

**CITY OF NORWALK  
AD HOC SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 11, 2025  
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: Johan Lopez: Chair, Josh Goldstein. Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, Margaret (Lisa) Shanahan

STAFF: Jodi Trendler

OTHER: Tom Livingston

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Lopez called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

The roll was called as reflected above.

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Diane Laurella  
21 Little Fox Lane

Ms. Lauricella addressed the committee supporting the proposed Community Sustainability Task Force. She referenced her prior involvement in forming the Mayor’s Energy and Environmental Task Force under Mayor Rilling, which included volunteers from the Board of Education and city agencies. She stated that the task force lasted approximately a year and a half and undertook a few initiatives before disbanding. She emphasized the value of public engagement and events like the Earth Day energy forum. She expressed interest in discussing future programming related to solar and geothermal solutions with Jodi Trendler.

**IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

A. AD HOC SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

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5:00 PM, MAY 14, 2025

**\*\* MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Community Task Force Structure Discussion**

Ms. Trendler provided an update and expanded on the previously proposed task force structure. She emphasized that sustainability requires engagement across three pillars: human, environmental, and economic. She noted that many of the city's 48 boards and commissions already align with one of these pillars, while others fall under governance and operations.

Ms. Trendler proposed that the task force could take one of two forms:

- A coalition comprised of chairs from existing relevant boards and commissions, allows better coordination, information sharing, and strategic planning.
- A broader, newly-formed sustainability commission structured around specific focus areas such as energy, transportation, waste, building and development, natural resources, and community wealth building.

Ms. Trendler shared a visual classification of city boards and commissions by sustainability pillar and identified a critical gap in energy representation. She noted one of the current boards or commissions does not specifically address energy, which she stated will be central to the climate resilience and sustainability plan.

Ms. Trendler opened the floor for input on which structure the committee preferred and how best to ensure coordination without inefficiency.

Mr. Lopez responded in support of a representative model where chairs of each group participate in a larger sustainability body, promoting transparency, collaboration, and shared goals. He also recommended including residents who are not currently members of boards or commissions but are active in relevant community efforts.

Ms. Shanahan raised the question of whether external environmental groups in Norwalk would be invited to participate. Ms. Trendler clarified that the current structure focused solely on internal city boards and commissions.

Ms. Shanahan addressed concerns about the potential size and complexity of the task force. One member questioned how such a large group could remain effective and whether the task force's

**CITY OF NORWALK**

**AD HOC SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**JUNE 11, 2025**

focus would be narrowed. Ms. Trendler explained that the climate action and sustainability resilience plan would serve as the main driver of tasks and targets, especially related to emissions reductions. However, she acknowledged the importance of also addressing broader human factors such as health and safety.

Ms. Trendler requested additional feedback and ideas from the committee on how best to structure the task force moving forward.

Mr. Lopez continued the discussion on creating a collaborative task force composed of members from various boards and commissions. Ms. Shanahan acknowledged the number of organizations involved and expressed concerns about the group's potential unwieldiness. Ms. Trendler clarified that the list presented was a preliminary overview and could be consolidated based on urgency and other factors. Outreach to additional community organizations was also confirmed.

Mr. Goldstein added that while the goal was commendable, bringing too many people together might reduce efficacy. He likened the idea to an "Avengers of committees" but cautioned that it would require careful planning and structure to be effective. He reiterated that even having just the chairs from each group could still be too many participants. Not all committees intersect meaningfully with sustainability efforts, and refining the list would be necessary.

Ms. Trendler explained that the purpose behind the proposed task force was not just coordination but also tracking and data integration. She stated the goal is to ensure that if sustainability-related initiatives are happening within one board or commission, others are not aware and that this work contributes to a holistic city-wide strategy. She emphasized the importance of data collection in monitoring and measuring climate efforts, such as emissions reductions from scooter programs.

Ms. Trendler described how in her previous roles, such task forces operated largely through subcommittees focusing on specific issues like natural resources, which would then report back periodically to a larger group, possibly every month. This would allow focused work while keeping communication channels open across the broader body.

Mr. Lopez recommended that subcommittees report through designated representatives or chairs to keep the overall group manageable. This idea was supported as a functional structure.

Ms. Trendler emphasized that the current list was simply an overview to illustrate existing resources. She stated the structure would be built to facilitate collaboration and manage efforts better. Mr. Goldstein commended the data-collection focus, noting frequent communication gaps between departments and highlighting the importance of having IT infrastructure to support the initiative.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner was acknowledged for suggesting that planning commissions should come together at least occasionally to address overlaps, gaps, and potential consolidations, stressing the need not to limit participation to currently existing commissions alone.

## B. Global Covenant of Mayors Commitment

Ms. Trendler presented the next phase of climate action and sustainability planning. She explained that Norwalk has already completed a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory and must now set reduction targets and identify effective strategies across various sectors. This ties into the task force structure and the role of boards and commissions.

Ms. Trendler introduced the Global Covenant of Mayors as a global effort uniting municipal leaders committed to ambitious and measurable climate action. She noted over 14,000 cities are currently signed on. She noted The initiative was originally started in Europe and later joined by Mayor Bloomberg, eventually merging to form a unified movement supported by organizations such as C40 Cities, ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), and the UN.

Ms. Trendler noted the covenant supports cities through programs including Data for Cities (a tool for monitoring emissions), Innovate for Cities (focused on urban planning), and Invest for Cities (funding support). She indicated by joining, cities improve access to technical assistance and funding.

Ms. Trendler indicated the commitment involves the mayor signing a pledge affirming the city's intent to reduce emissions, increase sustainable energy use, enhance resilience through adaptation and mitigation, and regularly report on progress. He reassured the commission that Norwalk is already aligned with many of these requirements through its existing sustainability efforts, including the resilience plan and the greenhouse gas inventory.

Ms. Trendler provided an overview of the implementation steps following the City's recent progress on climate planning. She stated the City has already completed a greenhouse gas inventory and hazard evaluation, with further analysis underway through the upcoming Community Flood Resilience Plan. She noted any components have been addressed in prior plans. He explained the next phase includes setting augmented targets, assessing vulnerabilities, creating an action plan, and establishing monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Ms. Trendler noted currently, New Haven and Bridgeport are the only two Connecticut cities to have signed on to the initiative. She explained the benefits, including alignment with Sustainable CT and access to financial support, tools, and resources. She emphasized that joining the commitment demonstrates accountability and a genuine dedication to sustainability rather than greenwashing.

Ms. Shanahan asked whether the proposal required formal action. Ms. Trendler responded that it must be discussed with the Mayor and approved by the Council before submission to the U.S. oversight committee for the C40 Cities network.

Mr. Lopez raises a question about the ability to modify the commitment letter. Ms. Trendler clarified that the letter is a standardized document and must be agreed to as-is. She stated it

**CITY OF NORWALK**

**AD HOC SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**JUNE 11, 2025**

outlines required deliverables within three years, including a community-scale greenhouse gas inventory, assessment of climate vulnerabilities, ambitious emissions reduction targets, adaptation goals based on scientific evidence, improved access to affordable sustainable energy, and formally adopted climate plans. She noted some components are already in place, while others are being developed.

Mr. Livingston emphasized the importance of gaining Council support, noting the Mayor would not sign the commitment without Council backing. He suggested a resolution might be needed to demonstrate unified support, as the actions will require ongoing coordination across city departments.

Niedzielski-Eichner, unable to raise her hand, texted a question asking whether any of the commitment actions would take place before the next election. Ms. Trendler responded that the timing is ideal but dependent on the Commission and Council's engagement.

Ms. Lopez discussed his recent visit to the Ridgefield Recycling Center, highlighting its organic recycling program managed in collaboration with the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRA), which partners with approximately 28 municipalities. He noted the tour provided insight into the Center's processing of residential organic waste into compost using a smart machine, with compost offered back to residents. Drop-off fees are \$20 for residents and \$50 for non-residents. He stated the program was praised for its effectiveness and scalability. Attendees included representatives from DEEP and local organizations.

Mr. Lopez invited anyone interested in visiting the facility to coordinate a future tour, describing the experience as both educational and impactful.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
China Mayhew  
Telesco Secretarial Services