



**Town of North Stonington
Sustainability Committee
Zoom Special Meeting
January 24, 2023
7:30 PM**

Minutes

1. **Call to order/roll call:** A. Kahn called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. A. Kahn and C. Fasullo were present. Guests were Elaine Caldarone from Wild & Scenic Rivers and Chris Chrissos.
2. **Regular meeting schedule for 2023:** The Committee agreed to table this until the next meeting to get E. Sutphen's and P. Turner's Input.
3. **Bottle Bill Debrief from Sustainable CT Coffee Hour and Brainstorm:** A. Kahn shared information from the 1/20/23 Coffee Hour in which municipalities shared how they're using or planning to use the proceeds of the Bottle Bill. Ideas included hiring a recycling coordinator, machinery to suck up trash from the side of the roads, as well as partnerships with local non-profits to hire underemployed individuals to help with litter cleanup. A. Kahn to confirm with Jess LeClair from Sustainable CT whether the proceeds can be used for a composting program, as there was much discussion during the Coffee Hour on composting. A. Kahn will contact Bright Feeds, a company in CT that purchases municipalities' food waste. A. Kahn will also connect with First Selectman Carlson on his feedback.
4. **Bottle Recycling Program / Replenish:** A. Kahn scheduled meeting between Replenish rep and First Selectman Carlson and Highway Foreman on 1/31/2023. Replenish confirmed that they pay to collect and recycle nips bottles. Benefit would be additional funding toward cleanup of litter in North Stonington.
5. **Project Oceanology – Wild & Scenic Rivers Grant Application:** A. Kahn reported that the Sustainability Committee submitted an application on 12/28/2023 to Wild & Scenic Rivers to fund a custom program for North Stonington 6th graders through Project Oceanology that would have two sessions: an in-class water chemistry lab and hands-on immersive educational experience on Barn Island to do a Salt Marsh Transect Study. If we receive the grant and the program is deemed valuable for the students who participate, it would be nice to revisit discussions between Project O and the Town of North Stonington.

6. **Regional Agricultural Forum – Guest speaker on No-Till Farming:** This event will be held in March at the Ekonk Community Grange between North Stonington and neighboring towns to share information and ideas with local farmers and state representatives. The Committee discussed trying to source a subject matter expert to present on regenerative farming practices at this forum from the perspective of the financial benefits of such practices. A. Kahn to discuss further with E. Sutphen on her connections, as well as connect with some other contacts, such as Earth Care Farm and Sustainable CT to find farmers with “Tractor Cred” who could present on this topic. C. Chrissos suggested having a presentation/demonstration about regenerative farming at the North Stonington Ag Fair.
7. **Local Venue to Sell Farm Products:** A. Kahn shared that Native Eats provides at-home delivery service of products from local farmers and producers, and is hesitant to introduce competition to what they provide.
8. **Municipal Solid Waste:** the Committee discussed Stonington’s and Westerly’s Pay-As-You-Throw trash programs; this has been raised in town in the past with resistance so the Committee agreed to table.
9. **Conservation Commission: Wheelchair Access to Assekong Borderlands Trail:** E. Caldarone had an update from the last Conservation Commission meeting: the Commission found that they don’t need to build the raised walkway/ramps but applying for grants to put the underlayment down (Wild & Scenic Rivers and State of CT). First priority is to get grant funds. A. Kahn to share information on Sustainable CT Matching Grant program with B. Ricker.
10. **Pollinator Pathways Update:** No update
11. **Native Plants Ordinance:** E. Caldarone had shared information about Native Plants Ordinances. A. Kahn will connect with Conservation Commission and P. Turner to discuss this further.
12. **Discussion – Other Initiatives:** Wild & Scenic Rivers is sponsoring a nature walk on Barn Island on 2/4/2023 for which it would great to have North Stonington Residents’ participation. A. Kahn will post information on the walk on the Town of North Stonington’s Facebook page, and recommended E. Caldarone post it on NextDoor app for North Stonington and share with B. Ricker from Conservation Commission.
13. **Adjournment:** the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alexis Kahn, Chair