Sustainability Committee

Regular Meeting
October 1, 2026 - 6:30 P.M.
Board of Education Conference Room, Town Hall (3rd Floor)
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

MINUTES (AMENDED)

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

Other Attendees: Joe Daly, Recycling Committee Liaison; Nicholas Criscitelli, Planning Commission Liaison; Marc Nelson, Town Manager; Stephen O'Brien, Board of Education Liaison; Mark Scully, Former Sustainability Committee Member

Chair Lewchik called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Approve September 3, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Approve October Newsletter

Vice Chair Faithfull spoke about the new editorial process for approving the newsletter through the Committee and described the challenges. Chair Lewchik mentioned that a better process can be established. Vice Chair Faithfull stressed flexibility, described his outreach process, and outlined the newsletter procedure. Chair Lewchik further discussed the editorial process. The Committee discussed the newsletter being quarterly as opposed to monthly.

Manager Nelson mentioned the comments received regarding the newsletter and described his office's publicity efforts; persistent links on the Board of Education's and Simsbury Public Library's websites and physical copies distributed at the McLean Retirement Community. He mentioned how his office should not have editorial control of any aspect of the newsletter and that the Committee should be the final reviewer and approver. The Committee further discussed the process and agreed to suggest topics for future newsletters and approve the final draft. Mr.

Cristicelli suggested a Vermont program which incentivizes residents to transition from gasoline generators to leased battery powered ones.
Mr. Burkhart asked about using testimonials from businesses and residents detailing energy efficiency improvements they have done to their properties. The Committee discussed media coverage and testimonials further. Chair Lewchik suggested circulating a list of potential newsletter topics and identifying members to write and research the topics.

Discuss Annual Reports for the Boards of Selectmen and Education

Chair Lewchik provided a brief background on the report where the Committee describes it's activities over the past year and goals for the upcoming year. Chair Lewchik mentioned that the content for this report will be captured from the BOF Annual Report submission. Vice Chair Faithfull mentioned incorporating the EL&M letter.

Discuss FY2025-2026 Board of Finance Annual Report Submission

Chair Lewchik detailed the information contained in the annual report submission. She mentioned that the mission statement is from when the Committee was working on the rules of procedure and that section can be updated to the Selectmen-approved version. Chair Lewchik emphasized that this is a fiscal year report and highlighted activities the Committee undertook. The Committee discussed updating the mission statement reflecting that the Town achieved 130 Action Points toward the Sustainable CT designation. After a brief discussion, Vice Chair Faithfull moved to submit the report. Ms. Tedone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Manager Nelson suggested incorporating photos. Chair Lewchik agreed and asked the members to share photos to include with the submission.

Discuss Connecticut Green Bank Switch Together Program

Vice Chair Faithfull described that generally, the Town uses 160 million kilowatt hours of electricity each year, the Sustainability Plan sets a 2030 target of having renewable energy be half that use: 80 million kilowatt hours. Currently, roughly with the solar energy in place now, the Town has about 8 million kilowatt hours (1/10 of goal) generated by renewable energy (solar, geothermal, etc.). He described the three (3) buckets toward achieving this goal: business, residential, and municipal.

He encouraged a vote to approve this program and described how it's similar to the NESE program where individuals and businesses receive correspondence informing them of opportunities and resources. Vice Chair Faithfull elaborated on the specifics of the program; Solar United Neighbors (SUN) groups solar energy-interested parties together and negotiates with a contractor for bundled pricing that realizes savings around 25% to 30%. SUN handles all the outreach, promotion, and vetting process for contractors.

Mr. Burkhart mentioned that he thinks this program is a good idea and American solar energy is more costly than European solar energy. Residents receive the information and they decide themselves to move forward or not. Manager Nelson clarified that the program just allows the customer to engage with the one (1) vendor. Manager Nelson detailed potential procurement issues and a similar program he did in Poughkeepsie, NY related to consumer choice aggregation leading the city to bid for a vendor to supply electrical power to residents. He mentioned that the city vetted the vendors.

Manager Nelson mentioned the possible liability issues if the Town relies on a third party to vet the vendors and suggested the Town Attorney review this before being brought to the Selectmen. Mr. Cristicelli suggested connecting with CT Greenbank to understand their vetting process. The Committee discussed the Request-For-Proposals (RFP) process. Vice Chair Faithfull mentioned that he will investigate further. Mr. Burkhart spoke in favor of giving residents options. Manager Nelson suggested mentioning this program in the newsletter and building support for the initiative. The Committee discussed the Solarize Simsbury campaign, that was similar in nature, and involved vendors presenting their credentials and the Town selecting the vendor.

Discuss Solar Map+ Program

Vice Chair Faithfull mentioned that this is another CT Greenbank program. This program involves CT Greenbank looking at every municipal property, state properties in the municipalities jurisdiction, and low-income/affordable multi-family residential dwellings and offers suggestions regarding potential sites for solar energy. He suggested the Committee allow the program coordinators to speak at the next meeting and mentioned that the program would most likely start in the Spring.

Vice Chair Faithfull mentioned that CT Greenbank has safely stored thousands of solar panels. Any municipality can get these federally approved (30% off) solar panels but supply is limited and it's first-come first-serve. Chair Lewchick asked if there was an upfront cost to the Town and Vice Chair Faithfull confirmed that there is no upfront cost. The Committee further discussed having a presentation on this topic. Chair Lewchik suggested all members view the packet webinar materials, and pending no objection, asked that Solar Map+ provide a fifteen (15) minutes presentation at the next meeting. Vice Chair Faithfull said he will reach out to them.

Discuss Charging Smart Program

Mr. Scully spoke about this national program which is funded by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council. He spoke about the October 16th municipal readiness Electric Vehicle workshop. He mentioned that the Town may not have to change, just review, the zoning regulations to accommodate public charging. To reach Bronze status, the Town has to provide information on electric vehicles on the website, meet with our utility to talk about incentives. If Bronze status for Charging Smart is achieved; its 15 Action Points toward the Town's Sustainable CT designation. Chair Lewchik asked if this program is more related to residential vehicles and not the municipal

fleet and Mr. Scully confirmed that the fleet is one of the categories. Mr. Scully said that the workshop and program is designed to help municipalities understand how to get ready for electric vehicles.
After a brief discussion, Chair Lewchik moved to recommend the Town look into the Charging Smart program, attend the October 16th PACE EV Municipal Readiness Workshop, and further investigate if the program is the right fit for the Town. Ms. Tedone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New England Smart Energy (NESE) Update

Vice Chair Faithfull reiterated that the goal of the campaign was to get one hundred (100) home energy assessments completed and after only three and a half months, 110 assessments have been completed with 229 individuals reaching out to NESE.

Efficient Lighting & Maintenance Inc. (EL&M) Update

Vice Chair Faithfull described the approval process for the letter and the sensitive nature of the content when mentioning home based businesses and businesses that lease their space. He mentioned that the final language has been approved and that EL&M will be sending out the letters shortly.

Chair(s) Report

Chair Lewchik mentioned that the Town has received 130 Action Points from their partial recertification application toward the Sustainable CT designation. The Committee discussed that 2026 Bronze Certification is 200 Action Points. Chair Lewchik mentioned that projects and initiatives in progress could earn more Points. She further highlighted the results from the partial application. She mentioned the need to update the application with more information on the elementary school safe biking program. Chair Lewchik emphasized the importance of equity in our sustainability initiatives for achieving the designation and suggested further collaboration with the Town's DEI Council.

Ex-Officio Reports

Town Manager's Office: The Town is starting the FY28 budget process, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and long-term strategic planning. He mentioned the Charter Revision Commission accepting his recommendation to reduce the CIP from six (6) to five (5) years. He further described the former CIP process. He mentioned that his team is working on the capital process earlier this year and now showing the costs of delay.

The Town Manager reiterated that he is always interested in funding requests from the Town's boards and commissions. He reported that the Economic Development Commission has new leadership in the form of Chair Zemel. Vice Chair Faithfull asked about the Simsbury funding that

the Town's state delegation was able to secure. Manager Nelson elaborated on the projects thatwere funded for Eno Memorial Hall, the Simsbury Public Library's Teen Space, and Simsbury Farms Apple Barn. Manager Nelson recalled the history of the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center bandshell expansion project. He also elaborated on the Apple Barn project. Vice Chair Faithfull asked about the possibility of a clean energy HVAC system at Eno and the Apple Barn. Manager Nelson responded that the Committee could assist in this capacity; researching the costs. Chair Lewchik mentioned how the Sustainability Plan contains language that Town projects consider clean energy.

Board of Education: Mr. O'Brien mentioned that at the first meeting of the Board, they had a great presentation about the High School. He spoke about the students, their presentations, new department heads, and the progress on the ELA test scores, specifically math.

Planning Commission: Mr. Criscitelli mentioned that the Commission is waiting on the State's portal/plan regarding affordable housing and the Capitol Region Council of Government's assignment of the Town's goal for affordable housing units.

Recycling Committee: Mr. Daly mentioned that the Swap Shoppe is open in October; last month was its 25th season. He spoke about the Town's upcoming Hazardous Waste Collection event and the RFPs for the Town's municipal waste and removal services and transfer station. He mentioned that he is looking for the contracts for both and Manager Nelson said that he can provide that. Mr. Daly circulated a draft graphic for Simsbury waste bins that describes what items people can't throw away or recycle that would go on the inside of bins. He mentioned that he spoke to USA Waste about the sticker. The Committee further discussed outreach methods.

After a brief discussion, Chair Lewchik, pending no objection, moved to request USA Waste & Recycling equip future Simsbury recycling bins with an informational sticker detailing what does not go in the bins and facilitate a process to distribute stickers for bins that already exist.

Open Forum

Mr. Scully mentioned that there is a tour of the Housatonic Recovery Facility on October 26th.

Adjourn

Mr. Burkhart moved to adjourn. Ms. Tedone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:09 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Franklyn Barrueco
Management Specialist