Minutes for Sustainability Team Special Meeting of October 4th 2022

Meeting called to Order by Amalia Shaltiel at 7:05

Present: Theresa Govert, Kayle Lopez, Adam Bristol, George Willauer, Amalia Shaltiel, David Oakes (joined a few minutes into meeting). Guest Jesse Scott.

Motion for approval of Agenda of meeting made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Ms. Lopez. In discussion, Ms. Shaltiel added to New Business the introduction of volunteer Jesse Scott, and Liaison to East Haddam Land Trust Cynthia Demming, and the inclusion in meetings of volunteers. Agenda was approved with changes.

Minutes of August 2, 2022 were accepted. Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Bristol.

Unfinished Business:

1. Sustainable CT Application: David Oakes reported - We submitted application on 23 of August. We received feedback from Jessica LeClaire of Sustainable CT and Amy Thompson of UCONN that we needed some clarification on energy benchmarks. We resubmitted action with required changes on Friday. We haven't got any feedback yet. We had approved actions totaling 290 points, including our equity action. The one remaining factor was the benchmarking update provided on Friday. Hopefully if they don't find any issues, we will have met the point requirement and the equity action. I am pretty confident that we have provided enough modification and that some time in November there will be a ceremony and now we have to wait, hopefully we will hear good news soon.

   In discussion Ms. Shaltiel explained that the benchmark action was in a category where we had only one action, so if we didn't pass we wouldn't have met the criteria of on action per category. Sustainable CT was doing everything they could to help us reach the required benchmarks but it was a cliff hanger situation. 5 points away from certification. We will have to wait. She mentioned that all other actions but one about parking were approved. She thanked the team.

   Mr. Scott asked if these benchmarks needed to be updated every year. Mr Oakes explained that were on auto-share and would update automatically except for the fuel oil and propane for the town which will need manual uploading. The account was set up by a UCONN student of Amy Thompson some years ago with generic information. Mr. Oakes cleaned up some redundancies, put in the correct information of use per square footage. Fuel oil for the schools was entered as a lump sum as there were no intermediate totals. There is still some data missing to be put in at a later date. Based on tax data the benchmarks will be able to provide an EUI score and an overall portfolio manager score. They are autoloading now. Fuel oil and propane for the town are the only thing that need manual loading.

2. Kayle Lopez reported on the Goodspeed Airport festival. – The festival was very successful. The Sustainability booth did great. Over $200 were made for the town from selling composting buckets. There were positive interactions with people from town and even people who don't live in town who stopped at our booth. Food and Waste recycling was not successful, mostly because of lack of volunteers to man the food waste stations. Next year will require a whole lot

more planning and action. Overall, this was really successful, as the first composting and sustainability outreach to the town.
During discussion Mr. Willauer , mentioned how enjoyable the experience was. Ms. Govert suggested that next year Blue Earth bring the composting bins themselves and pick them up directly. Ms. Lopez explained they were fully occupied at the Chester Fair and were unavailable to us. Also discussed was the impossibility of food waste recycling without general recycling which did not happen this year.
Ms. Shaltiel commended Mr. Willauer for his signage and Mr. Bristol for his pamphlets for invasive species education and the art from recycled materials that went well with children and families which she organized and the volunteers who manned the booth, Ms. Lopez, Mr Wilauer and Mr. Bristol.

Team Member Reports:

Ms. Lopez – Report on composting initiatives – She is waiting to hear back from the Middle School STEM teacher for announcement of clubs. Composting will be explored in environmental club.

Waiting on finalizing a date for composting workshop at Ballecks.

Will be teaching a class on Composting at a Girl Scout group at their request.

Mr. Bristol - Climate Leader Initiative by Sustainable CT – is waiting for response on emails . Has created a plan of action for getting the points we need. Needs to be added to SustainableCT website to be able to enter Data. Ms. Shaltiel said she would do so.

In discussion Mr. Bristol and Ms. Shaltiel explained that Climate Leadership required 140 pts. out of 32 actions. Half of the action pts. are actions the town has already accomplished. Mr. Bristol will meet with Mr. Ventres to get the information we need to upload on to the Sustainable CT. site. In response to a question about timing Ms. Shaltiel clarified that increase in open space must occur in the last 3 years.

` Ms. Govert: Nothing to report. Ms. Shaltiel mentioned that Ms. Govert was now the Homeless Liaison for the municipality as mentioned on the town website. The Sustainability Team is now in a position to start to expand homelessness awareness in the town. She mentioned the Personal Care product bank that Ms Govert has initiated, how homelessness can manifests in lack of resources to care for existing homes. Ms. Shaltiel suggested creating a team to help repairing homes. Mr. Willauer was interested in that.

Mr. Oakes: Attended webinar with Sustainable CT about roll out of next years certification changes including a Gold Level Certification. Cautioned Sustainable CT that increased points would create a real struggle for small towns with no dedicated staff available for such endeavors, who rely completely on volunteers and worry on wasting town assets. He suggested making first step more palatable.

Ms. Shaltiel: Had also been present at Webinar and had voiced similar concerns. She will write a letter to Sustainable CT about the process and the lack of a formal feedback loop as a survey to

towns who participated in the process. Ms. Shaltiel was interested in the emphasis on regional cooperation and mentorship in the program.

Ms. Shaltiel reported on a conversation with Bob Casner, chair of East Haddam Economic Development Commission about a planned bike path circuit that will encompass, Chester, Tylerville, Moodus and East Haddam Village. East Haddam EDC is working with the Chester EDC and Sustainability Team. We might join in a regional cooperation project. Ms. Shaltiel will present this at the EDC meeting on Thursday September 7.

She mentioned that all three actions submitted in the Affordable Housing category were approved. This might set the stage for creating conversations in town about affordable housing..

New Business

1. Jesse Scott introduced himself - His family moved to Connecticut 2 years ago. Connected to the Sustainability Team at Festival. Is an expert in sustainability and energy efficiency. At present works with NY power company, Before that worked on a street light conversion program in NY that converted more than half a million street lights to LEDs. He can help us with our street lights inventory and all facets of sustainability. He is looking forward to working with the group.

   Ms. Shaltiel thanked him. As the Team needs non-Democratic members he can not at present join the Sustainability Team but will remain a volunteer.

2. Ms. Govert mentioned the Broad Band feasibility study and reaching out to Sustainable CT to see how it can be implemented as an action. Mr Oakes suggested that it would fall under Effective Community Communications – action 8.2. A discussion ensued on funding and equity and community needs for broad band and coupled with the need for community buy-in for the the program.
3. 2 opportunities for community engagement around Halloween were brought up. Creating a Sustainability scarecrow for an initiative of Scarecrows in Village by the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Bristol described the program, and it was suggested that Mr. Willauer would take that on.
   The other was to create a Fairy Garden for the Rathbun Library program. Ms. Lopez agreed to look into it. Mr. Scott was interested in helping.
4. Ms. Shaltiel talked about creating a page for the Sustainability Team on the municipal website – Ms. Govert said she will talk with Linda Zemieniesky
5. Possible events for the fall: Mr. Bristol will look into creating an event about invasive species with UCONN, if not in the fall, Jan or Feb.

   Ms. Lopes will probably postpone organizing a composting workshop till next spring.

   Poetry meeting postponed due to health reasons. Edwina Trentham and Greg Coleman will stay on team. The team will reach out to Edwina in a month or so.

6. Sustainability Team volunteers – a growing group Jesse Scott, Matt Shea. Cynthia Demming has been appointed Liaison for the East Haddam Land Trust.
7. Final words from Mr. Oakes: Impressed with the Job the team has done.

No Audience of Citizens

Invitation to Sustainable CT Ceremony will be sent out after status has been confirmed.

Next meeting set for November 1st 7 PM

Adjournment: Motion by David Oakes, Kayle Lopez seconded at 8:05