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TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD

Conservation, Energy & Environment Committee (CEEC)

There was a meeting for the above referenced committee held on Thursday, May 14, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting style. The in-person meeting location was Bloomfield Town Hall – Wintonbury Room/Conference Room 5, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT, and the virtual location was via Zoom.

Committee Members present were: *In-Person*—Paula Jones, Chair; Nancy Bowden; Robert Dickinson; Claudia Gwardyak; David Hager; *and via Zoom*—Brenda Watson (left at 5:12 p.m.); Jessica White

Committee Members absent were: Charlie Nevers; Zellene Sandler

Also present were: *In-person*—Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use; Nicholas Gabuzda, Environmental Planner; Lynn Weisel, Recording Secretary; and *via Zoom*—Lea Chayes; Lorenzo Jones (joined at 5:00 p.m.); Cori Presutti (joined at 4:40 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

All were amenable to the agenda as written.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Ms. Gwardyak and seconded by Ms. Watson to approve the meeting minutes from 4/9/26.

Mr. Dickinson requested that his public comment be updated to state "not to restrict solar only in industrial areas."

The committee voted unanimously to approve the 4/9/26 meeting minutes as amended.

Town Planner & Environmental Planner Report/s

Town Planner Report

Mr. Colman, Director of Building & Land Use, shared updates from his department. Key items included:

- *Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)*: TPZ will receive final drafts of the POCD for review at their meeting next Thursday. If approved for release, the POCD will be referred to Town Council and Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) for feedback. With this timeline, an adoption date of early August would be possible.

- *Town Center Economic Development*: The Town is submitting a revised Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant application, due in June.

- *Developments in Town*: First Cathedral is starting the process for zoning changes; 800 Cottage Grove Road project has completed its tax assessment process; and the building official is working with Popeye's to encourage the project along.

Mr. Colman reported that the budget had been adopted, and spoke briefly to the impact on staff and possible referendum.

There was discussion about the POCD, and it was reported that CEEC will be able to review the document after TPZ approves its release. It will also be posted on the Town website, and TPZ will hold another public hearing prior to final adoption.

The impact of the POCD future land use map in guiding zoning decisions, particularly for potential development along Cottage Grove Road, was highlighted.

Environmental Planner Report

Mr. Gabuzda, Environmental Planner, provided the following updates: Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) will be discussing regulations at their June meeting; Mr. Gabuzda is working with the Park River Watershed, and had a meeting with them and University of Hartford to discuss ways to manage land owned by UHart in Bloomfield where the Park River runs; and Mr. Gabuzda joined the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Recreation Task Force, a group aimed at promoting recreational opportunities along the Connecticut River watershed.

Old Business

Landscape Zoning Regulations & Ordinances (revising Tree Ordinance) - Update

Mr. Gabuzda reported that the Landscaping Zoning Regulation (6.1.C) has been revised, and is awaiting feedback from the Tree Warden. Mr. Gabuzda requested feedback from CEEC prior to the anticipated review by TPZ on 5/28/26.

There was a discussion of trees in the right-of-way, along with the ability of homeowners to remove trees on their property.

Sustainable CT Recertification - Update

Mr. Gabuzda reported that the Sustainable CT recertification application was submitted last month, with a response anticipated in June.

He noted that Sustainable CT invited Bloomfield, as one of fourteen towns, to the State Capitol to talk with legislators. Sustainable CT has also reached out to Mr. Gabuzda for support on a workshop on how to write equity and inclusivity statements, as they were impressed with Bloomfield's 2025 resolution affirming Bloomfield as a welcoming and inclusive community.

Ms. Jones highlighted the Sustainable CT community match program, and noted that the Farmer's Market was successful in a $6,000 match for coupons to provide fresh food to residents.

Extreme Heat – Update

Ms. Gwardyak proposed reaching out to the Korey Stringer Institute at UConn and reporting back to the committee.

Ms. Bowden endorsed this, and reported putting work on policies and protocols on hold in the current municipal environment. She recommended using the slides from the previous webinar with key groups, including a potential lunch and learn event with the Senior Center.

The committee and staff liaison were in favor of moving forward as proposed by Ms. Gwardyak and Ms. Bowden.

Agricultural Zone - Update

Mr. Gabuzda reported that this item is on the top of his list. Mr. Colman reported that an agricultural zone is included in the POCD draft.

Solar Regulations - Update

Mr. Gabuzda reported that no changes have been made to the proposed solar regulations since they were last reviewed in March. He has received additional comments, which will be discussed at the 5/28/26 TPZ meeting with a public hearing.

There was a discussion on streamlining solar permitting. Ms. Jones noted that a bill passed in the state legislature related to balcony solar in an effort to keep renewable energy sources moving forward in the current federal environment.

Revision of Chicken Regulations – Update

Mr. Gabuzda summarized revisions made to the regulations, including a decrease in the required buffer, and a clarification that the regulations are for small-scale chicken owners, not for commercial chicken operations. Ms. Jones will forward the proposed revisions to the committee.

New Business

"Plastic Free July" daily activity calendar - potential action (link on CEEC webpage)

Ms. Jones reported that Mr. Brad Huskinson proposed a "Plastic Free July," with a daily event calendar.

It was moved by Ms. Gwardyak, seconded by Mr. Hager, and approved unanimously to support "Plastic Free July" by putting a link on the CEEC website.

Other

There were no other items at this time.

Announcements/Updates/Upcoming Events from the Committee

Shred Day & Small Electronics Recycling (Saturday, May 30, 9 – 12:00, BHS)

Ms. Jones reported on the new Shred Day date of May 30, and requested volunteers. Mr. Gwardyak and Mr. Hager volunteered.

"The Story of Plastic" Screening & Panel Discussion (with BPL, September 15, 6 – 8 pm)

Ms. Jones reminded the committee about this upcoming event.

Tree City USA & Trees for Bloomfield: Arbor Day Celebration Recap

Ms. Jones reported on the Arbor Day celebration in honor of David Mann. Sixty people attended, including a representative from DEEP.

Ms. Jones shared about a project proposed by a Bloomfield resident to create a riparian buffer at Maplewood Park, with potential funding from Farmington River Watershed Association. The plan would be to make it a refuge, with the potential for biology research. The connection with pollinator pathways was also mentioned.

Simsbury Sustainability Fair Recap

Ms. Jones reported the Sustainability Fair was successful, with over 1200 people attending. Mr. Gabuzda created maps to show where solar exists in Bloomfield, Avon, and Simsbury, and these maps were shared with the committee. He noted that around one out of ten properties in Bloomfield have solar. Ms. Gwardyak offered to write an article about this for the Bloomfield Messenger.

There was a question about solar efficacy and its impact on other fuel sources. People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE) was highlighted as a potential resource for data and information.

Legislative Session Summary

Ms. Jones highlighted key updates from the state legislative session including: the passage of some form of the solar bill; the passage of a no excuse absentee voting bill; and the passage of no intentional release of balloons bill. She noted that both the bottle bill and riparian bill will likely come up again in the future.

Ms. Jones reported that state representatives recommended that residents and advocates work at the municipal level and strengthen their relationships with local representatives as a means to making change.

Other

There were no other items at this time.

Public Comment

Mr. Lorenzo spoke to the legislative session and noted that space was made for environmental bills by killing criminal justice bills. He noted that his organization takes human needs work as seriously as farm work, and highlighted that this issue uniquely impacts Bloomfield.

Ms. Jones recommended trying to get conversations going with groups and representatives early in the legislative session.

Adjournment

It was moved by Ms. Gwardyak, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

The complete meeting recording is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QcjsVAseeA