



Town of Sherman
Conservation Commission
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 8, 2023
Mallory Town Hall @ 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: William (Bill) McCann (Chair), Michele MacKinnon (Vice Chair), Colette Shulman, Lauren Weber, Anne Weisberg

Members Absent: (none)

Other Attendees: Christine Aruza (Clerk), Kent Lawson (Golden Bridge Project), Public

Call to Order: Chairman B. McCann called the meeting to order at 6:49 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

M. MacKinnon made a motion to approve the minutes

Seconded by: L. Weber

Vote: Unanimous For

Correspondence:

No new correspondence.

New Business:

Meeting with members of Golden Bridge Project (re: Greening Sherman initiative)

Commission members discussed the People's Action for Clean Energy ([PACE](#)) report provided prior to the meeting by A. Weisberg. PACE, a non-profit volunteer organization, was recommended by the CT Green Bank. A. Weisberg spoke with a representative from PACE. They produced a report for the town of Kent with publicly available information to determine how much energy the town uses in aggregate and per household in addition to how much savings could be achieved by both. PACE presented the information in the fall timeframe in advance of Kent's Earth Day event. Kent invited the CT Green Bank, Eversource and vendors to their event with fun activities for attendees.

Discussion then moved to Golden Bridge Project and 'Greening Sherman' initiative. B. McCann welcomed Kent Lawson from the Golden Bridge Project to the meeting and shared the general concept for the commission's proposed Earth Day Fair event. Per B. McCann the commission wanted to learn more about the Golden Bridge Project's plans and how to potentially involve them in the event and other activities moving forward. K. Lawson then described the impetus for creating the Golden Bridge Project and how it arrived at its focus on climate change and its mission statement. Through their discussions on various topics (social media, immigration, guns, etc.) they decided that the most practical starting place to enact local change was the climate.

Per K. Lawson their mission statement is, "The Golden Bridge Project will facilitate and encourage 'Greening Sherman' especially through the reduction of carbon footprint in cooperation with community and town organizations." The group would like for Sherman to become a model community in reducing its carbon footprint under the banner of 'Greening Sherman'. The initial focus will be home energy consumption and waste. The group sees their role as a conduit /clearing house of information for homeowners on topics such as solar panels, heat pumps and insulation. They are all volunteers and are independent from the town and wish to remain so. They will build a website, have a public blog, mailings, and encourage word of mouth through a series of forums.

They have identified a neutral expert in the field of home energy efficiency who will be a resource for them and can be a coach for homeowners, for a nominal fee, to help them decide what steps they can take. He came to their attention via discussions with members of the Bedford, NY clean energy initiative, "Bedford 2030". The expert could be the speaker at their first forum. C. Shulman asked if their forum could be held to coincide with Earth Day. K. Lawson indicated that they wanted to discuss that with the commission in order to explore ways to cooperate on the Earth Day Fair and in other ways.

C. Shulman also inquired as to what organizations they have spoken to regarding the initiative (e.g., Great Hollow, the Audubon, NCLC). They have talked with the Sherman Library, the JCC, the Scouts, the Veterans, the RTC and the DTC and they are all on board. Per K. Lawson they have also been invited back to the next board of selectman (BOS) meeting. They are asking the town to adopt a specific townwide objective to reduce carbon emissions by a certain percent by a certain date. Their next step is to request that Planning & Zoning (P&Z) add a statement about reducing carbon emissions in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Josh Dewind (61 Briggs Hill Road), also a member of the Golden Bridge Project, talked about the prior POCD and how it focused on what the town government could do to conserve the environment. He inquired if the commission could recommend that in the next POCD iteration that the town government encourage and support citizen environmental protection activities. The commission agreed it should go into the POCD and could also go into the recommendations in the next revision of for the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI). K. Lawson thought it would be useful to have a carbon reduction goal in the POCD as it is a multi-year recommendation and planning tool.

Conversation then turned back to the topic of the Earth Day Fair. B. McCann asked if the Golden Bridge Project would be able to do a booth at the Earth Day Fair to which K. Lawson agreed. M.

MacKinnon shared that there is a group based in New Haven, '[I Heart My Home](#)', that helps homeowners explore and implement renewable energy solutions for their home that would be worth reaching out to. She also shared that there is another group that focuses on renewable energy called, '[Sustainable Connecticut](#)' as well as a group called '[Sustainable Southbury](#)' that won an award for their efforts.

B. McCann thanked K. Lawson for coming in to speak about the Golden Bridge Project and their 'Greening Sherman' initiative. On behalf of the commission, he expressed its support of their mission and stated he would reach out to P&Z to let them know the commission supports the request to add a carbon footprint reduction goal to the POCD and he will put in a call to the First Selectman, Don Lowe, in additional support of their objective. The commission and Golden Bridge Project agreed to remain in contact about these items, with A. Weisberg offering to act as liaison. She will distribute K. Lawson's email and phone number to the other commission members.

Earth Day Fair Planning

A Weisberg proposed she write a Letter to the Editor of the local newspaper sharing what the commission has done to date and its impact. She suggested that each commissioner then write their own article about different aspects to create a series of articles leading up to the event. She also has secured a commitment from the CT Green Bank to participate in the event by providing an informational booth. Both the CT Green Bank and PACE recommended inviting Eversource to participate. Eversource has a mobile solar demonstration that they use at events. She will reach out to them tomorrow.

The question was raised about inviting vendors in general and how to qualify them. C. Shulman referenced Dandelion Energy as a reputable geothermal provider. She would like to speak to those with geothermal installations in town to get their assessment of geothermal in general. L. Weber offered to contact the homeowner on RT 37, her neighbor, to learn more about their experience.

The commission agreed to focus the event on environmental themes to highlight saving money and saving the planet at the same time. L. Weber suggested calling it the, 'Save Green Fair', which was well received by the commission. The date of Saturday, May 6th was proposed as the event date with Saturday, May 13th as the back-up date in case of poor weather. The Town Green was proposed as the primary event location with either Charter Hall or Town Hall as overflow or poor weather alternate sites. A. Weisberg will let D. Lowe, Eversource, the CT Green Bank, PACE and K. Lawson know the new, proposed date. B. McCann to reach out to D. Lowe to inquire about insurance coverage.

L. Weber listed the following groups for consideration to participate with information booths at the event: Naromi (NCLC), Great Hollow, the Audubon, the JCC, Sherman Library, Scouts, Veterans, Arbor Day Foundation, Sacred Grounds (for compost) and the Sherman School. She also suggested other ideas including having an e-Waste recycling collection station, a worm farm, and bringing an EV to show for example. M. MacKinnon suggested the commission also invite the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (hrra.org) as they help towns conduct recycling programs (plastics, food waste, etc.). L. Weber will create a spreadsheet to capture ideas and to help assign tasks moving forward. M. MacKinnon suggested doing weekly meetings

from here on out to continue event planning. The commission agreed to hold a meeting on Wednesday, February 15th. C. Shulman will see if she can host the initial meeting.

2023 Projects and Programs List Review

The commission gave M. MacKinnon the green light to pursue an autumn program, similar to the Doug Tallamy event of 2022. It will take place after the annual Farm Day event in Sherman (which occurs in September). For the spring program, M. MacKinnon is considering inviting Dr. Jim Sirch, who works at the Yale University Peabody Museum. He is their educational coordinator. He has an informational blog, *Beyond Your Back Door*. M. MacKinnon indicated he has a presentation on native plants. She will reach out to Ashleigh Blake of the Sherman Library to see if they can host and co-sponsor. The proposed date would be April 29th to act as a precursor for the Earth Day Fair.

Septic System Brochure

B. McCann distributed copies of the newly drafted and designed ‘Septic System Maintenance’ brochure that he and C. Shulman collaborated on. It was approved by the Tim Simpkins, the Town Sanitarian. C. Aruza will leave copies with Trish in the Health Department at Town Hall. L. Weber will share with P&Z and provide a .pdf copy to the William Raveis Real Estate local office and other realtors in town. B. McCann will send L. Weber the .pdf.

Old Business:

Archiving SCC Articles on the Web

C. Aruza will contact the town web master to discuss the potential of archiving the commission’s articles on the town website.

Adjournment

C. Shulman made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Seconded by: M. MacKinnon

Vote: Unanimous For

B. McCann adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza
Next monthly meeting: Wednesday, March 8, 2023, @ 7:00 p.m., Mallory Town Hall