

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

July 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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

A video recording is available at:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-07-20_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Karen Burnaska	Save the Sound
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Tom Tyler	MDC
Lori Vitagliano (alt.)	South Central CT Regional Water Authority

Other Participants:

Judy Allen	Save Our Water CT
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Cos.
Ally Ayotte	PURA
Corinne Fitting	DEEP
Alexandria Hibbard	DEEP
Iris Kaminski	
Dave Kuzminski (alt.)	Portland
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Bruce Wittchen	OPM

Members Absent:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
David Knauf	Darien Health Department
Joan Nichols	CT Farm Bureau Assoc.
Jeff Pugliese	Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel
<i>Vacancy</i>	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.

1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut noted that Josh Cansler could not attend the meeting, called the meeting to order at 1:34, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 6/15/2021 Minutes

Alicea Charamut pointed out that the draft incorrectly says she attended the meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the corrected draft [6/15/2021 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Alicea Charamut and Lori Vitagliano abstaining.

3. Water Planning Council Update

a. Water Planning Council Update

Alicea Charamut said she had not attended the WPC meeting and believes everything it covered will be addressed later in the meeting. She asked if anyone has anything to add. Iris Kaminski said there is a concern about leaf blowers in New Haven and asked if petroleum-powered landscape equipment should be considered as a potential source water issue. She said that should be brought up in the New Business section of the agenda.

b. Implementation Work Group (IWG) Update

Alicea Charamut said IWG co-chairs Virginia de Lima and Dave Radka are unavailable today and read an overview that Virginia had sent to her. The final report of the private well water quality subgroup will be sent to the WPC with the expectation that language on legislation and regulations will be hashed out throughout the process. Editorial changes were suggested on the drought report and it will be sent to WPCAG. A brainstorming session has been proposed for an IWG meeting to get ideas for tracking state water plan implementation. She added that the outreach and education group will focus primarily on education.

Alicea noted that Virginia had also mentioned that there recently was a discussion of whether the WPCAG or the IWG should initiate a source-water protection workgroup. This has led some people to ask if there might be a more efficient way of addressing water issues identified in the State Water Plan. Alicia said Virginia is asking members to think about alternative structures for addressing issues and implementing the plan. She added that Virginia had mentioned that the WPCAG and IWG have similar missions but two major differences: 1) the membership of the WPCAG is in statute; and 2) the IWG includes representatives of the WPC agencies.

Tom Tyler said the IWG's discussion focused on the limited pool of volunteers for the various groups and concerns about overlapping efforts. Alicea said she believes the WPCAG can work on things lacking consensus recommendations in the state water plan. She noted that the WPC, following approval of the plan, had adopted a prioritized list from those consensus recommendations. There is nothing comparable for the WPCAG.

Carol Haskins pointed out the workload of volunteering for groups like the WPCAG and questioned the value they are adding to the process. Dan Lawrence noted that the WPCAG's role is to advise the WPC but work sometimes lags while waiting for permission to proceed.

Margaret Miner said the WPC is not taking over plan implementation and Alicea said she believes the water plan needs dedicated staff. We do not have the resources

required for plan implementation. Carol Haskins asked in plan implementation is a priority for the WPC agencies and Alicea noted that the expected 5-year plan update is approaching; resources will be needed. Iris Kaminski said more funding is needed for water in general.

Dan Lawrence pointed out that the update cycle for water utilities' water supply plans is six or more years. He asked if it might be better to only update the state water plan every ten years and to issue a status report every two or three years. Alicea Charamut mentioned the implementation tracking group that is being formed and issues that arose during plan development.

Karen Burnaska said the WPC's annual report should address what was done that year and Alicea suggested that WPCAG members review that report. Martha Smith pointed out the original decision on plan priorities was based in part on what was easiest then, in part considering the need for funding. The availability of funding is different now. Alicea said she will look for a link to the WPC's annual report. Corinne Fitting said the WPC has not done those reports and the implementation group is looking into this.

There was further discussion of plan implementation reporting. Alicea said she will look into this further and will ask the WPC how the WPCAG can help. Corinne said that will help and noted that an upcoming brainstorming session will consider how to track implementation. Anyone interested is welcome. Alicea said she will have a suggestion for that work group and added that the WPCAG's next agenda should include "Structures for Implementation".

4. Old Business

a. Water-related legislation update

Alicea said this probably was covered last month and no one had anything to add.

b. Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) update

Dan Lawrence said it would be beneficial to coordinate work being done by the [Water Utility Coordinating Committees](#) (WUCCs) and the implementation tracking group. He noted that there are too many initiatives and the WUCCs need to focus on fewer. He mentioned the large number of leadership changes at the WUCCs, as described at previous WPCAG meetings.

Jonathan Avery said the Central WUCC met recently and noted its loss of leaders. It is discussing what issues to focus on. He mentioned that DPH is especially interested in small systems. The Eastern WUCC has not met recently and he mentioned that people are not stepping in to fill leadership positions as others retire.

Dan Lawrence said the WUCCs are working with COGs to develop planning guides to assist with water-related land development issues. He add that they are considering criteria for when new development that would otherwise be served by a non-community system should connect to a nearby community system. He said the WUCCs' work is difficult without a consultant.

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

Bruce Wittchen said the group did not meet for the second consecutive month. He highlighted that despite the generally wet conditions, parts of the state are below normal for the calendar year and conditions can change. Alicea Charamut pointed out how high the CT River is and warned that it is dangerous on the rivers. Dan Lawrence highlight that water use on the Aquarion system dropped down almost to winter levels during rainy periods, but rise afterwards. He added that the company sends conservation letters to people whose use exceeds their winter use by a factor of 3x or more. He noted that reservoirs are full and agreed that conditions can change quickly.

d. Nominating Committee

There was no report.

e. Hydrilla update

Alicea Charamut said she does not have an update on the funding request discussed at last month's meeting but we will keep this on the agenda. She offered a field trip to see the extent of infestations. Carol Haskins mentioned the Hydrilla she had seen during a water chestnut pull she volunteered for on the Mattabassett River and said she wondered if the disturbance of water chestnut removal aided the spread of Hydrilla. Alicea acknowledged the competing priorities when dealing with two invasive species in the same place, but said boat traffic and fishing do more to move Hydrilla.

5. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

- Update – WPC consideration of [Final Draft Report](#)

Alicea said the report update can be removed from future agendas. She said people continue working on various aspects solar siting and noted that DEEP is still accepting comments in its current [scoping process](#) and has been holding listening sessions. She recommended people submitting comments send detailed recommendations. Karen mentioned that WPCAG member John Hudak spoke on behalf of Regional Water and the WPCAG at a recent meeting.

Margaret Miner said John provided good comments. She added that she is concerned about what appears to be carelessness in land use decisions that threaten state waters. She listed three examples:

- A school on a 3-acre lot on Sleeping Giant Mountain, in an aquifer protection area and water supply watershed;
- Blasting proposed in Canton on a site near private wells and adjacent to a water utility source; and
- A quarry in Monroe affecting AA quality water.

Margaret said these are examples of high quality water that is lost or is at risk. We are not protecting the state's AA water. What do we have?

b. Source Water Protection Workgroup

There was no further discussion.

c. Solar Siting Work Group

There was no further discussion.

6. New Business

Alicea Charamut mentioned the concern Iris Kaminski raised earlier about petroleum-fueled landscape equipment such as leaf blowers. Iris explained that people in New Haven are looking at these because of noise, air pollution, and water pollution. She provided further background and asked if the WPCAG has any interest in looking into this.

Dan Lawrence said it would be difficult to connect such risks to leaf blowers because of the use of other gas-powered tools. He asked if this is a topic for the WPCAG. Margaret Miner pointed out that there are a variety of issues associated with various types of landscape equipment, highlighting people mowing up to wetland boundaries. Alicea acknowledge the concerns raised by Iris but said it does not seem to be within the WPCAG's purview.

There was a discussion of other approaches, including buffer requirements and noise regulations. Alicea said she believes we are seeing a transition from gasoline to electric powered equipment and added that she does not see a role for the WPCAG. Iris said the point would be to prevent pollution, which is easier than remediation. Pat Kearney highlighted the threat posed by highways passing many of the state's water supply reservoirs. He add that those are the state's highways and said we should look at what to do about those.

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

8. Next Meeting Date

Alicea read the schedule of upcoming meetings:

WPCAG:	August 17, 2021, 1:30
WPC:	August 3, 2021, 1:30
IWG:	August 10, 2021, 1:30

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM