

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, January 15, 2019**  
**Adella G. Urban Administrative Office Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Andrea Drabicki, Bryan Tarbell, Carol Williamson

**Members Absent:** Carol Coley

**Audience of Citizens:** None

- 1 CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM**
- 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES: New calendar year - no minutes for approval.**
- 3 OLD BUSINESS:**

**██████████ Bright Ideas Grant Money - Remaining: \$978.86**

- a. The Town's finance department is asking what to do with the remaining \$978.86 dollars of the Bright Ideas Grant Money.
- b. The committee passed a motion back on October 16, 2018 that the remaining grant money should be given to the town to use for energy efficiency related projects of their choosing. Mark Walter the Town Administrator would help allocate the monies to current Town projects/upgrades.
- c. Carole Williamson makes a motion to release all remaining funds associated with the Bright Ideas Grant Money to the Town in the amount of \$978.86 to be used for any energy efficiency related project(s), as per the stipulations of the grant, of the Town's choosing.
- d. Andrea Drabicki seconds the motion
- e. The EAC moves to vote unanimously in approval.
- f. B. Tarbell will follow up with the finance department to inform them of the committee's motion.

**██████████ Energy Star Portfolio Manager Review & Green Bank Energy Grant Application**

- a. The Town Manager and Executive Assistance have requested help with managing Town's energy portfolio manager. The EAC will forward login credentials to the online website to the Town.
- b. The Town would like to record additional energy efficiency improvements made to several Town buildings over the last few years in the energy portfolio. The EAC will assist the town in these efforts.
- c. The Town has expressed interest in applying for another Green Bank Energy Grant but will need to first update the portfolio manager. The EAC will assist the Town in applying for another Green Bank Energy Grant should the Town meet the grant requirements.
- d. Chairman Bryan Tarbell will forward along contact information.

**██████████ New Member Recruitment**

- a. Limited discussion included outreaching to possible new members while working on Sustainable CT initiatives. This topic was tabled until next month.

## Composting Education & Awareness Activities

- a. Carole Williamson reported that she has several composting bin types and brands costed out in the event that the EAC should decide to do another composting raffle or program activity. She also went on to say that she has construction specifications on how to build composting bins out of pallets if that should be an option.
- b. The EAC discussed a fundraising strategy that orders could be taken for interested citizens wanting sifters or composting bins instead of making or ordering an abundant supply.
- c. The EAC also discussed a potential partnership with either the boy/girl scouts for a build event.
- d. No decision was made. Brainstorming continues.

## 4 NEW BUSINESS

### EAC Goals & Events for 2019

- a. Earth Day
  - Bryan Tarbell mentioned that the EAC should have an Earth Day Event this year since we did not hold one last year in 2018
  - No decision was made. Brainstorming continues.
- b. Bike Rodeo & Safety Event
  - **Mini Mud Run/Bike Rodeo** will be on Sunday, **June 2, 2019**. The first weekend in June.
  - **Mr. Stephen Merlino** has agreed again to participate as a **bike mechanic** for the 2019 event. Mr. Merlino has a former affiliation with Scott's Cyclery but is the acting Vice Principal at Bolton High School.
  - **St. Francis Hospital** has reached out to Bryan (and Mindy Tarbell (PTO)) to participate in the Bike Rodeo which occurs during the Mini Mud Run.
  - Andrea Drabicki has suggested this year educational program **Watch For Me**, [www.watchformect.org](http://www.watchformect.org), a collaborative partnership between the CT Department of Transportation & CT Children's Medical Center. Watch For Me is an educational awareness campaign and does not conflict with the outreach efforts being conducted by St. Francis Medical Hospital but seems complimentary. Andrea will inquire with Director Amy Watkins if she can attend.
- c. Save the Bees/Pollinators Event
  - Will check with Carol Coley about the date and time of the event and if it will co-inside with the Town Wide Tag-Sale to encourage more foot traffic to her event.

### Budget Request

- a. The EAC will again be asking for an annual operating budget (cy 2019) to support upcoming events. The detailed budget request will be provided in writing to the Town in the amount of \$550. This amount is principally for educational campaigns, advertising, and activity food/refreshments.

## **Sustainable CT**

- a. Andrea Drabicki attended Sustainable CT program training with Town Administrator Mark Walter and First Selectman Steve Everett. Columbia has registered as a participant of the program. Sustainable CT is a self-enrolled program for municipalities whose mission is to:

*“[municipalities] strive to be thriving, resilient, collaborative, and forward looking. They build community and local economy. They equitably promote the health and well-being of current and future residents. And they respect the finite capacity of the natural environment”.*

- b. Sustainable CT is administered by the Institute of Sustainable Energy [www.sustainablect.org](http://www.sustainablect.org).
- c. Over 40 towns were in attendance for the training which also featured “lessons learned” from several participating municipalities such as; Coventry, Hebron, Ashford, Mansfield, Bristol, Middletown.
- d. Andrea Drabicki was unanimously voted and appointed as Columbia’s Sustainable CT “representative”.
- e. Andrea met with Town Manager Mark Walter and Executive Assistant Jennifer LaVoie to begin to map out expectations, participant roles, and an overall strategy of how Columbia would participate in the Sustainable CT program. No details have been determined or finalized at this moment.

## **5 COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

### **Regional Transportation Safety Plan – Capitol Region Council of Governments**

- a. Andrea Drabicki mentioned that on Monday, January 14, 2019 as the appointed regional Transportation Committee representative for the Town of Columbia she participated in a meeting with Town Administrators, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROCG) and their consultant to discuss transportation safety issues in Columbia for CROCG’s Regional Transportation Safety Plan.
- b. The Plan is a study to evaluate the 38-member municipalities, transportation related concerns and provide over all recommendations and suggestions for grant opportunities.
- c. The Town acknowledged that high speed is the main issue throughout the community on both state and local roads.
- d. Enforcement can also at times be an issue since Columbia shares Troop K with the several neighboring municipalities. Not all state troopers will patrol local roads it is up to Trooper discretion and assignment duties.
- e. Columbia also geographically sits in two (2) CT Department of Transportation (CTDOT) maintenance districts (Districts 1 & 2). Columbia is one of the few towns in the state with this unique challenge. CROCG acknowledged that coordination among two different districts poses challenges and coordination difficulties when it comes to any town-state coordination efforts. CROCG did ask Public Works Director George Murphy which district he had a personal preference for. Mr. Murphy indicated District 2 (Headquarters in Norwich). CROCG indicated

that they would be willing to facilitate a discussion with the CTDOT to have Columbia absorbed into one district. The Town indicated they would follow up with CRCOG.

f. Three (3) locations were discussed at the meeting:

**1. The Intersection of Route 87 & 66**

- Citizens have been recently vocal about the lack of left turn signalization for both north-south and east-west bound directions and expressed safety concern

**2. The Intersection of Route 87 @ West and Hunt Rd.**

- Citizens have been recently vocal about the lack of left turn signalization for both north-south and east-west bound directions and expressed safety concern

**3. Route 87 Jonathan Trumbull Highway (West) – The Curve at Columbia Lake Dam**

- The town spoke at length with the region and their consultant about the two (2) automobile rollovers at this location. Some low-cost solutions were proposed at this location such as horizontal striping in each travel lane well before the approach of the curve as a visual marker to calm traffic before entering the curve. Mumble and/or rumble strips were discouraged due to the proximity of residential homes being located within close proximity of the curve.

6 **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM