours will be in May. Ms. Shaltiel will start contacting our "fixers".

8. Volunteers and Liaison reports
    a. Mr. Sevigny: met with Civitas, municipal broadband company, in January, meeting again in early March to see if it is feasible for East Haddam. The difference from previous broadband is that it will be wireless, not fiber, much less of a cost to the town. BOS will be requesting $50K in next year's budget for a full time grant writing company that will do everything from developing funding strategies to writing grants and necessary followup. Put them on retainer for $3K/mo for these services. Ms. Shaltiel asked about Thermal Energy Networks using the SustainableCT funds, Mr. Sevigny suggests putting together a committee to discuss further especially with the Moodus development project. He will reach out to Peter Millman (PACE) for more info.
    b. Dr. Fortner participated in the winter sowing and invasive class. He will write an article for the newspaper on this to raise awareness.
    c. Mr. Ponanski: Doug Tallamy telecast at the Senior Center, maybe on the 18th in the evening. Ms. Shaltiel will talk with Brad Parker and connect with organizations who may be interested. Suggests sending an email to all our contacts with a schedule of webinars.

9. Audience of Citizens - none

10. Announcements

Ms. Shaltiel will not be present for the March meeting. She will ask Ms. Bourgoin if she can chair it. Mr. Ponanski stresses the importance of meeting when we have upcoming events.

11. Next meeting Thurs 3/5/26 6:30PM

12. Adjournment: 7:53PM called by Ms. Shaltiel due to loss of quorum

Public participants may come to the meeting or view the meeting on YouTube Live at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLZq-CmatoKY6FW829c6mBA?view_as=subscriber

You may also access the YouTube Live link from the Town's website: www.easthaddam.org

Questions/comments may be sent to sustainability.team@easthaddam.org prior to and during the meeting.

Questions/comments will be read aloud during the "Audience of Citizens" section of the meeting.

Questions/comments and responses will be included in the minutes and posted on the town website.

Every effort will be made to provide responses during the meeting.