

**CITY OF NORWALK  
AD HOC SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILLIENCE COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2026  
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

**ATTENDEES:** Johan Lopez, Richard Dellinger, Anne Wennerstrand, Josh Goldstein, Jesse Buccalo, Broderick Sawyer, Jan Degenshein.

**STAFF:** Jodi Trendler.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Lopez called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken and a quorum was established.

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Audrey Cozzarin addressed the committee on the Oak Hills Park sustainability item on the agenda. She stated her name and address at 19 Kendall Court in Norwalk and spoke as past president of the Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee since its establishment in 2016 through the park master plan. She described the Nature Center’s approximately 14 acres of city property, the majority preserved for wildlife, with pollinator-friendly plantings, a past quarter-acre meadow demonstration, an alternative natural lawn entering its second year, a food forest using permaculture methods with fruiting trees, bushes and shrubs, and a composting site. She noted educational talks including a successful Composting 101 session, partnerships with garden clubs, trail walks, tai chi, and birdwatching, and expressed the desire for the site to become the Norwalk Nature Center with greater city partnership.

Ms. Roma Stibravy then spoke, stating her name and address at 304 Silver Creek Lane. She discussed Manresa Wilds, formerly Manresa Island, in relation to climate preparedness, Connecticut’s 2050 zero-carbon emissions goal, the decommissioned fossil fuel plant, and the potential for solar arrays on polluted areas of the 125-acre site to reduce energy costs, improve air quality, and meet state mandates. Mr. Lopez reminded her that comments must relate to an item on the agenda. After additional attempts to connect her remarks to sustainability, Mr. Lopez disconnected Ms. Stibravy from the meeting.

No additional public comments were received.

**IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting: January 14, 2026

Mr. Dellinger proposed a correction in the final paragraph, changing “his responsibilities” to “her responsibilities” regarding Ms. Trendler and noting additional misgendering throughout the document. Ms. Wennerstrand concurred regarding the misgendering.

**\*\*MS. WENNERSTRAND MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 14, 2026, REGULAR MEETING AS CORRECTED.**

**\*\*MR. GOLDSTEIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS CORRECTED.**

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

A. EnergySmart Norwalk Programs Update

Ms. Trendler presented updates on the EnergySmart Norwalk programs, sharing her screen to display the city webpage. She explained that Energy Smart Norwalk is the co-branded initiative covering Solarized Norwalk and Heat Smart Norwalk. The Solarize program is a community bulk-buy initiative limited to 50 participants, with the first to sign contracts and prepare for installation receiving an additional one-thousand-dollar cash rebate. One full installation has been completed and eight more are in process. The Heat Smart Norwalk program, offered through utilities including SNHU, the Third Taxing District, and Eversource, provides a home energy analysis with on-site services such as weatherization, air sealing, LED lighting, and low-flow fixtures, along with recommendations and substantial rebates for heat pump installations. An information session is scheduled for April 11 and will be posted on the website. She emphasized that the programs are funded through the community benefits charge on electric bills and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from residential buildings.

Mr. Dellinger stated that the programs are timely given recent high oil prices and the end of locked-in oil contracts, and he encouraged strong advertising of both the Solarize and Heat Smart aspects, including tying the mayor’s forthcoming mailing to the virtual sessions. Ms. Trendler confirmed she is scheduling additional virtual Q&A sessions.

Mr. Lopez asked whether a minimum number of installs is required to receive the bulk-purchase rate. Ms. Trendler replied that there is no minimum requirement, only an upper limit tied to available discounts and rebates.

No further questions were raised.

B. Oak Hills Park Sustainability Initiatives

Mr. Lopez provided background, stating that the Oak Hills Park Nature Committee had contacted Ms. Trendler and himself to expand programming at the Nature Center and transform it into a formal nature center. Preliminary discussions include a series of educational workshops involving the public, environmental business owners, and students, the development of a food forest, a small educational composting site demonstrating microbiology, and a community

BioBlitz biodiversity survey. He suggested the project could serve as a deliverable for the committee.

Mr. Dellinger added that he joined the committee several years ago to provide support and that Mr. Lopez and Ms. Trendler have since participated in meetings, improving communication and culture at the site. He noted that the Oak Hills Park Authority has allocated approximately eight thousand dollars in funding this year for the first time in many years, along with a four-thousand-dollar donor grant, and that grants are being pursued from Athletic Brewing Company and the Fruit Trees Group. He invited any interested members to join the committee.

Ms. Trendler stated that the buildings on the property will undergo the weatherization and energy-audit process through the current program, generating savings that can support the Nature Center.

Ms. Wennerstrand expressed full support, describing Oak Hills as a local treasure, and inquired whether the composting program would primarily use food scraps from the restaurant or also incorporate green and brown materials such as leaves. Mr. Lopez confirmed that the plan includes food scraps from the restaurant and allowable brown materials depending on traffic patterns.

Mr. Sawyer expressed support, noting that Oak Hills is one of the best-kept secrets in Norwalk and that the committee should become involved.

#### C. Sustainability Task Force Update

Ms. Trendler provided the update, displaying the task force overview from her webpage. She reported that teams are actively researching and establishing baselines across sectors including energy, mobility, natural resources, waste and circular economy, building and development, human health and happiness, emergency preparedness, community wealth building, and resilient economy. The teams are identifying gaps and interrelationships to develop high-impact recommendations. The next full task force meeting on March 19 will feature team presentations on findings and initial recommendations. She invited all members to participate in any committee or full meetings and confirmed the sustainability and resilience plan remains targeted for completion by the end of May.

Mr. Dellinger asked for confirmation of the plan timeline. Ms. Trendler reiterated the end-of-May target. He also inquired about the status of her position following completion of the report. Ms. Trendler stated that her current contract extends through June and that the mayor has secured funding through December.

Ms. Wennerstrand asked whether the additional funding alters the task force trajectory or goals. Ms. Trendler confirmed the end-of-May deadline remains unchanged.

#### D. Review New Capital Projects Impacts Analysis Tool

Ms. Trendler presented the new capital projects impacts analysis tool, sharing the scoring form. She explained that the tool is an internal decision-making framework designed to integrate sustainability, resilience, and health considerations into all project evaluations, consistent with

the Plan of Conservation and Development. It employs a weighted scoring system covering project urgency, costs, return on investment, impacts on residents and businesses, feasibility including staffing and technology capacity, timeline, public acceptability, human health and happiness, equity, and social and economic factors. The tool was developed over four months in collaboration with the internal green team and adapted from a long-standing tool used by the City of Ann Arbor.

Mr. Goldstein asked whether the tool would be applied during the current capital budget cycle or reserved for future use. Ms. Trendler confirmed it is intended for future budgeting cycles beginning next year, with each department scoring its own projects internally. The resulting scores will assist in review, prioritization, and decisions during budget cuts.

Ms. Wennerstrand noted that several indicators under human health and happiness and equity appear subjective and recommended further definition and fleshing out to ensure consistent staff evaluations.

Mr. Lopez inquired whether underlying assumptions exist for the subjective categories and whether they would be refined. Ms. Trendler confirmed that assumptions would be reviewed and modified as needed through ongoing green team meetings.

Mr. Dellinger asked about the origin of the tool and its effectiveness in other municipalities. Ms. Trendler replied that it was adapted from Ann Arbor, where it functions as a guiding tool to ensure factors beyond cost and capacity are considered when prioritizing or deprioritizing projects.

Mr. Buccalo expressed appreciation for the tool and echoed the need for training and norming across departments if each will score its own projects. He suggested reviewing how Ann Arbor implements the tool citywide. Ms. Trendler offered to provide additional information.

Mr. Degenshein commended the tool for elevating consideration of environmental sustainability and resilience. He highlighted the high weighting given to equity and referenced five dimensions of equity—structural, procedural, cultural, distributional, and intergenerational—from American Planning Association materials that he would share with the committee. He also shared an analogy distinguishing equality, where everyone receives the same pair of shoes, from equity, where everyone receives a pair of shoes that fits, and stated he would forward related notes.

Ms. Trendler agreed to share the full tool with committee members for detailed review and feedback at the next meeting.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Wennerstrand announced that the 5th Annual Norwalk Birthday Festival will be held on April 25 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the green, featuring walks, bike rides, vendors, exhibits, nonprofit organizations, tree planting, speakers, artwork, and the annual Trash Fashion Show, with full details available at [visitNorwalk.org](http://visitNorwalk.org).

Mr. Dellinger announced the commencement of citywide flooding listening sessions and inquired how the resulting input would integrate with the sustainability efforts. Ms. Trendler confirmed her involvement in the flooding plan through the Planning and Zoning Department and expressed interest in the feedback received.

Mr. Lopez entertained a motion to adjourn.

**\*\*MR. SAWYER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MEETING WAS  
ADJOURNED.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Courtney Baldwin  
Recording Secretary