

## Water Planning Council Advisory Group

### March 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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

An audio recording (16 MB) is available at:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG\\_2021/2021-03-16\\_WPCAG\\_Audio.mp3](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-03-16_WPCAG_Audio.mp3)

A video recording (331 MB) is available at:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG\\_2021/2021-04-20\\_WPCAG\\_Video.mp4](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-04-20_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>
Carol Haskins	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition</a>
Sean Hayden	<a href="#">Lake Waramaug Task Force</a>
John Hudak	<a href="#">South Central CT Regional Water Authority</a>
Fred Klein	<a href="#">CT Power and Energy Society</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:

Judy Allen	Save Our Water CT
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Cos.
Ally Ayotte	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Mary Ann Dickinson	Alliance for Water Efficiency
Corinne Fitting	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Alexandria Hibbard	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Iris Kaminski	
George Logan	Aquarion
Sarah Ridyard	CT Water
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">OPM</a>

#### Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	<a href="#">CT Forest and Park Association</a>
Patrick Kearney	<a href="#">Manchester Water &amp; Sewer</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 1:34 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

## **2. Approval of draft 2/16/2021 Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the [draft 2/16/2021 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Brenda Watson abstaining because she had not attended the meeting.

## **3. Water Planning Council Update**

### **b. Implementation Work Group (IWG)**

Virginia de Lima said the group met last week and said one focus was the [workshop](#) presented by the [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) (AWE) today and tomorrow. Mary Ann Dickinson said 106 people registered and 85 watched this morning. She said the AWE will create a webpage where people will be able to view a recording of each day's presentation. Alicea Charamut asked if it would be possible to list the time each speaker appears; Mary Ann said AWE can prepare an agenda listing those times. Alicea asked if there were any questions about the workshop and there were none.

Virginia said another focus of the IWG has been a proposal to increase conservation requirements for water fixtures. She described a draft 1-page flyer and said they are looking for feedback from the Departments of Administrative Services (DAS) and Consumer Protection (DCP).

Virginia mentioned that another issue being discussed is the application of the [Freedom of Information Act](#) (FOIA) to meetings of water subgroups and pointed out that PURA and DEEP have provided conflicting interpretations. She said one option for simplifying compliance would be to post a generic agenda that can remain the same each month but noted that the public benefits from a more informative agenda.

Virginia said the private well water quality subgroup decided that radon, uranium, and arsenic should be added to the list of potential contaminants included in routine well water testing. She also outlined what the new implementation tracking work group is expected to look at. There also was a discussion of splitting work group topics to reduce the time needed for a group to complete its assignment. Virginia noted that there also was a discussion of attempting to avoid legislative sessions when scheduling work groups.

## **4. Old Business**

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

Dan Lawrence said the first WUCC implementation work group meeting was Feb. 25. He provided an overview of four subgroups: 1) *Drought & Conservation*; 2) *Small Systems*; 3) *Interconnections*; 4) *Planning – Developers & Local Planners*. Alicea Charamut said she appreciated drought and conservation being combined in one subgroup. There was further discussion about the WUCC effort and of the availability of minutes and other information about the groups.

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

Bruce Wittchen said the group met earlier this month and every county is currently considered normal, but some drying is happening. He highlighted that some USGS monitoring wells in NW CT are low. He also said the group is reviewing how the new drought plan worked during the recent drought and asked people to submit and comments or suggestions either at the next WPCAG meeting or directly to him.

Fred Klein asked if Bruce is expecting the drought conditions of 2020 to be repeated in 2021 and Bruce said he cannot predict that because it will depend on precipitation this year. He did note that precipitation was not that far below normal in lower Fairfield County last year and that the apparently high amount of lawn watering there might be repeated. There was a discussion of 2020's high water demands.

Alicea Charamut said stream flows are getting low in eastern CT and noted that less snow had accumulated there. She pointed out that we had a more normal snow melt this year than in recent years. Bruce Wittchen mentioned that monitoring wells in NW CT seem to show that.

**5. WPCAG Work Groups**

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska said the WPC has requested that WPCAG co-chairs Josh Cansler and Alicea Charamut be on the task force for DEEP's [Integrated Resource Planning](#). Margaret Miner mentioned that she found the WPC website to be out of date when she looked for the WPC's recent discussion of this topic. It says the page is under construction and no 2021 meeting documents are available.

Margaret Miner said she will check on the status of the Cheshire land conveyance discussed last year. She also said there was a split vote of the [CT Siting Council](#) regarding the previously discussed solar facility proposed on non-water company land in a RWA reservoir watershed in Hamden. She said the vote was 3-2 against approval and provided some background regarding solar facility concerns. There was a discussion of how to resolve solar facility siting issues.

Margaret Miner mentioned WPCAG member Denise Savageau's presentation regarding soil health and options for making source water information more readily available. Karen Burnaska noted that WPCAG member Aaron Budris is working on that with DPH's Eric McPhee. Aaron said Emily Wilson of [UConn CLEAR](#) is also working with them and they have reached out to the water utilities.

Margaret Miner said a good map and better education for local commissions are needed. She mentioned other work being done by DPH and also said the WPC should be a stakeholder in solar siting proceedings. John Hudak provided further information about the CSC proceeding regarding the project proposed in Hamden, highlighting that it is not finished. He noted another recently proposed solar project before the CSC in another RWA reservoir watershed that is a much more suitable site than the one proposed in Hamden.

Alicea Charamut said she will put together short-term recommendations for next month. Fred Klein asked that enough time be allowed for circulation and Alicea noted that they will be similar to those in the recent [report](#).

b. Update – WPC consideration of [Source Water Protection Workgroup Proposal](#)

Denise Savageau said she gave the proposal to DPH's Eric McPhee and Alicea Charamut said it will be circulated for further review.

## 6. New Business

a. Water-related legislation update

Alicea Charamut said a [Public Health Committee](#) hearing is scheduled tomorrow and will include [SB 834, An Act Concerning Water Quality Notification](#), and [HB 6615, An Act Concerning Safe Drinking Water](#). She has not reviewed those. Dan Lawrence said the [CT Water Works Assoc.](#) (CWWA) discussed HB 6615 and utilities are concerned about the lack of clarity of some provisions. There was a discussion of the intent and need for clarity. It was noted that Sec. 8 of HB 6615, which would require labs to report water utility samples violating standards, would apparently apply to any water samples submitted by a utility, even if not of potable water.

Alicea Charamut mentioned SB 1031, [An Act Concerning The Use Of Sodium Chloride To Mitigate Ice And Snow Accumulations](#) and provided some history regarding the bill. John Hudak said the industry is largely supportive, but noted that there is some confusion regarding the last section's reference to water softeners. Alicea mentioned [HB 6498, An Act Concerning The Siting Of Certain Solar Facilities On Farmlands And Core Forests](#) and John Hudak said it would extend DEEP or DoAg review on such sites down to 1 MW facilities. He said it should include DPH review for facilities on watershed lands and suggested that it be triggered based on the footprint of the facility instead of the proposed generating capacity.

Denise Savageau said HB 6498 focuses on the CSC process with the goal of making sure the CSC knows of these issues. She noted that the focus has been to deliver electric power at the lowest cost. Her comment is that other costs should also be considered. She also mentioned that it doesn't address DEEP's Integrated Resource Plan and mentioned that the issue begins with funding decisions. She expects the [CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation](#) will provide comments.

Margaret Miner said the CSC review comes too late and asked if anyone is considering changing that process. Denise Savageau said there should be more discussion of impacts to ecosystem services, not just the costs of construction. She pointed out that NY City has saved billions on potable water treatment system costs by protecting land in its source water areas.

Alicea Charamut mentioned that another bill of interest is [SB 926, An Act Concerning The Presence Of PFAS In Certain Consumer Packaging](#). She provided an overview of the bill and said we will continue to have issues with PFAS if they remain present in packaging materials.

Denise Savageau said [HB 6496](#), *An Act Concerning Certain Soil-Related Initiatives*, was approved by the Environment Committee, but not with everything wanted. There was a discussion of a correction made in the approved version and Denise highlighted that the bill does not offer the same protection for public drinking water watersheds overseen by DPH that it does for the aquifer protection areas overseen by DEEP.

Denise also mentioned [HB 6441](#), *An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation*. She said its prohibition against towns using funds for open space preservation if they do not meet the specified affordable housing standard should make an exception for source water protection. She pointed out that protecting urban water supplies requires protecting land in rural areas.

**7. Public Comment**

There was no further public comment.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

Alicea read the dates of upcoming meetings:

WPCAG:	April 20, 2021, 1:30
WPC:	April 6, 2021, 1:30
IWG:	April 13, 2021, 1:30

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*