MINUTES
SUSTAINABILITY TEAM MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2025
7:00PM
MEETING ROOM 3

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:12 PM.

a. Attendees (in person): Tanya Bourgoin, Amalia Shaltiel, Alan Ponanski. Via Zoom: Amber McDonnell, David Oakes, and Wade Tomlinson. Rev. Erin Flinn joined as a guest.

2. Approval of Agenda
Mr. Ponanski motioned to amend the agenda to include Rev. Erin Flinn, which was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of April 15th Meeting Minutes
Ms. McDonnell moved to approve, Ms. Bourgoin seconded. Alan abstained as he was not present at the meeting. The minutes from the April 15th meeting were approved.

4. Co-Chair Reports

a. Ms. Bourgoin: Rev. Erin Flinn, rector of St. Stephen's Church shared a significant project involving the resurfacing of their parking lot, which currently experiences spring water bubbling up, creating icy conditions in winter. This project, estimated at $30-40K for resurfacing and an additional $17K for a curtain drain, is part of a larger initiative to improve the church's facilities, including a playground installed in the 1980s. Ms. Shaltiel offered to connect them with SustainableCT for potential grant opportunities. Mr. Ponanski motioned for the Sustainability Team to support this project through various avenues, which Ms. Bourgoin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Bourgoin also mentioned hopes to reintroduce composting and the need for new team members as we are currently down three.

b. Ms. Shaltiel: [No updates were provided for Amalia's report in the original minutes.]

5. Team Membership
Mr. Tomlinson announced his resignation as of June 24, 2025, bringing our team down by four members. We are hoping to add Tyler Semrow and Lourdes Evans and will reach out to Jacqui Endorf’s husband and Jasmine Carnell’s husband regarding potential membership.

6. Old Business

i) Past Event Recaps (Ms. Shaltiel + Ms. McDonnell):

Earth Day Celebration + Compost Workshop: Despite the cold weather, turnout was surprisingly good. We look forward to making this an annual event. The Elementary School Garden was a wonderful addition. Kayle Lopez organized the composting workshop which was held at Ballek’s. Amalia coordinated with master gardener Susan Kinsman to offer guidance and answer questions at the community garden.

Repair Café: This event had a good turnout, with many items successfully repaired.

May and June Heritage Market: These events were well-attended and provided an excellent opportunity for the Sustainability Team to engage with the public. Mr. Ponanski noted that First Church's "no mow May" initiative inspired others and could be a future campaign for our team.

Roadside Cleanup for Memorial Day Parade: Tyler Semrow organized a successful Superhero Training Corps cleanup at Franklin Academy. Mr. Tomlinson made it a full day at Franklin Academy, creating a trail, a greenhouse, and adding gravel around campus, with a goal to add solar. Mr. Ponanski mentioned a well-attended Earth Day event at First Church/Land Trust with music and poetry. The roadside cleanup before the parade was productive, with 160 lbs of litter collected between East Haddam and Portland.

ii) Upcoming Initiatives:

Friday 6/20 6PM-9PM: Summer Solstice at First Church.This is a family event with ice cream, lawn games, and music, aimed at raising funds for a pollinator garden in honor of Anita Ballek.

Saturday 6/28 3PM-5PM: Community Conversation – Community Events Calendar

Wednesday 7/2 4PM-7PM: July Heritage Market at The Grange. Stars & Stripes theme

iii) Energy Assessments, Heat Pumps Campaign, Heat Smart (Ms. McDonnell): letter to all town residents kicking off the HeatSmart campaign should go out by end of June. We expect a large increase in energy assessment leads as a result and will look at insulation and heat pump opportunities.

iv) Recycling and Composting Updates (Ms. Bourgoin): not discussed

v) Gold Certification (Ms. Shaltiel): We have received pre-approval for our regional project for the Goodwin Trail for the conservation commission. We have completed 600 of the 750 required points. We are awaiting the BOE's equity statement and need an equity narrative for community conversations.

vi) Other Team Member Reports: None.

7. New Business

a. Harvest House (Ms. Bourgoin): This free community meal takes place every Sunday at St. Stephen's community hall, serving 25-30 people. They are looking for community groups to help plan, cook, serve, and clean up. Mr. Ponanski suggested a joint effort with the Conservation Commission. Ms. Bourgoin will follow up via email with those interested to pick a date in September.

b. Community Garden Plot: Any native seeds can be sown in our three garden plots.

c. Pollinator Pathway: Ms. Shaltiel has connected with the Pollinator Pathway organization, and we are set to join as a town. This will allow us to showcase public pollinator gardens and potentially run a campaign for creating new ones. We can also get butterfly posts wholesale to sell as a fundraiser. Pollinator-pathway.org is an excellent resource.

8. Volunteers and Liaison Reports

a. Mr. Ponanski: The Conservation Commission and Land Trust are very active. The Land Trust's annual meeting was held last Saturday, with a focus on improving efforts this year. The Conservation Commission is addressing trail maintenance and working to open and maintain trails safely for public

enjoyment. There's a significant initiative to install a pavilion at the wetlands. Land Trust membership is growing and becoming more dynamic. Ms. Shaltiel commended Gary Wilson, a commissioner on the Conservation Commission, for his extensive native plantings.

11. Next Meeting
The next meeting will be held on July 15, 2025, at 7:00 PM.

12. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 AM following Tanya's motion and a second.