

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

December 21, 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/2021-12-21_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Karen Burnaska	Save the Sound
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
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
Sonia Marino (alt.)	CT Association of Directors of Health
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Tom Tyler	MDC

Other Participants:

Ally Ayotte	PURA
Corinne Fitting	DEEP
Alexandria Hibbard	DEEP
Iris Kaminski	
Gannon Long	Operation Fuel
Christine O'Neill (alt.)	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Karen Weeks	
Bruce Wittchen	OPM

Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
John Hudak	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Joan Nichols	CT Farm Bureau Assoc.
Jeff Pugliese	Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of draft 11/16/2021 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [11/16/2021 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Fred Klein abstaining because he had not attended the meeting.

Recording began at 1:37.

3. Adoption of 2022 Meeting Schedule

There was a discussion of the proposed October meeting date being a major holiday on the Jewish calendar and of moving that meeting to another day. Darryl Newman said that holiday is observed in the evening, so there should be no conflict. The schedule was accepted as presented without a vote, keeping the usual October meeting date.

4. Water Plan Updates

a. Water Planning Council Update

There was a brief discussion of tomorrow's special meeting of the WPC, which is expected to review water plan priorities and the Water Chief proposal. Virginia mentioned that the WPC had discussed DEEP being contacted by the state Department of Administrative Services to discuss the adoption of EPA WaterSense standards. The Department of Consumer Protection would be responsible for implementing any new standards and federal funding might be available.

Virginia pointed out that the water plan priorities are from 2018 and provided an overview of how they were determined from the longer list of recommendations in the [state water plan](#). She said those should be updated and suggested that people start with a fresh look at the plan's recommendations instead of looking at what was prioritized previously.

b. Implementation Work Group Update

- **Topical Sub-Work Groups**

Virginia said the water plan implementation/tracking work group will meet on 4th Tuesdays. The [outreach & education](#) work group will be a permanent group. It will focus on wetlands and rivers in the coming year and mentioned some expectations. She also spoke of water plan branding and the WPC website, noting that agencies should keep the website current.

Virginia said the new work group established to consider expectations for the proposed water chief is scheduled to meet 11:00 – 12:30 on Jan. 7 & 21 and Feb. 4. She provided an overview of their expected to work and said there has been an effort to reach out to other states to learn their approach.

Denise Savageau said the outreach & education group is looking for new members. She added that the group will meet the first Thursday of each month and Corinne Fitting complimented the group's work.

c. Structures for state water planning and implementation

- Water Chief position

Alicea Charamut said this was already covered by Virginia's report but noted that the goal is for the group to provide a draft report to the IWG and WPCAG for their February meetings.

d. Other State Water Plan matters

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

Alicea showed the previously discussed water plan prioritization list [**Note: Was this been posted online??? Find it before posting another.**]. She noted that drought plan changes, identified as the highest priority, are underway. She said there is some ground to cover regarding conservation, mentioning that we haven't accomplished rate decoupling. She wants to prioritize water conservation.

Alicea said the electronic diversion reporting system that was a high priority has been completed, but the central data portal has not been, although there is interest. There was a brief discussion of its value for monitoring plan implementation. There was a discussion of other plan recommendations that were not ranked as highly as the priority items. Alicea noted the interest in regionalization but pointed out that it was not a consensus item in the water plan. She also mentioned funding for implementation, including for the proposed water chief position.

Alicea asked if the WPCAG should update its previous prioritization or if the IWG should. Denise Savageau pointed out that the list of recommendations divides topics that should be considered together as aspects of source water protection. Iris Kaminski agreed about considering some of the separated recommendations together and spoke of pollution prevention, which she noted is superior to correcting a problem after it is created.

Alicea Charamut described how DEEP had compiled the list of recommendations from the plan and there was further discussion of how some of the plan's recommendations relate to one another. Denise said source water protection is a federal term, with differences in requirements for point and nonpoint sources. She commented that there is little of the state water plan in the state's clean water act planning.

Alicea said she will distribute the spreadsheet and this group can discuss it after the WPC has looked at it. Denise Savageau encouraged people to look at **near-term items listed in Sec. 6.8.2** and at 5-year goals, such as climate change. Virginia De Lima added that modeling such as that done in the Quinnipiac basin could be extended. Alicea said we should also consider funding opportunities and which agencies would be involved.

Denise said climate change is expected to be a topic for the upcoming short legislative session. She described various federal funding streams and said the WPC and WPCAG should look at the state's revolving funds. Should some clean water funds go to nonpoint sources and some drinking water go to source water protection?

5. Old Business

a. Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) update

Dan Lawrence said the [Water Utility Coordinating Committees](#) (WUCCs) slowly move ahead and he described their interest in emergency interconnections. He noted that in the past those were primarily used when doing maintenance. Aaron Budris mentioned their work on outreach materials for local leaders and developers regarding interconnections. It is not ready for the public yet but a draft will be shared in the coming months. Dan mentioned that the Western WUCC met and commented that WUCCs should meet quarterly.

b. Interagency Drought Work Group update

Bruce Wittchen said the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) met to continue working through the recommendations compiled in the [report submitted earlier this year by the Drought Topical group](#). It completed the fourth of four charges. The next meeting will be a review of what it identified in these recent meetings. Alicea Charamut noted that the group has been meeting regularly even in the absence of drought.

c. Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins said the WPC voted Darryl Newman into the WPCAG representing the [CT Nursery & Landscape Association](#) (CNLA). She also mentioned that the committee received a warm response from Chelsea Gazillo of the [Working Lands Alliance](#) as a possible replacement for the agriculture representative. She added that John Hudak is rejoining the nominating committee.

d. Hydrilla update

Alicea said funding is available for preliminary Army Corps work and local funding is also being sought. She mentioned efforts underway for NY's Croton river and said she believes federal funding is required to address the problem.

6. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska said the group met 12/10 to hear of the previously mentioned WUCC work on outreach regarding development applications. She spoke of local land use application processes. She also mentioned the group's ongoing work to supplement the information received for consideration in the legislature's land conveyance process. She also mentioned that Bruce Wittchen had suggested scheduling regular meetings in 2022, which could improve meeting administration. She noted that meeting attendance varies according to the topic. Margaret Miner said quarterly meetings are good and they are missing something if they are not meeting so often.

b. Source Water Protection Work Group

- [Source Water Protection Outline](#)

Alicea Charamut said this is moving forward.

c. Solar Siting Work Group

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

Alicea said DEEP is regrouping on this and recommended that members bring forward anything that they think should be addressed. Alicea mentioned that there have been a lot of job openings and movement between positions at DEEP.

7. New Business

There was no new business.

8. Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

9. Next Meeting Date

Alicea read the schedule of upcoming meetings and pointed out that, although it isn't listed on the agenda, the WPC scheduled a special meeting tomorrow:

December 22, 2021:	WPC special meeting
January 4, 2022:	WPC
January 11, 2022:	IWG
January 18, 2022:	WPCAG

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM