

## Water Planning Council Advisory Group

### October 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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

A video recording is available at:

[https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2021-10-19\\_WPCAG\\_Video.mp4](https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2021-10-19_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>
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>
David Knauf	<a href="#">Darien Health Department</a>
Dave Kuzminski (alt.)	Portland
Dan Lawrence	<a href="#">Aquarion</a>
Margaret Miner	<a href="#">Rivers Alliance</a>

#### Other Participants:

Jonathan Avery	Hazardville & Jewett City Water Co.
Ally Ayotte	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Corinne Fitting	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Alexandria Hibbard	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Iris Kaminski	
Gannon Long	<a href="#">Operation Fuel</a>
Sonia Marino (alt.)	Guilford Health Dept.
Christine O'Neill (alt.)	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Charles Vidich	WestCOG
Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">OPM</a>

#### Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	<a href="#">CT Forest and Park Association</a>
Joan Nichols	<a href="#">CT Farm Bureau Assoc.</a>
Jeff Pugliese	<a href="#">Middlesex Chamber of Commerce</a>
Denise Savagau	<a href="#">CT Association of Conservation Districts</a>
Tom Tyler	<a href="#">MDC</a>
Brenda Watson	<a href="#">Operation Fuel</a>
Vacancy	<a href="#">CT Nursery &amp; Landscape Assoc.</a>

#### 1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:33 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

## **2. Approval of draft 9/21/2021 Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [9/21/2021 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously.

## **3. Water Planning Council/Implementation Work Group Update**

### **b. Implementation Work Group Update**

Virginia de Lima said the survey to follow up on the [rates workshop](#) coordinated by the [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) in the spring should go out later today. She also mentioned that 25 people participated in the water plan implementation & tracking work group's [9/28/2021 brainstorming session](#). The WPC has not provided feedback yet. She added that additional people are welcome to join that work group. She also provided an update regarding the outreach and education group, which is considering a multi-year approach, and she said it the WPC should consider making it a standing committee.

Virginia invited suggestions for new work groups and noted that the water chief position description discussed in previous meetings is on hold but should be discussed at the WPC's November meeting. Virginia also mentioned an interest in newly emerging topics. Alicea Charamut said the WPC might have a special meeting and someone will confirm the meeting date with WPC chair Jack Betkoski.

### **d. Other State Water Plan matters**

- [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3) reporting as it relates to the State Water Plan

Alicea Charamut noted that she and others have offered to comb through the water plan and other plans to identify priorities in common with the GC3 effort. Results will be sent to the WPC.

## **4. Old Business**

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

Dan Lawrence said the Western [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) met earlier today and he noted the need to update the WUCC member contact list to ensure all members can be reached. He mentioned the WUCC's review of an application submitted by a proposed bakery in Sharon that will be far from the closest public system that could serve it. He also said elections are coming up. He mentioned the challenges of getting people together and said that WUCC will have to focus on fewer things.

Jonathan Avery said his water companies are in the Central and Eastern WUCCs, which also have good intentions to meet. He noted that they need to fill vacant leadership positions. Dan Lawrence explained that WUCC business is handled by each region's WUCC. He noted the need to update the boundaries of water company service and added that WPCAG member Aaron Budris of the [Naugatuck Valley Council of](#)

[Governments](#) (NVCOG) is helping develop guidance materials to assist local land use officials and noted the relevance to the Watershed Lands Work Group.

Margaret Miner said she is concerned about so few members attending their WUCC meetings and making the WUCC decisions. She provided an overview of the WUCC process and said it is too exclusionary. Dan Lawrence said he did not disagree and said they are developing information on how the system works. He outlined the WUCC goals and process and noted the need to work on contact lists, pointing out that there are 800 email addresses on the Western WUCC distribution list. He said the focus is on plan implementation and mentioned work being done regarding interconnections.

There was further discussion of the WUCC process and Dan Lawrence said they are trying to clarify expectations and that providing information to the WPCAG could help reach more people. Jonathan Avery said WUCC meetings are open to the public and people have an opportunity to speak, but acknowledge the importance of the public knowing about the meetings.

Alicea Charamut asked if WUCCs have lists of applications that are before them. Dan Lawrence said the western WUCC currently has nothing and explained that applications come to WUCC chairs from DPH. He added that WUCCs are trying to clean up the process to be more visible and noted the urgency of many applications. He listed information WUCCs require for making a decision and noted that applications are typically far from any community water system. It should be possible to post those online and he mentioned that the website is run by DPH.

Alicea Charamut agreed that the process can be cumbersome, but pointed out that people will attend a meeting when they are aware of it and that it will address something of interest to them. There was a discussion of how to improve the process and Dan described how the WUCCs work with DPH in scheduling. Margaret Miner said the WUCC process was established to handle water utility planning with an expectation that people would approach WUCCs, which would have authority for planning and decision making and DPH would only step in when problems arose.

Dan Lawrence said the system has not changed from the approach Margaret described; what has changed is the process by which people come into the system. He outlined different scenarios new water users face depending on the presence or absence of public water service and exclusive service areas. They are trying to clarify the process so people understand the role of WUCCs, but people typically go directly to DPH, not to the WUCC. There was a brief discussion of Aaron Budris's mention of the Watershed Lands Work Group and Karen Burnaska said the group will contact him.

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

Alicea Charamut noted that Bruce Wittchen left for another meeting and asked Corinne Fitting for an update on the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#). Corinne said the group met and is working through the recommendations of the drought topical group and will proceed to Charge 4, the only one remaining, at its next meeting.

c. Nominating Committee

Alicea Charamut said the WPC approved the slate of nominations with the understanding that two slots still must be filled. Carol Haskins added that the [CT Nursery & Landscape Association](#) (CNLA) has said since then that they are unable to provide a representative. We will have to consider other options for that and for the agricultural slot, but noted that there have been some good recommendations. Alicea asked if anyone has any comments and Dan Lawrence noted that he will leave the nominating committee when he becomes WPCAG co-chair. It was noted that Josh Cansler is replacing John Hudak on the nominating committee and Alicea invited anyone interested in joining the committee to contact Carol.

d. Hydrilla update

Alicea Charamut said she does not have an update on Hydrilla or

## 5. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska said they still have not received the final addendum to the legislature's [Government Administration & Elections](#) (GAE) Committee's legislative land conveyance questionnaire. She also said that she and Margaret Miner will contact Aaron Budris as mentioned in the WUCC portion of this meeting. Karen noted that DEEP be hiring someone to work on the update of the [Green Plan](#) and she and Margaret will invite a presentation to the work group regarding that plan update process. Margaret said she had nothing to add regarding that but noted that she came across a previously unnoticed section of legislation regarding wetlands and land use permits and asked if she should hold this for public comment and Alicea said she should.

b. Source Water Protection Work Group –

- [Source Water Protection Outline](#)

Alicea said she has only received one draft and asked anyone who had sent one to resend it because she had experienced email issues when they were due.

c. Solar Siting Work Group

- [Draft Solar Siting Recommendations & Work Plan](#)

Alicea Charamut said there is no update and added that she has not seen anything about DEEP's [Sustainable, Transparent, and Efficient Practices for Solar Development](#) (STEPS) initiative, which she thought had been scheduled to meet in September. John Hudak said he has not either and Alicea asked Corinne Fitting if she knows about it and Corinne said she will find out and provide that information.

## 6. New Business

There was no new business.

## 7. Public Comment

Margaret Miner said she has learned of bills passed this year that extend time limits for land use permits ([PA 21-34](#) and [PA 21-163](#)). She described how the public acts both extend land use approvals to 19 years and noted that Rivers Alliance had submitted testimony in opposition to the latter at a time it had a different title. She explained the timing of land use approvals and described the impact on the time frame for wetlands approval and explained how it escaped later notice and noted how the [Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions](#) (CACIWC) has only a limited capacity to follow and advocate regarding legislation. She said there should be more tracking and advocacy regarding wetlands issues. Len DeJong noted that CACIWC's website has information about its upcoming conference, which includes a section on wetlands law.

Iris Kaminski noted the expectation for increased transportation infrastructure spending and asked about the connection bicycle paths and source water protection. Margaret Miner mentioned her organization's advisory work regarding bike paths in a wet area of Litchfield and said there can be a tension between protecting water and providing the ability for people to ride a bike.

Gannon Long said CT DOT would be the lead for that federal funding and described the scale of many transportation projects, pointing out that bike infrastructure tends to be a small proportion of the cost. She said it would be beneficial if DOT heard more about source water protection and about including improvements for walking and biking when doing costly road projects. She mentioned DOT Deputy Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto being a good contact regarding this.

Iris Kaminski asked Margaret about the tension between bikes and water and thanked Gannon for the information she provided regarding the cost of transportation projects. Alicea said she added a link to [Bike Walk CT](#) in the chat. Margaret Miner said people wanted the Litchfield bike trail, but one must question how it will be constructed and how it will be maintained, especially if it is desired to be available year-round. Alicea mentioned the potential for wildlife conflicts.

## **8. Next Meeting Date**

Alicea read the schedule of upcoming meetings:

November 2, 2021:	WPC	[note: this meeting was later changed to Nov. 3]
November 9, 2021:	IWG	
November 16, 2021:	WPCAG	

## **9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*