

# Sustainable Litchfield Committee

## Regular Meeting

3:30 pm Tuesday, September 7, 2021

Litchfield Fire House

### MINUTES

- Call to Order 3:35pm; Present: Ben Buck, Dean Birdsall, Carrie Szwed, Diane Field, Margaret Hunt, Jeff Zullo, 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman Denise Raap, guests from Farmer's Alliance
- Public Requests/Comment: Barbara Putnam and Amy Dyer, from Farmers' Alliance, and lawyer Jim Stredonsky, joined us. Their goal is support farming and farmers in Litchfield, and therefore, they're working on having a "Right to Farm" ordinance adopted for the town. They handed out a draft of the ordinance. It's still open to revisions and updates. The purpose of the ordinance is for the town to have a policy statement that will support farmers and farming. About 30 of the 169 CT towns have adopted a Right to Farm ordinance. Goshen has one. This "movement" in Litchfield at least partially grew out of the two recent Farmers' Forums. Farmers' Alliance also went to the EDC and are meeting with other groups to spread the word and get input. After the ordinance is adopted, they plan to go to Planning and Zoning in the spring to make sure zoning laws make it as easy as possible for farmers to thrive. Margaret suggested Farmers' Alliance hold an education-centered town meeting, such as what the Facilities Review Committee did. This effort definitely applies to 5.3.1 – Develop agriculture-friendly practices. Also a good candidate Action to Optimize for Equity. The Alliance's specific "ask" is that we commit to this Ordinance as a Committee and that we come out to support it when it comes up for public comment and vote. Jeff suggested moving forward by bringing it up at the Board of Selectmen tonight in order to call Farmers Alliance to the next Board of Selectmen meeting. He said perhaps a petition to hold a public meeting is not even necessary if Board of Selectmen is inclined to just adopt it like they did the Equity Statement.
- Approve 8/17/21 Minutes. Jeff motioned to approve. Carrie seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Silver Application Summary – Sustainable CT will announce its final decisions for Silver in early November. There will be a recognition event in early December for towns that were approved for bronze and/or silver this year, to which we will be invited. Kudos to Ben and Margaret for taking us over the final stretch for Silver submission!
- Committee Vacancy
  - Committee needs – demonstrated self-starter, connection with local businesses, youthful; political affiliation does not necessarily matter
  - Candidate recommendations – Jason and Kimberly Wallengren – Diane will approach them. Priscilla Jeffrey – Margaret will approach her. Robertson Hartnett – Ben will approach him. Evan DeRoss – Margaret will approach him. We will find out what their interest level is and discuss who to narrow it down to at next meeting.
- Post Silver Strategies

- Public Launch and Brand Promotion (tabled for next meeting)
- Identifying strategic next action and champions – Jeff recommended we reach out to partners to see what THEY need or what projects they’d like us to focus on. Denise suggested this Committee perhaps be the entity to ensure that the Equity Statement is being actively used to make town decisions. Also wants to partner with SMART Task Force moving forward. We discussed an Education campaign to let townspeople know about the expense of waste to the town and taxpayers. SusLitch and Taskforce should have a meeting together to discuss this.
- Presentations to key partners (tabled for next meeting)
  - Town Departments
  - Schools
  - Others?
- Announcements – none
- New Business – 1) Sustainable States Network Community Energy Challenge - We have been invited to take part. 40 municipalities in nation as part of this network. John, Denise, and Jeff think the best part of the Challenge to take part in is Option 2: Energy Efficiency in Buildings. At present, our huge oil consumption in our town buildings negated our energy savings because these buildings are old and wasteful. Need to change this! We’ll make the SSNCEC a standing item on Committee meeting agendas, and perhaps we form need a sub-committee to address it as well.
 

2) Raz mentioned StoryMaps to Jeff, so Jeff brought it up to us. StoryMaps is a layer of ArcGIS that allows you to map key points in town. Perhaps we could put the “Litchfield Dawn to Dusk Highlights Tour” on StoryMaps to start, or use it for other purposes.

3) Carrie reported that a Bantam River Watershed Plan is coming down the pike, and that James Fischer from White Memorial is forming a Watershed Committee composed of local stakeholders and individuals/organizations that have an interest in the health of the watershed. He would like to possibly recruit someone from SusLitch to be a town representative on that Committee so that that person can be a liaison to convey the information back to Denise and other town officials. We agreed to invite Jamie as a guest under “Public Comment” to our next regular meeting in October.

4) As requested by Farmers’ Alliance, a motion was made by Margaret and seconded by Diane to officially make a statement saying that Sustainable Litchfield supports the “Right to Farm Ordinance” as presented. All in favor. Motion passed. Jeff will mention our support at the Board of Selectmen meeting tonight.
- Adjournment: 4:37 pm. Margaret motioned. Ben seconded. Motion approved.