

Minutes: Town of Watertown Environment & Energy Efficiency Committee (WE3C)
July 20, 2020, 7 p.m., via ZOOM Meeting

Minutes

The meeting was opened at 7:00 p.m., chaired by Andrew Airasian. Attending members and citizens: Meredith Fields (co-chair), Laurel Schwab (Town Environmental Planner), Lauri Murphy, Steve Steadman, Varun Saluja, Brian Hebeisen, Pat Rathbone, Ernesta Krackiewicz, Helen Soussou, Libby Shaw, WCATV, and Jeanne Trubek.

1. Introductions were made. The minutes of 6/15/20 meeting were approved as amended.

2. Announcements

There will be no Faire in the Square this year due to Covid.
The School Building Committee will meet Wednesday, July 22.
The next meeting of WE3C will be September 21.

3. Environmental Planner Report

Laurel Schwab is writing a grant proposal for Accelerating Climate Resiliency. The application is due at the end of August. This is similar to the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and will coordinate with it. More information will be coming soon.
Laurel is working with the Friends of Bees and with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to create a pollinator garden near the parking lot at the DPW.
Arsenal Park Phase A reconstruction is underway.
The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness project has a website that is a repository of great quantities of information (<https://resilient.watertown-ma.gov/home>). It includes compilations of the results of focus group meetings, information about progress we are making, relevant news articles from around the country, and suggestions for how Watertown residents can help. It is a constantly updated website; if you have material that should be included, send it to Laurel Schwab.

4. WE3C Co-chairs' Announcement

Meredith and Andy announced that they both need to step back from chairing WE3C. They hope that WE3C members will think about their availability to step in. For further discussion at next meeting.

5. Working group reports

Composting The composting working group announced progress: An ad-hoc informal composting discussion group that includes our working group has been meeting every 2 weeks to follow up on last year's symposium. WE3C recommended to Town Council in late 2019 that the town establish a refuse/recycling/composting committee. This recommendation went to the DPW subcommittee of the town council but hasn't yet come out. During the budget process, DPW requested funding for a recycling coordinator - it was not approved for this year, but maybe next

year. The ad hoc group is gathering information about what neighboring communities are doing. There is a need to re-assess single stream recycling.

Trees Libby Shaw reported on the current status of the Trees For Watertown activities. One year ago the Town Council voted to plant 2500 new trees over the next 10 years. Then the tree warden, Chris Hayward left and the program came to a halt. Councilor Ken Woodland, who helped develop the program, is working to implement it. Watertown has not yet hired a new tree warden.

School Buildings Pat Rathbone reported on the school building working group. There will be meetings about the high school Wednesday July 22 and Wednesday July 29. These will be held via zoom. The link is posted on the town calendar or on the school website. The high school will require an override.

5. For future discussion

As the corona virus is brought under control and life gets back to "normal", how do we get "normal" to include environmentally sound practices? Some of the issues raised are:

- habitat conservation
- decreasing the impact of climate change
- environmentally friendly transportation
- reducing suburban sprawl

Next meeting September 21, 2020.

8:30 Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Trubek