

**CITY OF NORWALK
AD HOC SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES– OCTOBER 8, 2025, 6:00 PM
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDEES: Johan Lopez, Heather Dunn, Joshua Goldstein.

STAFF: Jodi Trendler, Tom Livingston.

OTHERS: Dave Carpenter, Thom Smith.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lopez called the regular meeting of the Ad Hoc Sustainability and Resilience Committee to order at 6:00 p.m. on October 8, 2025, via Zoom virtual meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Lopez conducted the roll call. A quorum was not present for the meeting.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: August 13, 2025

The acceptance of the minutes from the regular meeting on August 13, 2025, was not discussed due to the lack of quorum.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Gold Certification from Sustainable CT

Ms. Trendler provided an update on the gold certification from Sustainable Connecticut, a voluntary statewide program for communities to submit actions toward building a more sustainable community, with over 3,000 potential actions available.

In April, Norwalk had received bronze certification, and for the August deadline application, the city achieved gold status, representing a significant jump and a full staff effort involving every department, community organizations, the school district, the housing department, and the transportation department. This achievement was due to work over the past three years, with Ms. Trendler coordinating the compilation and submission of information.

Norwalk is one of 12 communities in Connecticut with gold status and one of 20 climate leaders. Mr. Livingston commended Ms. Trendler as the ringleader of the effort, noting that it would not have been accomplished without her, and highlighted Jerry's contributions as well. He also

observed the city's strong embrace of sustainability concepts, as evidenced by eager participation in Green Team meetings. Mr. Lopez reiterated thanks for Ms. Trendler's dedication and commitment, reflecting the city's focus on resiliency and environmental progress, and invited other council members to comment. Ms. Dunn congratulated Ms. Trendler and inquired about next steps, whether maintenance or reapplication is required, if there is anything better than gold, and how she could help.

Ms. Trendler explained that gold is the top level, with certification valid for three years, after which updates to actions completed and new ones added will be required. Norwalk scored 965 points out of 3,000 possible, leaving room for more points in the future.

Ms. Dunn asked about low-hanging fruit for the next year and any needs for help, budgeting, or planning. Ms. Trendler confirmed low-hanging fruit items where data compilation was incomplete for the current application but will be ready next time, and committed to following up on budgeting and planning needs.

B. Solarize Norwalk Presentation

Ms. Trendler introduced the presenters, Mr. Dave Carpenter and Mr. Thom Smith from Solar Homes 360, the vendors for the Solarize Norwalk program, which has launched with events and meetings scheduled to inform residents, provide details, answer questions, and maximize solar implementation in Norwalk.

The program aims to take advantage of federal tax credits for solar before they expire. Ms. Trendler turned the presentation over to Mr. Carpenter, who introduced himself as Vice President of Customer Experience for Smart Roofs Energy, the parent company, with Solar Homes 360 as the residential division selected to support the Solarize Norwalk effort. Mr. Smith is Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

Mr. Smith congratulated the committee on the gold certification and noted the rapid RFQ process for Solarize Norwalk. He introduced himself and Mr. Carpenter, both in the industry since 2009, with prior experience in the most active Solarize programs nationwide, including the first Solarize Norwalk in the early 2010s. Their previous company was acquired, leading to the formation of Solar Homes 360, emphasizing their expertise in running such programs.

Mr. Smith described the Solarize model as a collaboration between installers, the city, and community to drive down solar costs through group buying, where more enrollments benefit all, especially given Connecticut's high utility rates from Eversource and other districts. The program is a time-bound group buying campaign with cash rebates per installation rather than fixed pricing, applicable to purchase, loan, or power purchase agreement options, with no preference for any.

Rebates are tiered: \$1,000 for 1-24 installations, \$2,000 for 25-49, and \$3,000 for 50-plus, growing for all enrollees as tiers are reached to encourage early adopters while ensuring guaranteed savings. Mr. Smith shared screen visuals and explained enrollment via a website, with site visits, proposals, and designs by engineers. The process includes a homeowner portal,

welcome calls, satisfaction surveys, and net promoter scores managed by Mr. Carpenter for a white-glove experience, with commitment to making things right if issues arise.

Mr. Lopez inquired about warranties and panel insurance. Mr. Smith detailed a 30-year bumper-to-bumper warranty through third-party Zurich International's Solar Ensure product, covering parts, labor, leaks with zero deductible and no prorating, transferable if the company changes, allowing use of any installer.

Mr. Smith emphasized the collaborative nature and importance of early weeks, seeking introductions to champions, city employees, and stakeholders for success. Ms. Dunn suggested an event at her house on the morning of October 25 to demonstrate the process, with extra screens for walkthroughs. Mr. Smith and Mr. Carpenter confirmed availability on that Saturday, pending personal schedules, and Ms. Trendler committed to emailing details for coordination, including potential attendance by others like Eddie and Nora.

C. Sustainability and Resilience Office Updates

1. HeatSmart Norwalk: Upcoming Home Energy Efficiency/Heat Pump Program

Ms. Trendler provided a quick update on HeatSmart Norwalk, a program similar to Solarize Norwalk but promoting energy efficiency and heat pumps to maximize homeowner savings, with flexible funding options. More work is needed before launch, but it is forthcoming, emphasizing efficiency first in renewable energy contexts, aligning with current circumstances for significant resident savings. Mr. Lopez noted the importance of public education on heat pumps' suitability.

2. ClimateView

Ms. Trendler reported gaining access to the ClimateView software platform through the Institute for Sustainable Communities of Connecticut, funded by the redevelopment agency membership. She is participating in a climate communications cohort and completing training, after which a dashboard will launch to track greenhouse gas emissions and actions, including those from Solarize and HeatSmart programs.

3. Community Sustainability Task Force Kick-off 10/27/2025

Ms. Trendler announced the launch of the Community Sustainability Task Force on October 27, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., seeking recommendations for members to create a vision and actions for sustainability and resilience. She mentioned reaching out to Ms. Dunn for contacts in emergency preparedness and recovery, and Ms. Dunn suggested Dana Ross, head of EMT. Ms. Trendler confirmed the focus on Norwalk.

Mr. Lopez committed to emailing the council for constituent recommendations. Ms. Dunn inquired about pressure on the task force; Ms. Trendler confirmed Louise is involved, and Lisa Shanahan agreed to chair the Natural Resources Committee post-office.

Ms. Trendler noted interest from many and a signup link on the city's sustainability webpage, which she will share. The Solarize Norwalk page is also on the website, linking directly to the program. Ms. Dunn expressed interest in experiencing the process as a guinea pig to inform residents. Mr. Lopez asked about a link for HeatSmart Norwalk; Ms. Trendler confirmed it is not yet available.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lopez adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary