Minutes not yet approved.
Approval and any edits to be made in succeeding minutes.

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TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD

Conservation, Energy & Environment Committee (CEEC)

There was a meeting for the above referenced committee held on Thursday, October 8, 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*: Jessica White

Committee Members absent were: Charlie Nevers; Zellene Sandler; Brenda Watson

Also present were: *In-person*—Nicholas Gabuzda, Environmental Planner; Brad Huskinson; Lynn Weisel, Recording Secretary; *and via Zoom*—Don Weigt (joined at 5:19 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Jones noted the addition of the approval of the 7/9/26 meeting minutes. All were amenable to this addition.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Hager, seconded by Ms. Gwardyak, and voted unanimously to approve the 7/9/26 meeting minutes as written.

It was moved by Mr. Hager and seconded by Mr. Dickinson to approve the 9/10/26 meeting minutes.

Ms. Jones had the following edit to the minutes on page three under the "Announcements" section for "'The Story of Plastic'" to read, "... additional information on plastics and CEEC projects (including Trees for Bloomfield) at the event."

The 9/10/26 minutes as edited were approved unanimously.

Town Planner & Environmental Planner Report/s

The Town Planner was not present so there was no Town Planner report.

Environmental Planner Report

Highlights from Mr. Gabuzda's report included:

- The Town applied for a DEEP urban forestry resilience grant, and anticipates hearing back in mid-October.
- The Town is working with the Arbor Day Foundation to bring corporate volunteers to LaSalette Park. The company approached for the project decided not to participate this fall, but is open to potentially volunteering in the spring.
- The Town is working on the CT Department of Agriculture CT Grown for Kids grant with the Board of Education and Slow Poke Farm in Bloomfield.

- The Town is working on a sign to recognize Seabury for their donation of conservation land to Bloomfield, known as Seabury Conservation Area, at 191 Wintonbury Ave.

There was a question about the status of the recycling facility on Mucko Road. Mr. Gabuzda reported that the facility filed for a special permit and site plan renewal. They received the special permit, which needs to be filed annually, but did not need to refile for the site plan renewal, as their current site plan does not expire until 2034.

There was an inquiry as to why the Town was denied twice for a CIF grant for the Town Center. Mr. Gabuzda was not sure, and referred inquiries to Mr. Colman.

There was a robust discussion on the POCD. Mr. Hager recommended using a different cover picture, and suggested using a picture of Town Hall or Prosser Library instead.

There was a conversation about the strategies in the POCD that list CEEC with assignments and action items. One example highlighted was the natural resources section that lists CEEC as the leading entity in the development of a farmland preservation program. Mr. Hager noted the importance of CEEC being aware of their responsibilities in the POCD.

Ms. Jones reported that in some instances where she saw CEEC listed as the responsible party that she suggested other entities that she thought would be better suited to manage the action item. Additionally, she highlighted that during yearly priority-setting, CEEC can look at the POCD and Sustainable CT to make sure that items from each are incorporated into CEEC's priorities. She emphasized that in order for CEEC to be the lead entity for some items, CEEC will need Town support, including from the Environmental Planner, and direction/clarity on what is meant by some of the items.

There was a discussion on the role of CEEC, and Ms. Jones noted that CEEC's inclusion in the POCD speaks to the effectiveness of CEEC over the years.

Ms. Bowden highlighted farmland and farm policy, noting that the best way to establish policy was to form an agricultural commission. She referenced previous comments that the Town may not want more committees, and noted that this may be why CEEC was tasked with certain items in the POCD. She recommended that an agricultural commission still be considered.

Old Business

Sustainable CT

Mr. Gabuzda reminded the committee that the Town received bronze Sustainable CT certification. The official awards ceremony will be in November and all are welcome. He reported that the Town is a little over halfway to having enough points for silver certification, and there was discussion on a variety of items that could count towards certification.

Extreme Heat – Updates

Ms. Bowden reported that the subcommittee was focusing on two items—a presentation for Senior Services using the video and slides from their previous presentation with the library; and a book discussion in collaboration with the library during Earth Month (April) on the book, "The Heat will Kill you First."

She noted that she has reached out to the Health District and to the Korey Stringer Institute but has not yet heard back. The subcommittee would also like to utilize the Town's eNews to send out information on extreme heat.

Artificial Turf – Updates

Mr. Gabuzda reported that his department has been charged by the Town Manager with a turf analysis looking at five main factors—need, usability/use, health, environmental factors, and finances—on artificial and natural turf. Ms. Jones noted that she emailed information on turf from Beyond Plastics as a data point.

Agricultural Policies and Support

Mr. Gabuzda has developed an approach for gathering data on agriculture in Bloomfield, and has a one-pager that he will send to the committee. Ms. Jones noted that this item will remain on the agenda.

Ms. Bowden inquired about chicken keeping regulation updates. Mr. Gabuzda noted that there are not any new updates, but that chicken keeping regulations should be considered with agricultural policies to make sure that the two don't contradict each other.

Community Interests (Plastics, Pesticides, Rodenticides, Bird Feeder/Bear Considerations)

Ms. Jones reminded the committee that this is a running list and that every item may not be discussed at each meeting.

- *Plastics*
  Mr. Huskinson brought up "Skip the Stuff" laws, noting that ways to incentivize business participation was discussed at the previous meeting. He asked if there was a way to engage the Chamber of Commerce to find out what would motivate businesses to participate. Mr. Hager suggested that champions of "Skip the Stuff" are needed in each sector. Ms. Gwardyak offered to brainstorm ideas with Mr. Huskinson.

  There was a brief discussion regarding plastic bag store drop-off and where the plastic bags go.

  Mr. Gabuzda reported on his meeting with Bloomfield Public Schools Superintendent and Food Service Director. They agreed to do a trial run with reusable utensils at one school, Carmen Arace Middle School, as this school has a dishwasher. Mr. Gabuzda suggested using money from the nips fund to support the purchase of reusable utensils. Mr. Huskinson recommended that Mr. Gabuzda look into a subsidy from Plastic Free America which provides grants for reusable utensils to schools that currently use disposable plastic utensils.

- *Pesticides*
  Ms. Jones noted that this item was a placeholder, and that the committee hopes to do research on pesticides with a local company.

- *Rodenticides*
  Ms. Jones reported that there might be an opportunity for advocacy during the legislative session. She highlighted that the Town does not use bait boxes, but thought one school might be. Next

steps include determining what is driving the use of bait boxes.

- *Bear & Bird Feeders*
  Ms. Jones suggested asking animal control to approach residents with problematic practices with bird feeders, as it is a public safety concern with attracting bears. She offered this approach as an option if the practice with bird feeders is not a widespread problem, rather than creating an ordinance. She will bring this up at the Town Council Public Health subcommittee meeting.

New Business

Shred Day

Shred Day & Electronics Recycling will be held Saturday, 11/14/26 from 9 a.m. – Noon at Bloomfield High School, with the same set-up as previous years. Volunteers are needed, and Ms. Gwardyak volunteered.

Landscape Ordinance Updates

Mr. Gabuzda reported that he is still in the research phase, and is looking at how the landscape ordinance could incorporate other topics, to include all items on a property. He noted this could be a way to include other items previously discussed, such as pesticides, rodenticides, and pollinator pathways.

He reported that the tree ordinance will be heard by the public soon.

Other

There were no other items at this time.

Announcements/Updates/Upcoming Events from the Committee

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

Mr. Huskinson reported on the film screening and panel discussion, and noted the event was successful due to the committee's support. He suggested having a similar annual event each September, and noted that for the future he would choose a shorter film and allow more time for discussion. He reported that the event speaker, Katherine Owens, is a former Bloomfield resident and would like to participate again in the future.

Trees for Bloomfield/Tree City USA – Photo Contest

The Trees for Bloomfield photo contest ends October 22. Ms. Jones encouraged people to enter.

Other

There were no other items.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Hager, seconded by Mr. Dickinson, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

The complete meeting recording is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBqUs1L9E5Y