

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
Sustainability Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
February 23, 2011

Present: Stoddard (chair), Lennon, Matthews, Stafford, Loxsom, Miller, Ed Wazer (guest), Kathleen Paterson (guest), Chrissie Dittrich (guest), Walton (staff)

The meeting began at 5:05pm.

The December 15, 2010 meeting minutes were approved with one correction to the date of the minutes.

The agriculture committee briefed members on Mansfield agriculture. Mansfield has 34 retail outlets and 2 CSAs. The Town owns farmland, which has usage agreements with farmers. Tolland County has had an increase in the number of farmers, but the size of parcels farmed has decreased in acreage with more farms less than 5 acres. There has been the addition of ten new farms in Mansfield since 2000. The sustainability committee could support the agriculture committee by having an overarching definition of sustainability, making connections between Mansfield farm produce and the Mansfield school lunch program, promoting a Right to Farm ordinance, and advocating for farm friendly zoning regulations.

The committee discussed ideas for an Earth Day celebration. It was suggested that the Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge be the focal point. Walton will look into having a Neighbor to Neighbor table at the Storrs Farmer's Market and UConn's April 21 spring fling. Tours of the Community Center's "green" features could be another way to celebrate Earth Day.

At the Town Council meeting on February 14, 2011, Stoddard reported on the Sustainability Committee's first year of activities and outlined the committee's five broad priorities moving forward.

Walton reported that she, the Finance Director and Town Manager met with Kirby Mill owners, Sam and Michelle Shifrin, to discuss the purchase of electricity produced from the Kirby Mill hydro project when it is operational. The Finance Director is checking to see if this purchase will affect the current contract that the Town has with CCM. Walton will follow-up with the finance director.

Stoddard, Walton, Hultgren will be meeting with Cynthia vanZelm and the Storrs Center developers on March 1, 2011 at 5:30 pm to discuss opportunities for Storrs Center to become a model of sustainable development. Walton will send out the meeting notice for members who wish to attend.

Matthews reported that a decision has not been made on the proposed elementary school building project. Among residents there is a strong desire to keep all three elementary schools. Matthews noted that major school repairs are not anticipated in the next five years, so a decision does not have to be made immediately. Governor Malloy has proposed that a larger share of state funds go to school renovation and a smaller share to build new, which could change the decision of whether to build new or renovate.

Lennon and Stoddard met with the Four Corners development committee. The Four Corners Committee had been focused exclusively on water and sewer hook up. Lennon and Stoddard brought a perspective of the triple bottom line of sustainability to the meeting. At the next meeting the committee will discuss how it might interface with the Four Corners Committee.

Walton will walk the committee through the new sustainability WebPages at the next meeting.

The committee affirmed to stay with the 5 pm to 6:30 pm meeting time. The next meeting will be March 23, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia Walton