



**April 13, 2023**  
**7:15-8:30pm**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Ron Blumenfeld, Becky Bunnell, Kiersten Chou, Mary Hogue, Larry Kaley, Peter Kraus, Bill Leavy, Dustin Mandre, Jim Marren, Shawn O’Sullivan, Bob Wall

**Liaisons:** none

**Guests:** none

- **Meeting Minutes**
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- **Treasurer Report:** Ron Blumenfeld
  - Balance as of 4/11/2023 is **\$5,111.03**.  
The March balance was an incorrect entry by the Treasurer; it was not \$6,253.33, which was the Start of Year balance, but rather \$5,786.05. In the interim, SFTF reimbursed Emma Kaye \$175.00 for seven \$25 gift cards for participation in an energy survey and \$500.00 to the High School Scholarship Foundation of Fairfield (HSSFF) for two \$250 awards. ( $\$5,786.05 - \$675.00 = \$5,111.05$ )
- **Liaison Reports**
  - **Bike-Ped:** TBD
    - No report
  - **Solid Waste & Recycling Commission:** Misty Beyer
    - No report, see Food & Waste Committee report
  - **Fairfield Forestry Committee:** Mary Hogue
    - UI Tree Removal / Trimming
      - 8-10% of removals are being allowed by Tree Warden; reverting to tree trimming
      - Greenfield Hill (2022 list) 62% complete; Stratfield / Tunxis Hill for 2023 list
      - Canvassors finishing up Greenfield Hill and reprinting Tree Rights door hanger
    - Pollinator Pathway
      - All FPS 1st graders planted native plant seeds in “milk jug greenhouses” - **THANK YOU OLIVER NURSERIES** for the soil
      - Held three “milk jug greenhouse” native plant seed workshops at: Fairfield Woods, Pequot and Main Children’s Library - **THANK YOU OLIVER NURSERIES** for the soil
      - Ted Luchsinger and Mary Hogue continue to work with CT Audubon Society, Aspetuck Land Trust, CT Ornithological Society, Pollinator Pathway, Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University and others on [CT Lights Out programming](#) an

advocacy ([HB 6607 \(RAISED\) AN ACT CONCERNING THE NIGHTTIME LIGHTING OF STATE-OWNED BUILDINGS AT CERTAIN TIMES FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.](#))

- Ted Luchsinger did a walk through on Fairfield U campus with Environmental Studies professor and student to discuss student organic landcare project as well how to manage the overall campus; also discussed Dark Skies-compliant lighting
- Follow up meeting with facilities and Executive Director Stephanie Coakley at Pequot Library. The Library will begin having the lawn cut every two weeks instead of one and are planning 2 small pollinator gardens to begin the journey to sustainability. Facilities also repaired motion detectors and sensors on outdoor flood lights, they now default to off unless movement in the parking lot after 11 pm. Will continue advising on journey as Pollinator Pathway
- Tree Planting Program
  - Placing uniquely number tags on a trees planted through the Tree Planting Program to better able to track each tree - problems with replacement trees should be resolved
  - Meeting with Dr Samah Sembel 4/26 to continue evaluation data analysis work
  - 1720 Post Road Pocket Park has new walkway installed by DPW, planting should be commence soon - **THANK YOU OLIVER NURSERIES** for the landscape plan and discounted plants; **THANK YOU TUCKER FUND, SUSTAINABLE CT AND LOCAL MERCHANTS** for helping to fund this program most of all **THANK YOU TOM CORELL** for making this all happen!
  - Still waiting to get approval from Angelus Papageorge re: tree planting on school campuses
  - Town Arbor Day Ceremony 4/28 10am Tomlinson Middle School
- Outreach
  - 4/10 11am-3pm seed sowing / benefits of trees workshop at Fairfield Museum and History Center
  - Participating in FPS Zero Waste / Earth Month doing presentations on benefits of trees
  - Plans to have one article a month related to information pertinent to the month on trees / pollinator pathway efforts
- **Flood and Erosion Control Board:** Becky Bunnell
  - Still working on various resilience projects
  - Need to get Town alignment on an updated Master Plan and funding
- **Conservation / Inland Wetland Commissions:** Ted Luchsinger
  - Conservation Department to purchase some Weed Wrenches to assist with invasive removal in open spaces
  - 980 High Street, which was denied by Inland Wetland Commission was appealed to Superior Court
  - Updating info for all trails using Avenza software
  - Used billboard vinyl + goats to combat invasives are non-chemical ways to address invasive issue; citizens have voiced concern about use of chemicals in open space areas

- Blue bird and bat houses installed in open spaces, being monitored – some have inhabitants!
- Ash Creek Conservation Association (ACCA) presented on issues related to that open space areas
- Entrance signs to open spaces getting upgraded
- Looking into fundraising for open space
- Friends of Lake Mohegan (FOLM) will meet the 3rd Saturday of the month 11am-1pm with a rain date of the 3rd Sunday at the same time; mix of invasive removal, native planting, clean ups and educational presentations
- Updated Inland Waterways regulations approved by commission at 4/5/23 meeting with rider model for fee updates. Updated fee schedule, separate from the regulations, will make compliance much easier for the public to navigate. This is currently in review by DEEP for final approvals.
- **Mill River Wetland Committee:** Kiersten Chou
  - [Trivia Night](#) - funds go to scholarship program - April 27 at Hub and Spoke
  - Job Opening - Assistant Gear Manager <https://tinyurl.com/MRWCAstGearMgr2023>
  - Upcoming Walk and Talk sessions - come hear about our educational programs
    - April 29, 9:30am at Mill Hollow re: Biodiversity
    - May 13, 1pm at Ash Creek re: Estuary
- **PTA Council:** Meghann McKale
  - Compost
    - Trays are now being included in compost which greatly reduces bulk of solid waste but greatly increases bulk of compost - funding issue!
    - Schools composting: Mill Hill and Fairfield Ludlowe High School (all grades), Riverfield and Holland Hill (two grades with plans to expand); FLHS program is operated and funded by the student Eco Club!
    - Meghann McKale and Mary Hogue meeting with Dawn Carr, Food Services Director, about back of house composting on 4/20
  - Milk Carton Recycling: Dwight, McKinley Mill Hill, North Stratfield, Riverfield, Stratfield are currently recycling milk cartons; Sherman plans to start soon
  - Paper-only recycling in classrooms: Dwight, more to follow
  - Zero Waste / Earth Month: McKinley Mill Hill, Riverfield, Sherman, Stratfield having programming
  - Native Plant Gardens to support new pollinator curriculum need to be tested for lead by Health Department; most schools have an existing garden; all 1st graders planted native seeds in “milk jug greenhouses”
  - Communication
    - Weekly Green Tips going out to all PTAs and getting published on [SustainableFairfield.org](https://SustainableFairfield.org), Patch and NextDoor
    - FPS Director of Communications, Rachel Chappa, will be helping to get more information about sustainable activity in FPS out
    - FPS Superintendent, Mike Testani, said he would be sure to have a dedicated Sustainability webpage created and maintained - he felt this type of news often entices people to move to a town

- Meghann McKale and Mary Hogue presentation to Fairfield Board of Education Facilities Committee on 4/26 2pm
- 4/6 EV presentation and car show at Fairfield Warde with Daphne Dixon and Barry Kresch
- **Earth Day:** Larry Kaley, Mary Hogue
  - **Sat, 4/29, 10am-1pm Fairfield YMCA, 841 Old Post Road**
  - [Press Release](#) posted on Town website - **THANK YOU JIM MARREN!** and posted on social media - **THANK YOU RABAB HUSSAIN!** And posted on Town Facebook - **THANK YOU JACKIE BERTOLONE!** - **please help spread the word! Lots happening: *Four Events in One: Earth Day in Fairfield Will Celebrate Our Planet, "Green" Vehicles, Safe Biking and Healthy Kids***
  - Banner at Sherman Green going up this Monday for two weeks: 4/17-5/1
  - Thu, 4/26 5:30-8pm Canal Dock Boathouse, 475 Long Wharf Drive, New Haven "Central Coast YMCA Beacons of Light In Our Community" is honoring Larry Kaley and Mary Hogue for the work with the Y on collaborating on Fairfield's Earth Day Celebration and Y's National Healthy Kids day for several years - Larry's brainchild
- **Reports for Sub-Committees**
  - **Energy & Built Environment:** Bob Wall
    - Applied for Community Partnership Initiative grant to support Heat Smart campaign to assist low-income households; waiting to hear back from UI
    - Joined Equity Committee members for a brainstorming session on Heat Smart campaign with Sustainable CT Equity Coach, Denise Page
    - Resolved ongoing discrepancies in solar data for Portfolio Manager energy benchmarking
    - Followed up with CAO, Tom Bremer, regarding Fairfield's plans to use \$122K Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program from the federal government; advised that SFTF was willing to help with planned use of such funds
    - Addressed editorial comments on Renewable Energy and Sustainable Homes modules for Sustainability Plan
  - **Transportation:** Daphne Dixon
  - **Food & Waste:** Becky Bunnell
    - **Recycling and Waste Actions:**
      - Glass Recycling pilot– No update
      - Food waste program – There will be a 40% off promotion on the cost of Compost kits for Earth Day ( month of April). These will be promoted at the Earth day event at the Y, at plant sales and at the Southport school. We will need to assemble more kits over the coming weeks.
      - OOPS stickers and Clean the Stream – There was a discussion that after almost a year, many of the haulers are still not putting the stickers on the Bins. There was a suggestion to do a monthly dedicated focus on social media on the key sources of contamination – so May can be NO PLASTIC BAG month, June, only recycle plastics 1 and 2 months, etc. There was also a suggestion for SFTF to write a formal request to the SWR department and commission to start the OOPS

program and use the Alcohol mini funds to hire people to go with the haulers on their routes and place OOPs stickers.

- Mattress recycling event for spring – May 6<sup>th</sup> 8:30 – 12:30. Bob will work with the communications team to get on Brenda’s newsletter and social media . We will also request a flier be placed at the transfer station as well as promotions on Earth Day.
- Seminars on recycling and composting – We are scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at Fairfield Woods and have requests out to Audubon and Pequot.
- School recycling initiatives / Green team - The School Green teams are applying for a grant from Sustainable CT to expand the Food Waste pick up. They are also exploring adding sharing tables and reinstating Food Rescue pick-ups. The challenge will be to make this cost effective on an ongoing basis. They are also working with the School administration to make one of the School Website headers `` Sustainability” as a robust sustainability focus is attractive to prospective parents choosing a school system.
- Discount composter program - We will put up a flier at the Earth Day event and promote on social media.
- Sustainable CT grant - The Green teams (Sustainability VP of the PTA council) will be applying for a grant to expand school composting. We are also exploring the option of working with CET to help apply for a USDA grant to expand composting through METROCOG.

■ **Food Actions:**

- Farmers market and sustainable food options outreach – We have reached out to Parks and Rec (who now run the Sherman Green farmers Market) to explore the option of a one year trial to take SNAP (food stamps)
- Flash Food - Stop and Shop is rolling out an app that helps reduce food waste upfront by offering large discounts on food nearing its expiration date. We will start to promote on social media.
- Refill program – We are exploring a program to reduce the use of Single use coffee cups at local coffee shops called Refill not landfill. This has been rolled out successfully in surrounding towns.
- Brown Paper bags at Grocery stores – After speaking with the manager of Trader Joes, we have decided to look into getting a town ordinance to assess a fee for all paper bags. This has been done successfully in Stamford, so we are reaching out to get the language of the Stamford ordinance. Paper is very resource-heavy to produce: “Manufacturing a paper bag takes about four times as much energy as it takes to produce a plastic bag, plus the chemicals and fertilizers used in producing paper bags create additional harm to the environment.

○ **Natural Environment:** Mary Hogue

■ Sustainable CT

- Documentation of ALL actions that can be used for Sustainable CT re-certification in 2024 as they are implemented – **need to look back at 2022 for those actions – progress updates? (THIS PERTAINS TO ALL OF SFTF)**
- Working on creating a Checklist doc for each action to make documentation requires more clear and easy to track, see this [Google Form](#) as an example.

Sample is of planting a Pollinator Pathway garden, [3.12.1 Enhance Pollinator Pathways](#) – **please test this out and let Mary know of changes required.**

- Sustainability Plan Updates
  - Peter: Forest and Trees –first draft to Forestry Committee 4/12
  - Ted & Amanda: Sustainable Landscaping – with Ron, needs minor editing
  - Shawn: Parks and Open Spaces - ?
  - Mary & Larry: Wetlands and Marshes, updated, need to check with town/state staff to confirm
- **Equity:** Emma Kaye & Shawn O’Sullivan
  - Committee met with equity coach from Sustainable CT to discuss HeatSmart campaign
  - Survey to be updated and distributed more widely while encouraging open discussion with and listening to residents at public locations (parks, playgrounds, laundromats, houses of worship) and through new connections (contractors, food stamp recipients, Operation Fuel, 8-30G landlords, PTOs and reduced lunch families, neighborhood associations, state reps)
  - Event at First Church Congregational: Deeper Than the Skin will be at First Church Congregational in Wakeman Hall on Saturday, April 15th at 8 pm. Promo video can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/580A46iYgek> - please attend and invite others. Link for tickets: <https://givingtools.com/give/3668> - an anonymous donor is underwriting tickets for those unable to pay.
  - Steve Bogan and Doug Bunnell from the Racial Equity and Justice also joined us for several meetings and will be continuing on
- **Communication & Outreach**
  - Press release for Earth Day+ out today on Town website, shorter version will be in Brenda’s newsletter this week
  - Earth Day+ promoted on social
  - Promotion for Mattress Recycling to start soon
- **Advocacy**
  - Letter to Legislators in **SUPPORT** for HB **6607** AN ACT CONCERNING THE NIGHTTIME LIGHTING OF STATE-OWNED BUILDINGS AT CERTAIN TIMES FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS - requires state-owned and leased buildings to shut off lights during peak migration season, from March 15 to May 31 and from August 15 to November 15 between the hours of 11pm to 6am.
- **Sustainability Plan:** Bob Wall
  - Updates to Sustainability Plan - most have drafts submitted and/or fully reviewed
- **Key Upcoming Dates**
  - 4/20, 6:30-8pm, Osborn Hill School 760 Stillson Avenue, [Town Plan of Conservation and Development \(POCD\) public meeting](#)
  - 4/22, 53rd (Official) Earth Day
  - 4/24, 12:30-1:30pm, Fairfield Rotary, 74 Beach Road, Pollinator Pathway Presentation by Mary Hogue (All are welcome, \$8 for Lunch, Please contact [Barbara Welles](#) if you plan to attend)

- Thu, 4/26 5:30-8pm Canal Dock Boathouse, 475 Long Wharf Drive, New Haven “[Central Coast YMCA Beacons of Light In Our Community](#)” - Larry Kaley and Mary Hogue are honorees; \$50pp
  - 4/28, Arbor Day; 10am Town Official Arbor Day Ceremony at Tomlinson Middle School, 200 Unquowa Road
  - 4/29, 10am-1pm Fairfield YMCA, 841 Old Post Road, [Fairfield’s Earth Day Celebration](#), [National Healthy Kids Day](#), [National Drive Electric Earth Day](#) and Bike Rodeo
  - 5/1, 12:30-1:30pm, Fairfield Rotary, 74 Beach Road, Benefits of Trees Presentation by Ryan Romeo (All are welcome, \$8 for Lunch, Please contact [Barbara Welles](#) if you plan to attend)
  - 5/6, 8:30am-12:30pm Veteran’s Park, 801 Reef Road (across from Rod Highway) [Fairfield Spring 2023 Mattress Drop-off Day](#)
  - 5/8, 5:30pm, Fairfield Woods Library, 1147 Fairfield Woods Road, [Composting Awareness Workshop](#)
  - 5/20 11am Fairfield Museum and History Center, 370 Beach Road, [Fairfield Rotary Club Day of Service Ceremony](#)
  - 5/20, noon-2pm, Fairfield Grange #133, 1873 Hillside Road, [Pollinator Pathway Presentation](#), [“Learn how to plant a pollinator garden” & Luncheon](#); All are welcome, Reservations required
  - 6/3 9am-1pm Fairfield Warde High School, 755 Melville Avenue, [Sustainable Warde Club sponsored Redeemable Bottle Drive](#)
- **Old Business**
  - **New Business**