MINUTES

SUSTAINABILITY TEAM MEETING

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024

HYBRID IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL (Committee)

VIA YOUTUBE LIVE (Public)

7:00PM

1. **Call to Order** - Meeting called to order by Tanya Bourgoin at 7:05PM. Present: Tanya Bourgoin, David Oakes, Jesse Scott, Amalia Shaltiel, and Amber McDonnell joined by Wade Tomlinson and Matt Shea virtually by zoom.
2. **Approval of Agenda** – Motion by David Oakes, seconded by Jesse Scott. Agenda approved.
3. **Acceptance of minutes** - Meeting of May 21, 2023 – Motion by David Oakes, seconded by Jesse Scott. Minutes approved.
4. **Chair Report/Correspondence** – Amalia Shaltiel has correspondence from fellows Brigitte and Rebecca: they recently visited Moodus Ice Cream Parlor, saw compostable cups but no compost bin. Asked if we should start outreach for commercial composting. Idea to be considered in future meeting. Tanya Bourgoin stated the importance of in-person meetings to foster better community relationships which is difficult to form in virtual meetings. Ms. Bourgoin also handed out handwritten cards and volunteer pins to Committee members, stating this was a gesture of appreciation initiated by First Selectwoman Irene Haines. Cards and pins for those who could not attend this in-person meeting will be handed out at a future committee event/meeting. Amalia Shaltiel and Amber McDonnell advised they wrote and distributed handwritten thank you cards to those who assisted with the Silver Certification. Tanya Bourgoin is encouraging more community engagement, reminds members that one does not need to be an official member to participate and share ideas/perspectives. Amalia Shaltiel, David Oakes, and Tanya Bourgoin discussed reaching out to other town sectors (Youth & Family Services, Board of Ed, libraries, etc.) to make everyone aware that we are here to listen and are focused on inclusivity. Amalia Shaltiel has formed many relationships in the process of gathering data for Silver Certification and encourages all committee members to do the same. Jesse Scott encourages a full roster, suggests a list of tasks for volunteers (tabling farmers markets, etc.). David Oakes suggests contacting the Boy Scouts for recycling and trash pickup at events.

5. **Unfinished Business**: Jesse Scott provides an update on the energy assessment and heat pump campaigns: he just finished the monthly report, 6 leads signed up to date for energy assessments. There has been a large apparel order made through EMP Apparel in East Hampton (t-shirts, hoodies, hats, canvas bags), more collateral (lawn signs, etc.) to be printed in the future. Mr. Scott mentioned Eversource's heat pump training this coming Tuesday and encouraged participation from additional committee members. Tanya Bourgoin asked about signage promoting these campaigns in advance of this Saturday's Spring into Summer picnic. Mr. Scott states there is a delay in some signage due to EMP Apparel moving locations at this time. Press Release went out in the town newspaper last week (May 15). Nothing came into the gmail account as a result. Tanya Bourgoin asked if we are doing a heat pump presentation in addition to the energy assessment presentation at the Senior Center in July. She has a contact who does heat pump education for the public. Jesse Scott expressed concern about bringing on someone outside of Eversource's program, could be confusing. Eversource would need to approve anything he presented in advance. Mr. Scott would prefer to meet this person before discussing this idea with Devan Willemson at Eversource. David Oakes shared concern about sharing customer contact information with a third party. Tanya Bourgoin reiterated that this person is not for profit. Mr. Scott mentioned it will take time to convince townspeople to convert from oil to electric, as oil is part of the fabric of the community. Amalia Shaltiel and Jesse Scott spoke about the Spring Into Summer picnic this Saturday. The majority of the food and drinks will come from local businesses (Wrasslin' Cats, Cold Spring Farm, Higher Grounds, Hometown Market), estimated total cost of $400-$500 to come from the Eversource grant. Ms. Shaltiel will be picking strawberries at Berry Hill Farm this Thursday, invites committee members to join if available. Ms. Shaltiel is looking for help picking up food Friday night and Saturday morning in advance of the event. Tanya Bourgoin will figure out sustainable dishes and flatware. Ms. Bourgoin stated the Chatham Health District contacted her regarding the food being offered at the picnic, wants to confirm all food is coming from a commercial kitchen. Ms. Shaltiel confirmed all food is coming from a commercial kitchen except for the strawberries from Berry Hill Farm; Ms. Bourgoin thinks this will be fine. Ms. Bourgoin has obtained approval for BYOB at picnic (no hard alcohol) from the Board of Selectmen. Weather looks iffy right now, but the Grange has plenty of indoor/outdoor options to work with. Ms. Shaltiel states there will be multiple representatives set up at various tables: Conservation Commission, master gardening, Elementary School Garden flower craft, energy/heat pump campaign, repurposed art table.

a. Amalia Shaltiel mentioned the Sustainability Team is co-sponsoring a presentation on dark skies at the end of July. Ms. Bourgoin and Ms. Shaltiel will circulate educational material about dark skies. East Haddam has a solid dark skies ordinance and is in good standing.

6. **Team Report** – Ms. Shaltiel has been posting different action items for Silver Certification each day on the Sustainability Team facebook page and has seen more activity on the page as a result. She encourages all committee members to 'like' and 'share'. Ms. Shaltiel sent a report of all action items completed for the Silver Certification to all committee members which includes the reviewer's comment. Jesse Scott wants to learn more about the dark skies and invasive species.
    a. Tanya Bourgoin spoke with St. Stephen's Church, they are very welcoming, wants to find ways to work together. They asked if the committee would make a meal for Harvest House in the fall; proposed dates forthcoming. 5-6 committee members would be needed; Jesse Scott is in favor of this idea.
    b. Tanya Bourgoin mentioned there is much concern about tree removal in town, she is pushing for the tree warden to consider rescheduling the town hearing from Tuesday 6/25/24 2PM to allow more townspeople to attend. There are 100+ trees marked for removal on Newberry alone. Ms. Bourgoin is working with Open Space to make this process more open and transparent. She is not sure if our committee can do more than asking to consider tree removal very carefully. Michelle Velez of Public Works has a statement on the site about this already. Ms. Bourgoin and Ms. Shaltiel will draft a statement from the Sustainability Team about this.
    c. Ms Bourgoin brought up the issues of racism that came to light recently at the middle school. She is working to create community conversations regarding diversity, equity and inclusion led by a trained facilitator. Wrasslin' Cats offered to host. Amalia Shaltiel states Sustainable CT has a trained equity coaches at no cost to towns. Jesse Scott states the Board of Selectmen needs to work with the Board of Education. Tanya Bourgoin states they are already involved. Mr. Scott is pressing for diverse hiring practices, notes that there is not a single person of color in a teaching role in the East Haddam Public Schools. He hopes that with the middle school principal retiring this year, we will see some diversity in the person who fills that role. Mr. Scott was present at the Board of Education meeting on this topic this past week. He states "this is a black eye for the whole town", and change starts at the top. Ms. Bourgoin was not present at the Board of Education meeting, but states we have a new superintendent who needs an opportunity to make a difference. Her final comment on the matter is "this is an opportunity for

learning, we have to lead the way." Wade Tomlinson states he has a child in the school system who shared this topic with him, he is in full support of inclusivity and equity practices within the school system.

7. Public Comments – No public comment
8. Next meeting – not discussed, as Amber McDonnell had a hard stop at 8PM and the meeting was over time.
9. Adjournment – at 8:08 Motion by Tanya Bourgoin, Seconded by David Oakes.