

City of Norwalk
Ad Hoc Sustainability and Resilience Committee
Regular Meeting
January 11, 2023

Attendance: Chairman Lisa Shanahan, Josh Goldstein, Tom Livingston, Greg Burnett, Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, Jenn McMurrer (6:15), Diana Revolus (6:15)

Staff: Brian Bidolli, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Executive Director; Katie O’Leary

Other: Bill Lucey, Brittany Chamberlin; Save the Sound

1) Call to Order

Chairman Lisa Shanahan called the meeting to order at 6:03. There was not a quorum present.

2) Acceptance of minutes from the September 15, 2022 and November 9, 2022 meetings.

The approval of the minutes will be pushed to next month’s meeting as there is not a quorum present to approve them.

3) Public Comments

Diane Lauricella called in to mention there is no agenda on the city website. She gave a brief history of stormwater authorities in Norwalk. She believes that stormwater authorities will be a great benefit to the city. It will impact water quality and green infrastructure. She would like to encourage the council to make use of the citizens who care about green energy and water preservation. She offered her help in implementing any green initiatives the committee undertakes.

Lynnelle Jones called in about her neighborhood’s susceptibility to flooding. Ms. Shanahan stated that public comments must be in regard to agenda items.

4) Business

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a. Update on the inventory of current sustainability projects underway.

Mr. Bidolli presented a chart on Climate Resilience Projects currently underway. It details the projects going on, and who is overseeing each. This chart will be forwarded to the entire committee.

Mr. Bidolli pointed out that transportation has a lot of opportunities to increase climate resiliency.

Ms. Shanahan mentioned that the City of Norwalk has recently received three different grants to create efficiencies in green infrastructure. One went to the Maritime Aquarium for the living shoreline, one is earmarked for flood planning throughout the city and the third is for the Norwalk Land Trust to work on a bird sanctuary.

b. Update on the Climate Action and Sustainability Plan RFP.

Mr. Bidolli gave an update on the RFP. The firm SLR based out of Boston, has been chosen. They are currently finalizing the scope of the project. They will do a gap analysis and looking at best practices.

Negotiations will be finished soon, and Mr. Bidolli plans to invite SLR to a future committee meeting to present their plan.

c. Introduction to stormwater authorities presented by Save the Sound.

Mr. Lucey presented a PowerPoint presentation on Stormwater Management and Flood Resilience. The overarching goal is to maintain a healthy shoreline, coastal environment, as well as to improve water quality by controlling runoff.

Mr. Lucey pointed out that due to warmer ocean temperatures, there are increasing larger storms causing coastal and interior flooding. The stormwater runoff carries pollution such as car oil, animal feces, lawn fertilization and pesticides into Long Island Sound. The biggest challenges

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facing Norwalk's stormwater collection are impervious coverage, sewage overflow, and residential fertilizer usage.

Water quality issues are a concern right now for the city of Norwalk. Norwalk's DPW has estimated that it will cost \$500 million to replace the current pipes with larger adequate sized piping to withstand expected increases in storm water runoff. Mr. Lucey suggests there are generally two ways to fund this — either through a tax increase or a stormwater fee. He gave some examples of how these two approaches can be implemented to generate revenue. This demonstration showed that the impact on the individual is quite small.

Mr. Lucey suggested implementing a credit system to lower individual costs for landowners that implement certain techniques to capture or minimize storm runoff. Property owners can be incented to add rain gardens or bioswales by providing discounts to the fee for these improvements.

Mr. Lucey finished by explaining how Save the Sound is prepared to help Norwalk and individual communities address and implement a stormwater plan.

Mr. Goldstein asked to review the costs for taxpayers. Property owners.

5) ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Shanahan adjourned the meeting at 6:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Chaple
Telesco Secretarial Services

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