

Sustainable Litchfield Committee

Regular Meeting

3:30 pm Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Litchfield Fire House

Draft Minutes

Present: Committee members Dean Birdsall, John Morosani, Margaret Hunt, James Keithan, Diane Field, Jeff Zullo, Ben Buck. Also 1st Selectman Denise Raap and member of the public James Fischer

- **Call to Order** at 3:33pm by Dean Birdsall
- **Public Requests/Comment**
 - Jamie Fischer – Research Director at White Memorial Conservation Center and Bantam Lake Protective Association coordinator with Litchfield

Fischer shared two reports generated by US EPA and State of CT DEEP that are still in draft form and provide much needed data about nutrients in the lake which can impact water quality, fish and wildlife, and recreational activities. He hopes that drafts will be finalized in month or two. Bantam Lake is listed as an impaired lake. The first document reports on data about the two sources of nutrients in lake. First source, watershed loading, refers to run off from watershed. Second source, internal loading, refers to nutrients rising up from lake bottom sediment. Surprising finding is that the Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLSLD) phosphorous and nitrogen discharge was main source: increased 65% over the covid year due to seasonal residents staying full time at their lake houses. In addition, a plan is being drafted that will address the problem and serve as toolkit to guide future projects. Once the draft of the two reports are finalized, BLPA will be able to apply for funds, create a watershed team, and educate lake and watershed residents about low impact sustainable development techniques. Zullo said WLSLD has been cited for nitrogen loading from DEEP for years, and he asked if DEEP is levying any fines on WLSLD for their nutrient over the last year. Fischer said he did not know of any fines, but that it was important that the Watershed Management Coalition that is being formed should include WLSLD. Zullo had further questions about tools to address the nutrient increase problem, but Fischer said none of the tools Zullo suggested would help much. Fischer thanked Litchfield for last year's \$10,000 which helped to pay for basic surveillance of water quality every two weeks, as well as permits and application of treatments. He is pleased that the town of Litchfield is at the table again in the coming year and budgeting \$10,000 again for the BLPA. Discussion followed of the complex and long-term effort needed to improve the water quality of Bantam Lake. Cyanobacteria has become major issue for water quality. Fischer noted that the copper sulfate treatments have side effects on certain fauna in the lake ecosystem. Fischer is looking for members to join the Watershed Coalition Team with the commitment to meet once or twice a year plus feedback. Fischer will send info about the proposed Watershed Coalition Team to Raap.

- **Approve 9/7/21 Minutes:** Correction: add “and Dean” to last sentence of bullet four of the minutes. Hunt moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Buck seconded. All in favor. James Keithan and John Morosani abstain.

- **Committee Vacancy**
 - Candidate reports from outreach: Field: Bantam Coffeeshop owners don't live in Litchfield. Hunt: Evan Dobos no response; Priscilla Jeffery on Arts Council so unavailable. Buck talked to Robertson Hartnett who is too busy. Continue to think about who might fill the vacancy.
- **Post Silver Strategies:** Birdsall reported that feedback from Sustainable CT is coming in on our Silver application actions.
 - **Public Launch and Brand Promotion**
 - Budget: Zullo said Selectman will vote tonight to transfer \$2,500 to Sustainable Litchfield budget
 - Table public launch plans. Tentatively move launch to Earth Day 2022.
 - **Identifying strategic next action and champions:** Discussion of how do to tackle involving partners? At beginning of committee, John Post and Jeff Zullo did one-on-one meetings to invite specific stakeholders in. Possible strategy: ask them to come talk to the committee
 - SMART Task Force joint meeting and cooperative effort: Raap suggested asking Jerry Geci and Chez Lilley to come speak to committee at November meeting and ask them to focus on ideas to bring school into the effort as a partner and talk about ideas for food waste reduction. Birdsall emphasized need to go slowly to make big changes. Raap emphasized the importance of creating a financial incentive for food waste reduction. Invite BOF member (Erich Marriott?) to speak to financial perspective and possible cooperation with SMART Task Force at November meeting.
 - Sustainable States Network Community Challenge: Zullo reported that "building municipal efficiency" is Litchfield's choice of focus. The Challenge focus seems to be more on public housing, but Jessica LeClair of Sustainable CT cleared working on just municipal buildings. Buck will join Birdsall and Zullo on sub committee. Keithan will be back-up. John Post will help as he is able. Need dedicated data entry help, maybe from LHS or Wamogo students. If Zullo writes up a description of the data entry need, John Morosani offered to give a description of the data entry need to Superintendent Leone as a way to find student help. Could such a thing become institutionalized, a permanent part of an environmental science curriculum perhaps?
 - NRGs Story Maps with Public Works Dept. Tabled
 - Farmers Alliance: Putman and Stedronsky spoke at last meeting.
 - BLPA: Fischer came and spoke today in public comment
 - Reach out to partners/community to identify target actions: Tabled
 - **Presentations to key partners:** Tabled until results of Silver come back
 - Town Departments
 - Schools
 - Others?

- **Thank you letter to partners** (MH/JK/JP) Discussion of who gets thank you letter and what it should say. Could send general announcement letter and then personalize for those who were directly engaged in certification actions. Decision to continue to work on letter draft and wait to send letters out after news of Silver application. Morosani mentioned asking partners to link to Sustainable Litchfield on their websites.
- **Sustainable CT Coffee Hour** : Hunt reported on the 9/17/21 Coffee Hour. Sustainable CT has a new marketing position who will be a resource for town.
- **Announcements:** Zullo announced the mid-December meeting of CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Annual meeting. Suggested sending a couple of members of Sustainable Litchfield along with municipal representation. Maybe get a table. Bronze and Silver certifications will be awarded.
- **New Business:** Field reported talking to Sportsman's about using new logo on merchandise. Talked to Bantam Tileworks about making a coaster. Should also consider Wolf Pottery. Buck said the idea should be to use sustainable products/materials and local merchants. Field will get some estimates. Other ideas: packets of pollinator seeds with logo. Reusable produce fabric bag with logo.
- **Next meeting date:** Postpone November 2, 2021 Regular meeting because of Election Day. Call Special Meeting for November 9, 2021, 3:30pm at Litchfield Firehouse
- **Adjournment:** Zullo Motion to adjourn; Keithan second. All in favor. Adjourned 5:12 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Hunt (for Secretary Carrie Szwed)