Sustainability Committee

Regular Meeting (Remote)
August 6, 2026 - 6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

Members Present: Jami Lewchik, Chair; Bayard Faithfull, Vice Chair; Lydia Tedone; Brian Burkhart

Other Attendees: Joe Daly, Recycling Committee Ex-Officio; Nicholas Criscitelli, Planning Commission Ex-Officio; Franklyn Barrueco, Management Specialist; Marc Nelson, Town Manager; Tom Roy, Director of Public Works/Town Engineer/Tree Warden

Chair Lewchik called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

Approve July 9, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Tedone moved to approve the minutes as presented. Chair Lewchik seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Latimer Lane Elementary School and Simsbury High School Solar Power Purchase Agreements Update

Director Roy informed the Committee that the Town is under contract with Greenskies for a solar array at Latimer Lane and the High School. He outlined the terms of the agreement; at the High School, the Town will be paying 5 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity and at Latimer Lane, we will be paying 7.7 cents per kilowatt hour. By comparison, the Town shops around for electric rates yearly and the best recent (current) rate is 11 cents per kilowatt hour. These rates are set for the next twenty (20) years, which is notable with the safe assumption that electric rates will mostly increase over the coming years. At a conservative analysis and estimate of rates only going up 2.5 %, over the term of the agreement, the Town will be saving approximately $1.8 million.

Director Roy mentioned that the Town will not own the panels and is simply allowing Greenskies to install them. They are responsible for the maintenance and operation. As part of this agreement, the schools will have displays showing information related to the daily, weekly, and annual energy generation. Director Roy mentioned that both roofs are new and the solar panels help protect the roofs by stopping direct sunlight from drying and weakening the roof, making it susceptible to cracking and failure.

Vice Chair Faithfull asked about the different rates between the schools. Director Roy mentioned that this is most likely due to the difference in sizes of the solar array. The Latimer Lane array is about 40% of the size of the array at the High School. Vice Chair Faithfull asked about the construction timeline. Director Roy said this will start in 2027. Mr. Burkhart had questions regarding the size of the arrays. Director Roy mentioned the technical considerations in the Town's Request-For-Proposal.

Director Roy mentioned that the Town does not want to produce more electricity than needed in a year since the excess energy would be sold at commercial rate which is not profitable. Mr. Burkhart asked if the Town will be looking at the other elementary schools; Director Roy responded, since there is no current federal incentive, not currently. Ms. Tedone mentioned her support. Vice Chair Faithfull suggested reconvening for next steps regarding identifying the next locations for solar energy. Director Roy mentioned the Simsbury Performing Arts Center as a potential site. Mr. Criscitelli asked about harnessing the energy generated from one location to supply another location. Director Roy briefly discussed the concept of virtual metering. Mr. Criscitelli asked about utilizing parking lots. Director Roy described the potential benefits and consequences.

August Newsletter

Vice Chair Faithfull mentioned the newsletter topics in detail; specifically, the new farm, plug-in solar, and New England Smart Energy update. He mentioned that the September newsletter will highlight the new school solar arrays. Manager Nelson mentioned that a press release is being contemplated.

Sustainability Plan Part 2 (Waste) Progress and Next Steps

Chair Lewchik described the progress working on the Committee's goals in the Sustainability Plan and alignment with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). She mentioned looking at state regulations and proposals regarding food and municipal waste and recycling. Director Roy mentioned that Simsbury is a member of the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority working on addressing the state's waste crisis. He mentioned that the Town landfill has been taking food waste over the past year.

Chair Lewchik mentioned the conversations at the Board of Education regarding food waste collection through Simsbury Public Schools. Directory Roy mentioned that our Schools are below the threshold and globally, there is not enough food waste processing facilities. The school needs to be certain size and certain distance from a facility that can take it. The larger challenge is building capacity within the state. The Committee discussed gas cylinder recycling.

Chair Lewchik mentioned national producer responsibility laws and the free collection/disposal of batteries. The Committee discussed the Town's approach. Director Roy mentioned that the place you buy the battery would be the same place to properly dispose of it. He mentioned that the Town accepts smaller batteries at the three (3) scheduled Household Hazardous Waste Collection events

and the Town Landfill will waive the permit fee for electronics. Chair Lewchik and Director Roy discussed a newsletter topic, utilizing resources from the Department of Public Works Town website webpage, to inform the public where to properly dispose what.

New England Smart Energy (NESE) Update

Vice Chair Faithfull reported that the campaign is going extremely well. He collaborated with Simsbury Community Media to create a public service announcement video. NESE has tabled at Fitzgerald's Foods twice to distribute information, resources, and literature. The original mailing was sent out June 15th and the second mailing is scheduled for August 10th. As of today, one hundred twenty-nine (129) residents have reached out to NESE via their web portal. Forty-nine (49) home energy assessments have been scheduled. Twenty-five (25) energy audits have been completed already.

Vice Chair Faithfull described a potential future publicity campaign partnership with Efficient Lighting & Maintenance Inc. (EL&M) to engage with Simsbury businesses, offering free energy audits, in a similar manner that NESE did with residents and homeowners. The partnership is scheduled for Board of Selectmen consideration at their August 10th regular meeting. Mr. Burkhart asked about outreach to landlords since some business owners lease their space. Manager Nelson said that this is going to individuals who file paperwork for their businesses with the Tax and Assessor Offices. Mr. Criscitelli mentioned collaborating with the Economic Development Commission (EDC). Manager Nelson agreed, mentioned the Business Development Coordinator supporting the EDC, and creating the Town's first comprehensive Business Database. He said that outreach will first begin in Tariffville in conjunction with the Town's Tariffville Plan.

Chair(s) Report

Vice Chair Faithfull proposed a new Connecticut Greenbank campaign with Solar United Neighbors called the "Switch Together Program" to assist with getting solar energy for private residences. Similar to the NESE campaign, they send out mailings and set up a website page. They also organize a reverse auction. They gather homeowners and negotiate with solar contractors and ask them all to bid on solar pricing resulting in cost savings to the residents. He mentioned that he will send out additional information. Mr. Criscitelli asked if the solar installations were limited to rooftop or ground mount and Chair Lewchik asked if this covered businesses or residential. Faithfull mentioned that currently its exclusively rooftop and residential.

Chair Lewchik described Connecticut Greenbank's public private partnership with C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) a financing mechanism that allows commercial, industrial, and multi-family property owners to finance clean energy and energy efficiency upgrades without paying the full upfront cost. They host free educational sessions that cover low interest financing, the technical layouts, project application workflows, and answers questions. She suggested this being included with a future business roundtable in the Fall.

Ex-Officio Reports

Planning Commission - Mr. Criscitelli reported that the proposed car wash application has been referred from the Zoning Commission to the August 18th Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency regular meeting for a recommendation and the Zoning Commission will further consider this at their September 9th regular meeting. The car wash application left the Planning Commission with a neutral referral. In July, CT allowed plug-in solar, and he pondered on how to educate the public regarding this. Chair Lewchik if there was any consideration from a planning perspective on plug-in solar. Mr. Criscitelli said that the law doesn't afford municipalities any authority to further regulate; just that the solar needs to be on a dedicated outlet.

Economic Development Commission/Town Manager's Office - Manager Nelson reported that on August 10th the Selectmen are considering a reappointment and two (2) new appointments to the Economic Development Commission. He mentioned the Business Development Coordinator, Charter Revision Commission process, scheduled EL&M letter, and the new contact form the Information Technology Department created for the Sustainability Committee webpage. He also mentioned the Town's conversion to Microsoft 365, working with our auditors and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to improve the Town's cybersecurity, and adding links to the Sustainability Committee from the Board of Education Simsbury Community Calendar.

Specialist Barrueco reported that the Office posted the July 15th New England Smart Energy Home Energy Assessment Tracker on the Sustainability Committee webpage, Facebook page, and Town Facebook page, the Selectmen approved the Community Boost Grant application, we reviewed and approved the NESE remail letter, we forwarded the Building Department's solar permitting data to the Chairs, and sent out the August Newsletter on Facebook and the Town's website.

Adjourn
Vice Chair Faithfull moved to adjourn. Mr. Burkhart seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Franklyn Barrueco
Management Specialist