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TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD

Conservation, Energy & Environment Committee (CEEC)

There was a meeting for the above referenced committee held on Thursday, July 9, 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; *and via Zoom*— Brenda Watson

Committee Members absent were: David Hager; Charlie Nevers; Zellene Sandler; Jessica White

Also present were: *In-person*—Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use; Nicholas Gabuzda, Environmental Planner; Brad Huskinson; Lynn Weisel, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

All were amenable to adding an update on the nips program to the "Other" item under New Business.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Ms. Bowden, seconded by Ms. Gwardyak and Mr. Dickinson to approve the 6/9/26 special meeting minutes as written.

VOTE: AYE: Bowden, Dickinson, Gwardyak, Jones
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: Watson

The motion passed 4-0-1.

Overview by Brenda Watson (North Hartford Partnership) – Climate Resilience Hub Project

Ms. Watson, Executive Director of the North Hartford Partnership and CEEC member, presented on the Climate Resilience Hub Project at the Swift Factory in Hartford. (Full presentation attached).

The committee was congratulatory on the work being done, and noted the inspiration it brought for ideas in Bloomfield. CEEC requested a tour of the site, likely to occur in September. The importance of third spaces was highlighted, and the Swift Factory was noted as a good example of what to do with old buildings.

Town Planner & Environmental Planner Report/s

Town Planner Report

Mr. Colman, Director of Building & Land Use, provided the following updates:

- The Town Center project is working on a new RFQ/RFP for additional responses for a developer, with responses due in the fall.
- Staff is working to finalize the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) in the next ten days for TPZ to review in August. After TPZ review, the POCD will be referred to the Town Council, with an additional hearing likely. It is hoped that the POCD will receive final approval by the TPZ in September.
- Mr. Gabuzda will be making a presentation on Sustainable CT to the Town Council.
- A lot of development is happening in Town as evidence by the numbers from the department, including an almost 50% increase in revenue over what they projected for the budget.

There was a brief discussion on the status of the Wintonbury Mall. The Town has applied for a CIF grant, with an answer expected in September.

There was a question about a housing proposal on Woodland Ave., and Mr. Colman reported that there have been discussions, but the developer has not yet returned with a final proposal.

There was a question about the POCD, and when the clock for the next POCD would start. Mr. Colman believed that the clock for the next POCD starts once the in-progress POCD is approved. Mr. Gabuzda highlighted that updates to the POCD can be made at any time, and do not have to wait until the 10-year review of the POCD.

Environmental Planner Report

Mr. Gabuzda deferred his report, noting the majority of his updates would be highlighted in Old Business.

Old Business

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

Mr. Gabuzda reported that the landscape zoning updates have been shared with CEEC and TPZ, and will be heard by TPZ at an upcoming meeting (date to be determined). The tree ordinance is being reviewed by DPW and Finance Department staff, and will be sent to CEEC for review soon.

Ms. Jones reminded the committee that Mr. Gabuzda had sent CEEC the most updated version of the regulations and policies, with an invitation to submit comments, and that members thought the updates looked good.

Sustainable CT – Update

Mr. Gabuzda reported that the Town had received recognition in the Messenger and Sustainable CT website for the recent recertification. He highlighted that he will be giving a presentation to the Town Council on Sustainable CT.

He is working on a community survey to gain additional input for future Sustainable CT actions. The survey will need to go to Town Council for approval, but he will send it to CEEC for input first. He also highlighted that future Sustainable CT actions would reflect input from CEEC priorities.

Extreme Heat – Update

Ms. Gwardyak reported that she wrote up extreme heat resources, and sent to the Messenger for publication.

Ms. Bowden reported that the extreme heat workgroup is focusing on outreach. Upcoming actions include: trying to set-up a lunch and learn at the Senior Center; trying to get an article in the Senior Center's Silver Scoop; getting information into Town of Bloomfield eNews and flyers; and seeing if Social Services will distribute paper flyers at the food bank.

Additionally, Ms. Bowden reported:

- She contacted the Korey Stringer Institute, but has not heard back.
- She reached out to the West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District to see if they have materials that can be used in outreach.
- The workgroup is also learning more about the Town's emergency alert system to ensure that all residents are connected in some way.

Solar in Bloomfield (Status of Current Projects)

Mr. Gabuzda provided an update on the status of solar projects on municipal buildings in Town based on his conversation with Glen Garrity, DPW Interim Director. There is an agreement for solar panels on Prosser Library, with work to begin in Fall 2027. There are also plans for solar on 330 Park Ave. and a design is under review.

There was a question on the power purchase agreement numbers—how much the Town would save and how much energy would be sent back to the grid. Mr. Gabuzda was not sure of the exact details, but offered to send out the purchase agreement to those interested.

The committee discussed the importance of sharing the progress that is being made on sustainability in Town. Ms. Jones highlighted the recent maps that Mr. Gabuzda created that illustrate the solar installations in Bloomfield, Simsbury, and Avon. Mr. Gabuzda noted that out of the three towns, Bloomfield had the highest percentage of solar.

Artificial Turf

Ms. Jones provided an update on artificial turf in Town. She reminded the committee that CEEC passed a resolution restricting future use of artificial turf that was supported by the Parks & Recreation Committee. At the time, the Rockwell Park Committee requested additional information before they made a recommendation.

Mr. Colman noted that there are countervailing positions on the issue. He reported that the Rockwell Park project is coming to TPZ to review the first phase of development, while the turf is in the not-yet-funded second phase of development. It was noted that the Rockwell Park master plan may be included in the information to TPZ. The application will be reviewed by TPZ at their 8/27 meeting.

Additionally, it was noted that there have been discussions about the Bloomfield High School athletic field needing to be re-turfed, but the status of the conversation was unknown. It was highlighted that his decision would be the purview of the Board of Education.

Pesticide Use in Town

The group would like to collect concerns from interested groups on this issue, such as BBC and the Pollinator Pathway group. The committee also discussed the need to reconnect with DPW to ensure that current pesticide use practices were understood.

The complexity of landscapes within Town was noted, and Mr. Colman highlighted that this was part of the reason DPW asked for funding for a horticulturalist during budget season.

Ms. Bowden suggested reaching out to Harrington Landscaping for feedback and possible shortcuts, as well as to Lori Brown of the CT League of Conservation Voters for ideas on the top chemicals to focus on.

New Business

Waste Reduction Initiatives – Potential Resolutions and/or Ordinances

Mr. Huskinson thanked CEEC for their endorsement of "Plastic Free July," and noted that it is an annual event. He reported on the upcoming "Story of Plastic" film screening with BPL and shared that Katharine Owens will be a speaker during the discussion after the film.

Mr. Huskinson reported on the use of disposable cutlery at Bloomfield Public Schools. He has found a non-profit that will subsidize the conversion from plastic to stainless steel, as well as potential funding for commercial dishwashers. He has had a brief discussion with the BPS food services manager.

Mr. Huskinson shared information on "Skip the Stuff" law, that would require food service businesses to provide single-use plastic items upon request only. Other towns in Connecticut have passed similar laws, and Mr. Huskinson recommended that Bloomfield pass this regulation.

There was a brief mention of the composting pilot at Bloomfield High School, but it was noted that this had stopped for a variety of reasons.

CEEC 2027 FY Budget – Discussion

Ms. Jones detailed the CEEC budget, with comparisons to previous years. The increase in cost for shred days was noted, as was the new cost for the Trees for Bloomfield photo contest photo matting and mounting. There will also be some funding for speaker stipends.

Ms. Bowden highlighted the option and potential for CEEC to apply for grant funding for specific projects. Ms. Jones noted that this had been done before with Trees for Bloomfield.

Cancellation of August 13, 2026 Meeting

Ms. Jones reported that the August CEEC meeting historically has been cancelled in lieu of a committee potluck, but that it would remain on the calendar for now in case the need for the meeting arose.

Other

Mr. Gabuzda provided information on the nips program, created by the CT bottle bill, in which customers pay a five-cent fee when purchasing the small alcohol nips bottles. The fee money is received by the town in which the nips were sold, and must be used for reducing solid waste or reducing the impact of litter.

Bloomfield had previously used these funds for an anti-litter campaign. Mr. Gabuzda reported that the Bloomfield fund had $12,800 as of October 2025, and noted that the funds do not expire or go away. He has some ideas for use for the funds and asked the committee to send him any ideas they may have.

Announcements/Updates/Upcoming Events from the Committee

"Plastic Free July" daily activity calendar

There was no additional discussion on this item.

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

There was no additional discussion on this item.

Trees for Bloomfield/Tree City USA – Photo Contest

There was no additional discussion on this item.

Other

There were no other items.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

It was moved by Ms. Gwardyak, seconded by Ms. Watson and Mr. Dickinson, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

The complete meeting recording is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siYFbTtv67k