



LUKE BRONIN
MAYOR

CITY OF HARTFORD
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON THE
ENVIRONMENT
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103
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MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 14th, 2019

5:30 PM

Green Room, Room 100, City Hall
550 Main St., Hartford, CT 03103

Commissioners

Chair:

Kerri Provost

Vice Chair

Alex Rodriguez

Secretary

Tom Swarr

Members :

JoAnne Bauer

Sam King

Mark Mitchell

Edith Pestana

Russell Williams

Staff:

Shubhada Kambli

Grace Yi

Commissioners attending: JoAnne Bauer, Sam King, Edith Pestana, Kerri Provost, Alex Rodriguez (by phone), Tom Swarr, Russell Williams

City Staff: David Grant, Grace Yi

Public: Nancy Bowden, Alex Herbst, Bob Painter, Mary Sanders

I. Meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM.

II. Meeting Notes

The edits provided by commissioners were reviewed. Sam K. moved to approve the April minutes as edited. Alex R. seconded. The motion passed with 4 ayes and 2 abstentions.

III. ACOTE Planning Process

Election of Officers - Sam K. and Kerri P. were nominated for chair. Sam withdrew his nomination. Kerri was approved unanimously as chair. Sam K. and Alex R. were nominated for vice chair. An election by ballot was conducted, and Alex was elected by a 4 to 3 vote. Tom S. was nominated as secretary. There were no other nominations, and he was approved unanimously.

Discussion of 2019 Priorities – There was a wide-ranging discussion of potential priorities. Notes from the April meeting were reviewed, and it was noted that results from an earlier SurveyMonkey poll of resident concerns should be considered. Consideration of the update to the City's Plan of Conservation and Development, a proposed implementation of the Simple Recycling program in the city, and importance of energy efficiency efforts (and funding) were among the topics discussed.



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This led to a discussion of the need to highlight cost impacts in any recommendations made by ACOTE. It was acknowledged that the City faces significant financial constraints, and that cost and feasibility would be important considerations. ACOTE can help the City with grant applications to help provide additional resources. It was also highlighted that there are numerous collaborations with other funding sources that could be tapped. We need to view projects for their economic development potential as well as their costs. It was noted that ACOTE should decide first on the action or recommendation, and then address funding concerns. It was also noted that non- financial measures were important given the potentially severe impacts of climate change and the consequences of not acting.

There was discussion of ways to invite community input for ACOTE priorities, including conducting public forums to hear from residents. It was noted that getting people to come to ACOTE meetings could be a challenge, and that it would be better for ACOTE to go out to the various neighborhoods to conduct any outreach efforts. Outreach to NRZs was considered a good place to start. The need to investigate other means of publicity – newspaper articles, other media, a pamphlet explaining ACOTE, etc. – was raised.

There was discussion on the appropriate role for ACOTE. Providing recommendations for action to City Council was considered important. One specific issue raised was that other cities have declared a climate emergency to drive greater action in addressing potential impacts of climate change. It was noted that in previous years, DPW staff attended meetings to update ACOTE. There was concern about time pressure on already stretched city staff, but it was agreed that reports on specific tasks would be valuable.

A call was made to focus our discussions. The need to identify actionable goals was stressed. There needs to be positive outcomes that help residents. After discussion, it was agreed to structure the brainstorming effort using the same focus areas as the City's Climate Action Plan – Energy, Food, Landscape, Transportation, Waste, and Water. We also acknowledged that



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in the discussions, we had already identified several tasks that were directly actionable- energy efficiency, recycling, the Plan of Conservation and Development, trees, and litter.

Consider change to meeting schedule – Based on availability of commissioners and city staff, potential conflicts with other standing meetings, Green Room availability, the group agreed to stick with a Tuesday night meeting. JoAnne B. made a motion to move the meeting to the first Tuesday of the month. Edith P. seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Tom S. moved to change the meeting time to 6:00 PM, and Edith seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Recruitment of Volunteers – ACOTE bylaws require a Membership Committee. Tom S and Edith P. volunteered to serve on the Committee. It was noted that outreach to the NRZs can serve multiple purposes – gather input on ACOTE priorities and recruit new commissioners and volunteers.

IV. Other Business – Grace Yi provided an update on a very busy April, Earth Month. There were more than 50 green events scheduled around Hartford. On the National Water Conservation pledge, Hartford moved from 178th to 28th place for cities of comparable size. There were over 70 additional sign-ups for rain barrels under the Retain the Rain program in April, bringing the total sign-ups this year to over 100. The Bright Green Hartford initiative will continue in May. The City's resident guide was highlighted as a valuable resource on local services and programs. The guide is available [online](#) in English and Spanish. See the [calendar](#) on Climate Stewardship web page for upcoming events.

V. Summary of Agreed Actions

- Grace Yi – Follow up to have someone attend June meeting to update ACOTE on ongoing work on Plan of Conservation & Development
- Tom Swarr – contact Hartford 2000 & individual NRZs to schedule ACOTE update on their agenda



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- Kerri Provost – draft article for Hartford Courant on some environmental topic on behalf of ACOTE
- Alex Rodriguez – draft summary of climate emergency declarations
- Alex Rodriguez & Sam King – schedule meeting to discuss potential projects related to energy efficiency
- Tom Swarr – compile summary of our brain storming of priorities based on the focus areas of Climate Action Plan
- All – review Court of Common Council agenda for topics of interest

VI. **Next meeting** – June 4, 2019 (Special Meeting) – There was a review of items commissioners wanted on the agenda for the June meeting:

- Plan of Conservation and Development
- Declaration of climate emergency
- Review of priorities based on Climate Action Plan goals
- Council agenda review
- ACOTE outreach efforts