

## Water Planning Council Advisory Group

### January 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

A telemeeting of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) was held by Zoom

An audio recording (27 MB) is available at:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG\\_2021/2021-01-19\\_WPCAG\\_Audio.mp3](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-01-19_WPCAG_Audio.mp3)

A video recording (354 MB) is available at:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG\\_2021/2021-01-19\\_WPCAG\\_Video.mp4](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-01-19_WPCAG_Video.mp4)

#### Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	<a href="#">Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments</a>
Karen Burnaska	<a href="#">Save the Sound</a>
Josh Cansler	<a href="#">Southeastern CT Water Authority</a>
Alicea Charamut	<a href="#">Fisheries Advisory Council</a>
Virginia de Lima	<a href="#">USGS CT Water Science Center</a>
Lee Hoffman (alt.)	<a href="#">CT Power and Energy Society</a>
John Hudak	<a href="#">South Central CT Regional Water Authority</a>
Patrick Kearney	<a href="#">Manchester Water &amp; Sewer</a>
Dan Lawrence	<a href="#">Aquarion</a>
Margaret Miner	<a href="#">Rivers Alliance</a>
Jeff Pugliese	<a href="#">Middlesex Chamber of Commerce</a>
Denise Savageau	<a href="#">CT Association of Conservation Districts</a>
Tom Tyler	<a href="#">MDC</a>
Brenda Watson	<a href="#">Operation Fuel</a>

#### Other Participants:

Jack Betkoski	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Len DeJong	Kleinfelder
Corinne Fitting	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Betsy Gara	CWWA
Alexandra Hibbard	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
David Kalafa	
Iris Kaminski	
Dave Kuzminski (alt.)	Portland
George Logan	Aquarion
Martin Mador	Sierra Club
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Gail Surface	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Mike Trahan	Solar Connecticut
Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">OPM</a>

#### Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	<a href="#">CT Forest and Park Association</a>
Carol Haskins	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition</a>
Sean Hayden	<a href="#">Lake Waramaug Task Force</a>
David Knauf	<a href="#">Darien Health Department</a>
Joan Nichols	<a href="#">CT Farm Bureau Assoc.</a>
Vacancy	<a href="#">CT Nursery &amp; Landscape Assoc.</a>

**1. Call to Order**

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:31 and asked everyone to introduce themselves and identify the organization they represent.

**2. Approval of draft [12/15/2020 Minutes](#)**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft minutes and Alicea asked if there are any comments regarding the draft minutes. Bruce Wittchen said he had a comment about the agenda, not the draft minutes. He explained that the way he has been using the state public meeting calendar to post meeting documents sometimes results in the links changing to previously saved documents. He sent everyone an email just before this meeting with correct links to the agenda and two documents linked in it. The motion to approve the draft minutes was approved unanimously, with John Hudak abstaining because he had not attended the meeting.

**3. Water Planning Council Update**

a. Water Planning Council Update

Josh Cansler said the meeting included a discussion regarding Miller’s Pond, a potential public water source largely in Waterford. The pond is owned by the Schacht family, which has been trying to sell it as a reservoir, and Tom Schacht provided an overview of the situation to the WPC. Josh noted that there is a history of lawsuits and other issues. Jack Betkoski said WPC members recognize that they only heard one side of the story, so the agencies will research it further and reach out to the involved municipalities.

b. Implementation Work Group (IWG)

Virginia de Lima said she just circulated the [final agenda](#) for the [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) (AWE) workshop to be held in March and described the role of cosponsors in circulating the invitation. The primary focus is financial decision makers. She also provided an overview of the conservation approach. She said the two current work groups met after the IWG meeting, so she does not have an update regarding them. She added that the WPC has asked the IWG to postpone its discussion of water system regionalization.

c. Other WPC/State Water Plan matters

There were no other WPC/State Water Plan matters.

**4. Old Business**

a. [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) update

Dan Lawrence said the next regional meeting will be Feb. 15.

b. [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) update

Bruce Wittchen said the interagency group met and decided to return all counties to normal. New London County had been at Stage 2 and the rest of the counties at Stage 1, but all have been returned to normal. Alicea Charamut said she appreciates that the group will continue to meet and monitor conditions and Jack Betkoski thanked the group and gave kudos to Aquarion for its handling of the 2020 drought.

Dan Lawrence asked if ground water concerns Bruce had mentioned at the previous WPCAG meeting have eased. Bruce highlighted the improvement at the [USGS's real-time well in Salisbury](#) and said the concern last month was that the well at that time had plateaued at a level below normal. Subsequent monitoring showed that well's rise to normal, but data are limited in other areas in that part of the state.

Virginia de Lima pointed out that that the USGS wells measured only monthly will be measured soon and fill in some of the gaps. She noted that USGS wells tend to be located away from areas with major pumping. Virginia mentioned that the USGS had proposed to study the relationship between ground water levels in spring and summer base flow in nearby streams, but she does not think anything has been done. Dan Lawrence asked for further details and there was a discussion of the general approach.

## **5. WPCAG Work Groups**

### **a. Watershed Lands Work Group**

Alicea Charamut pointed out that links have not yet been added to the [draft document that was circulated](#) and Karen Burnaska thanked everyone who has participated in the work group. Karen provided an overview of the group's recent and upcoming work regarding "Class I & II-like" lands, which are in the watershed of drinking water reservoirs, like the Class I and II lands owned by water companies, but are owned by someone else. She said they have received many suggestions for legislation, regulations, and other approaches regarding solar projects. She also mentioned Denise Savageau's proposal for a source water protection work group, to be discussed later, and its connection to this work.

Margaret Miner said all the discussion is about solar projects now, but it will not be in the future. She noted that the recently discussed solar project proposed in a Regional Water Authority watershed is relevant; the recently-discussed Candlewood project not in a drinking water watershed is not. She added that there have been discussions with DPH and then with DEEP. Efforts should be integrated. Karen Burnaska recommended that the group's report be sent to the WPC and noted comments regarding broader issues.

Alicea Charamut said she did not see any recommendations appearing to require conflict resolution and asked for comments. Margaret said some aspects are ready to go without further discussion; others need more. There was a discussion about how to proceed and that some are ready for action near-term while others are long-term.

John Hudak said he likes the new format of the report. He pointed out the distinction between recommendations identified as "Watershed Lands Workgroup purview" and those identified as "Other" and suggested using a different term for the

latter. He also asked about the criteria for dividing them. There was a discussion of the difference and of the overlap for some issues.

Denise Savageau asked for opinions about charging this group with also working on source water protection vs creating a 2<sup>nd</sup> group. Is there bandwidth for two groups? She provided further background and explained that source water protection gets into other issues, such as storm water management. She noted there is overlap with the watershed lands work group, but this group's name should be changed if it is to also take on source water protection.

There was a discussion of the watershed lands work group charge and history and Alicea Charamut said it will be up to the WPC to decide if it wants a second group. Denise said the recommendation should be for the WPC to decide between expanding the watershed lands group or creating a second group. She noted that the current name of the group might not be recognized as including other source water protection issues. There was further discussion of possible approaches and roles for work groups.

Alicea Charamut asked for comments about a broader work group to look at water sheds lands issues and source water protection together. Denise Savageau noted the different abilities brought by different people and said all must be involved, pointing out the number of recommendations that DPH provided. What tools are available?

Virginia de Lima said a proposal must clearly define what is to be done, noting that every watershed is a source of water to some use. Denise Savageau noted that source water is defined as being a source of drinking water and said terminology must be specific.

Lee Hoffman noted that he had to leave soon and wanted to provide some comments. He recommended that the link to Appendix I on pg 5 should link to the full general permit, not just the appendix. He will provide the link and Alicea said there is further work to do on links in the report. Lee Hoffman added that he is troubled by the inclusion of the report's Appendix B, a rough draft of the work in progress. It does not need to be included. Karen Burnaska explained that it was included because it had been provided to the work group. There was further discussion and it was recommended that a link be provided, not the full draft report.

Jack Betkoski noted the changes since the beginning of the WPC and recommended the group be vigilant and move forward quickly. Situations like this will come up more frequently. Karen Burnaska made a motion to send the report to the WPC with the cover memo also recommending the WPC form a Source Water Protection work group. Alicea Charamut recommended against merging those requests and instead have the attention be focused on the Watershed Lands Work Group report and any concerns. Karen withdrew her motion. Jack Betkoski said he had to leave the meeting at this time and emphasized the importance of this work.

There was a discussion of the issues addressed by the work group having relevance beyond water resources, such as to farmland soils and forests, and that the recommendations are not specific to solar facilities. The bullets at the top of pg 4 of the draft report follow the "Other" heading at the bottom of pg 3 and are included

under that heading because they are relevant to more than just drinking water sources. There was further discussion of how to address that in this report.

Virginia de Lima said there are structural issues that must be addressed; this conversation might not be the best way to do that. Karen Burnaska said the issue is not limited to solar projects, but those are the current focus. People have brought up other factors also impacting on water. There was a discussion of the energy project focus, types of such projects, and criteria enabling fast-tracking during [CT Siting Council](#) (CSC) review by petition for a declaratory ruling.

Karen Burnaska said she would like for the group to move forward with the report, but not if members are uncomfortable with it. Alicea Charamut said the report makes good recommendations and there seems to be little concern about it. Any issues can be worked out later. Karen explained the process leading up to the report and there was general agreement that it does not need to go back to the work group. Karen made a motion that the report be forwarded to the WPC and the motion was seconded following discussion of a possible friendly amendment. The motion passed unanimously with Virginia de Lima abstaining because she had not yet read it carefully.

c. [Source Water Protection Workgroup Proposal](#)

Denise said there is widespread confusion about the meaning of source water protection and said it extends beyond water company lands. She described how the topic is addressed by the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3) and highlighted that DPH and water companies cannot handle it on their own.

Denise said most funding for water quality goes to non-source water efforts. She said the improvement of impaired waters is prioritized, not the protection of source waters. She described the [One Water Approach](#) and asked what each agency's role should be, noting the difference between a focus on broader water issues and a narrow focus on water supplies. Denise said she is not sure whether a separate group should be created for this or if it should be part of the Watershed Lands Work Group's charge.

Iris Kaminski said her focus is on the prevention of pollution and contamination. For her, the big picture is Long Island Sound and the little picture is a neighbor using pesticides. Agencies' support would be appreciated. Denise said source water protection does not address those concerns and mentioned DEEP programs that do. Denise noted that many communities rely on water from elsewhere and said the town of Hartland does not have capacity to protect water originating there that is used elsewhere in the Hartford region. She also described the Farm River, which provides water to the estuary and to the regional public water supply.

Alicea Charamut said there is overlap between this and the Watershed Lands Work Group and asked how they differ from [DPH's Source Water Collaborative](#). Denise said the Watershed Lands Work Group should be the Source Water Protection group and asked if many people are aware CT has a Source Water Collaborative. Denise said the focus should be on breaking down the silos. There was a discussion of producing a white paper on source water protection and a motion was made and seconded to recommend that the WPC charge a new group with doing so. The

motion passed unanimously and Alicea said that recommendation will be conveyed at the WPC's next meeting.

**6. New Business**

There was no new business.

**7. Public Comment**

There was no further public comment.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

Alicea read the dates of upcoming meetings.

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*