MINUTES

SUSTAINABILITY TEAM MEETING

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2024

HYBRID IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL (Committee)

VIA YOUTUBE LIVE (Public)

7:00PM

1. Call to order: 7:14PM (delayed start due to connectivity issues w/ Zoom/clickshare) by Tanya Bourgoin. Present (in person): Tanya Bourgoin, Amalia Shaltiel, Amber McDonnell, Terri Garrity. Via Zoom: Jesse Scott, Kayle Lopez. Member of the public: Honora Meyers. Joe Sina representing Alan Ponanski from the Conservation Commission as Alan is on vacation
2. Approval of agenda: Motion by Ms. Shaltiel, seconded by Ms. Gerrity. Agenda approved.
3. Acceptance of minutes: Motion by Ms. Lopez, seconded by Ms. Gerrity. Minutes accepted.
4. Chair Report/Correspondence: Ms. Bourgoin does not have much to report, did confirm that an email to the Sustainability Team inbox was received, this sparked conversation about the two email addresses for the team: sustainability.team@easthaddam.org*, easthaddamsustainability@gmail.com . The gmail accountt was only created because it is necessary to open YouTube account. Per Linda Zemieniesk, the Easthaddam.org account should be used for public to contact the team and used on all promotional activity. There was a discussion about best approach to timely response to emails to sustainability team.
5. Members/team structure:
    a. Hopeful new member Honora (prefers Nora) Myers met Mr. Scott, Ms. McDonnell and Ms. Shaltiel at the Spring into Summer event in June 2024, has a background in environmental science and a side business “Upcycle With Honora” to give items a second life. She already volunteered at the Musical Bridges event with Ms. Shaltiel in August 2024 supporting the energy campaign. Ms. Gerrity motioned to vote Nora in as an official member of the Sustainability Team, Ms. Shaltiel seconded. Gleeful acceptance from all! Per Ms. Bourgoin, this will be submitted at the Board of Selectman meeting on 8/21/24.
    b. There was a lengthy conversation about more structure/defined roles within the Sustainability Team. Ms. Bourgoin wants to focus on the team’s longevity

and do more programs, activities, etc. within the town beyond SustainableCT certifications which are good for 3 years. She suggests eventually changing the team name and becoming an official commission with the town for legitimacy reasons. Ms. Gerrity suggests looking at other towns with similar committees that have been in place longer than this one to see what that looks like. There was a review of Robert's Rules of Order to review duties of the chair person and secretary.

c. Mr. Scott made a motion to vote Ms. Shaltiel as co-chair of the Sustainability Team. Ms. Gerrity seconds the motion. All in favor. Mr. Sina and Ms. Myers abstained. Ms. Bourgoin and Ms. Shaltiel shall discuss their individual responsibilities in this role.
d. Mr. Scott made a motion to vote Ms. McDonnell as secretary of the Sustainability Team. Ms. Shaltiel seconded the motion. All in favor. Mr. Sina and Ms. Myers abstained.

6. Unfinished Business and Ongoing Initiatives:
    a. Update on middle school initiatives: not discussed
    b. Energy assessments and heat pumps campaign: (see discussion notes below)
    c. Equity conversations: (see discussion notes below)
    d. Recycling initiatives: not discussed
    e. Repair Café: happening 8/25 11AM-4PM at the grange. Plenty of experts available, we will need as many volunteers as possible for clothing swap, toy swap and school supply swap. Nora invited those in attendance to stop by the Historical Society after the event to check out her first photography exhibit: Bloom Where You Are Planted.
    f. Climate Leader Certification update: Amalia submitted for the certificate by the deadline (today). Will hear probably by October. We get 25% of town's energy through solar. All LEDs throughout town has saved us 10% on energy.

Adjournment: 8:04PM Mr. Scott and Ms. Lopez must leave, no longer at quorum.

Discussion continues:

Ms. Shaltiel reports that the energy campaign is doing well, already over the goal of 12 leads. Collaboration with Lantern Energy is very useful. Recent senior center presentation went well. Next we are creating packets with IE applications for food bank (Linda printed copies, saved us $). Tanya suggested distributing packets to the Harvest House and Youth & Family Services.

Ms. Bourgoin and Ms. Gerrity: equity discussions – BOE will take the lead on this. Board is waiting on a plan from Dept of Justice. They have a community program that they have introduced to the district, will be working with the district and the town. This is a plan that will be multi-dimensional, more to come in the next month or two. Ms. Gerrity is excited. Ms. Shaltiel asked how the BOE effort can balance with the town wide need for a place to talk and heal. Ms. Gerrity advised that the school district can only be responsible for the district which is the reason this is a multidimensional effort. Working with the Selectman's Office will make this a townwide effort. Once a plan comes forward from the Dept of Justice with a plan for students, then the first selectman will be working with the remaining town agencies and that's when things will gel. Ms. Bourgoin: "3 legged stool" – BOE needs to take the lead because this is the primary agency affected by the events that took place. The Selectman's Office is responsible for DEI things that happen within departments and agencies. Outside of that, the Sustainability Team is the only agency in town that has any kind of overreach in this. So we (Sustainability Team) have to be the third leg of the stool. Ms. Gerrity stressed that this must be addressed appropriately, don't want to make rash movements just for the sake of making things happen. Ms. Shaltiel suggested making a statement so it is clear to the public that we are working on this. Terri: wonderful idea but the statement has to come from all 3 legs of the stool. Ms. Gerrity and Ms. Bourgoin will put something in writing to reaffirm our commitment to this issue. Ms. Bourgoin: 2 Wrasslin' Cats Accord has become a non-profit, proceeds from café will go to the non-profit. They are having a kickoff event this Saturday (various members of different groups, rep from NAACP will be there).

Neurodiversity equity initiative – Ms. Gerrity had a good meeting with Dr. DeBrito, she pledged her support for this program so they are working on numberss in terms of what to ask for when applying for the grant. Had to make a few tweaks to the program itself, when talking about individuals with special needs and their families, to make sure they have enough coverage. This is a community initiative but there is an educational opportunity. Need to make sure there are certified individuals on site. She will do a full presentation of the program once all the pieces of it together. Ms. Shaltiel confirms the full support of the Sustainability Team on this initiative.

Memo on trees: - Mr. Sina: we suggested the conservation commission be the advisory, but they don't want to take that on because they are short-staffed. We do have a situation, there is confusion between the town tree warden and what some people in town would like, what is appropriate for roadside trees. Jim Ventres said he has a responsibility for tree safety, tree warden does too. Right of way is tree warden, inside of right of way is land use, conservation commission will support land use. Conservation Commission was told it's 'not your business'. Note taking concluded as of 8:35PM as Ms. McDonnell must leave.