Minutes for February 7th 2023, Sustainability team meeting

Meeting called to order by Amalia Shaltiel at 7:00

Present: Jesse Scott, Amalia Shaltiel, Theresa Govert, David Oakes and Kayle Lopez. Joining the meeting Edwina Trentham and Greg Coleman, volunteer Matt Shea, Cynthia Deming, liaison for EHLT, and Tanya Borgoin President of Friends of Sunrise/Machimoodus State Park.

Approval of Agenda – Motion by Kayle Lopez, Seconded by Jesse Smith. No changes. Unanimous approval.

Approval of Minutes of January 3rd 2023 meeting – Motion by David Oakes, seconded by Kayle Lopez. No corrections. Minutes unanimously approved.

Changes in composition of Sustainability Team. Ms. Shaltiel reported that George Willauer resigned but will stay on as volunteer and Jesse Scott joined the Team. He was welcomed by all. Ms. Shaltiel again brought up the need for a non-Democrat to fill our tenth member vacancy. Kayle Lopez reported that Jeanie D'Amato is interested in joining, has filled the application and has given it to Linda Zemienieski

Friends of Sunrise, Machimoodus State Park a Ms. Shaltiel Introduced Tanya Bourgoin, president of the organization and shared on screen the new device that Friends of Sunrise Machimoodus State Park have purchased. Ms. Bourgoin introduced herself. She was cofounder of Friends of Machimoodus State Park in 2016 and is now president. The organization applied for the Mary and Nancy Jambrin grant from Middltown Community Foundation for $15000 for the purchase of a device – Aquacide Thermodynamic Sterilization that eradicates invasive with Hot water instead of herbicides. She explained the history of the need for the device in renovating a garden on the property and battling invasives without herbicides before being able to plant a pollinator garden. She applied for the grant in 2022. The grant was closely aligned to their goals and they received it December 2022. Ms. Bourgoin explained how the device worked. She talked about the ability of offering it to other entities in the communities, so they don't have to use herbicides. A discussion ensued about how this will happen. Especially interested was Ms. Deming, the EHLT Liaison as they are battling invasives in their preserves. Ms. Bourgoin is working on insuring the device and talked about transportation and training. Also discussed was the use of the device for cleaning boats for invasives at boat launches., and other uses.

Spring Fling Event Ms. Bourgoin mentioned the coming event scheduled for March 19th hoping the Device will be available for people to see then. Ms. Shaltiel mentioned that the Sustainability Team would have a table at the event and that Ms. Lopez would be in charge of set up. She asked Ms. Bourgoin to tell the group more about the event and participant groups.

Ms. Bourgoin said the event will take place on Sunday, March 19th as a celebration of all things nature related and the telling of stories with an emphasis on the educational aspects. There is a commitment from Connecticut Audubon Society, from the Conservation Commission, The Connecticut River Conservancy, UCONN Master Gardeners and UCONN Composting Team. A member of Friends of Machimoodus will be doing a plant talk and a yoga demonstration. Ms. Bourgoin will talk about pollinators. Another member will be talking about local geology. DEEP burn team leader will hopefully be able to do a controlled burn demonstration. Kristen Bell Antoino who also works with DEEP will do a program such as the Sky's the Limit or No Child Left Inside. Ms. Borgoin is waiting for a response from other groups. The event runs from noon to 3 with set up from 10:30

Ms. Shaltiel asked if other Team members and volunteers wanted to contribute to the event. She said we will probably be doing artwork in nature. Ms. Lopez asked for help picking up tent and table. Ms. Shaltiel has a truck. Mr. Oakes suggested we bring the plaque from our certification ceremony. He also suggested Sustainable CT members might want to be in our tent and the Fellow Annika Shifffer-Delegard from Wesleyan.

Climate Leader Certification Progress: Ms. Shaltiel reported as Adam Bristol was unavailable. She has given Jim Ventres the list of Open Space criteria that Sustainable CT wants in their report. Jim has the information but we will need to put in the Data. Ms. Shaltiel asked David to see if the fellow could do that. Mr. Oakes asked if East Haddam was in the GIS (Geographic Information System). Ms. Shaltiel asked Mr. Oakes to find the answer to that. And he will follow up with Mr. Ventres.

Ms. Shaltiel also got in touch with Mr. Wilson, Chair of the Conservation Commission, and Pete Govert, President of the East Haddam Land Trust, about the Forest Management Action. She mentioned the lecture about Forest Management given by the Land Trust last month. Mr. Wilson added it to the Agenda of the Conservation Commission meeting which occurred at the same time as the Sustainability Team meeting. In the email exchange Mr. Ventres replied that the Conservation Commission is de Facto our Forest Management Team and that it would be a good idea to get a forester to evaluate our forests.

Ms. Shaltiel reported that John Olin of the Conservation Commission is pursuing having a resilience readiness workshop by the Nature Conservancy. He is trying to involve First Selectwoman Haines in the process. Mr. Oakes emphasized the importance of planning and taking into consideration concerns and needs of emergency responders. Ms. Shaltiel suggested involving Mr. Oakes with John Olin and Bernie Gillis of the climate resilience subcommittee of the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Shaltiel asked Mr. Scott to move in to taking care of the actions around lighting. Mr. Scott assented. He mentioned the energy audits First Selectwoman Haines mentioned will be done in most of the municipal buildings. He will try and see these audits and check the calculations and make a list of what should be prioritized. Ms. Haines also mentioned, lighting upgrades at town hall and the libraries and some other facilities. Mr. Scott also mentioned the solar arrays they are looking to install at the dump and some other places. Mr. Scott talked about the direct pay model to tax exempt entities instead of the power purchase model that was put forth. This can save money to the town. Ms. Shaltiel again suggested that he set up a meeting with First Selectwoman Haines and maybe with the whole Board of Selectmen. She said the team would help him in any way. Mr. Oakes was wondering who was doing the energy audits. Mr. Scott said he would find out. Mr. Scott also talked about Home Audits that Eversource does and suggested we promote that at the Spring Fling. A discussion ensued about energy solutions. Energize CT Community, a non-profit that offers energy solutions, partnering with the municipality was mentioned as was Emily Basham of CT Green Bank. David Oakes will look into that. Mr Scott explained that all Green Banks are getting money to buy down inflation rates through the inflation reduction act. Money will be cheap for projects both for town and businesses. He suggested we put effort into educating the town during this year. Ms. Shaltiel asked Mr. Scott if he could create talking points or information for a brochure or workshop about this subject. He will do a presentation on the inflation reduction act for next meeting and will reach out to Eversource for material for the Spring Fling and other educational material available to him.

Outreach: Ms. Shaltiel reported that we now have a Face Book page and a page on the municipal site. We can add links to different places on our municipal page. Ms. Shaltiel asked if anyone else apart from

Ms. Lopez would like to be an editor on the FB page. At this point she was using it to advertise events of other organizations that were of interest to the Sustainability Team.

Relationship with other Sustainability Teams: Ms. Shaltiel reported that she was at the Chester Sustainability Zoom meeting. Ms. Lopez is in contact with Rob Bibbiani of Chester Sustainability Team in regards to composting. Ms. Shaltiel mentioned that Deep River, Chester and Essex are teaming up to start composting in schools.

Ms. Lopez talked about meeting with the agriculture committee, the STEM teacher at the middle school and about adding a composting component to the Middle School garden club. She has no details yet. Ms. Lopez mentioned her dream of composting locally instead of sending it anywhere. Matt Shea asked Ms. Lopez if she had talked with the director of food services in the schools.

Team Reports:

Jesse Scott: Showed his Official letter of acceptance to the team. He is looking forward to working with everyone. Suggested a hike before the Spring Fling.

Kayle Lopez: Will try and find Nancy Ballek at Ballek's Garden Center to set a date for the composting workshop. She would like to advertise it at the Spring Fling

David Oakes: Is involved in Bristol certification. Spring Fling might be an opportunity to get points for outreach actions.

New Business:

Map of Local Businesses: Ms. Shaltiel is creating a map of local businesses to fulfill an action in Category 2- Thriving Economies, following the example of a successful Lyme action. Ms. Shaltiel asked for help in finding other businesses and organize the list. The EDC is aware of the effort but hasn't yet contributed. Mr. Oakes suggested the Tax assessor might have the list of registered businesses in town.

Workshops and Events: Ms. Shaltiel mentioned the Spring Fling at Sunrise,Machimoodus, Composting Event, UCONN Invasive Species event which is waiting on Adam Bristol. Jesse Scott asked about other possible events in the Community. Ms. Shaltiel mentioned the Eight Mile River Event which is normally held in August. Ms. Shaltiel suggested that we create events. Ms. Lopez will try and schedule Composting workshop for weekend before Earth Day. Ms. Borgoin mentioned that she is part of Friends of Rathbun Library and that we can coordinate events with them.

Ms. Shaltiel mentioned the need to start thinking of Equity projects and mentioned the survey for Farm Stand owners and Users that was sent out but hasn't had much response. Ms. Shaltiel will send the survey to the Team.

Mr. Oakes mentioned Spring and Summer Equity virtual training and that anyone from the Team can do those. Events on the SustainableCT calendar were also mentioned.

Next meeting March 7th 2023 7PM. Ms. Shaltiel mentioned the possibility of meeting with the Conservation Committee.

Mr. Oakes made a motion to adjourn and thanked Jesse, Tanya, Cynthia and Matt. Mr. Scott seconded.

Meeting ended at 8:23