

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

April 18, 2023 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/2023-03-21_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Karen Burnaska	Save the Sound
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Jon Morrison	USGS CT Water Science Center
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Christine O'Neill (alt.)	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Aimee Petras (alt.)	Farmington River Watershed Association
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts

Other Participants:

Jonathan Avery	Hazardville & Jewett City Water Cos.
Lauren Bergman	CT Water Co.
Kim Czapla	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Rebecca Dahl	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Ali Hibbard	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Iris Kaminsky	New Haven
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Charles Vidich	WestCOG

Members Absent:

Bonnie Burr	Agriculture
Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
David Knauf	CT Association of Directors of Health
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Tom Tyler	MDC
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

Vacancies

Business Organization

Staff:

Bruce Wittchen [CT Office of Policy & Management](#) (OPM)

1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:32 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 2/21/2023 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [3/21/2023 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Christine O'Neill abstaining because she had not attended the meeting.

3. Updates

a. Water Planning Council Update

Alicea Charamut said there had been additional discussion of funding and Denise Savageau added that the agencies are seeing if they have funds available to hire a contractor to perform some of the previously discussed work. She mentioned that she has independently discussed this with her legislator and encouraged others to do the same. Alicea noted that the WPC is interested in moving forward with portions of the work where possible before having funding.

b. Implementation Work Group Update

Denise Savageau mentioned the recent drought webinar, [Preparing for Drought in Connecticut](#), and said another webinar is being organized. She said the Outreach & Education work group has been considering the [state Water website](#) and a new work group is organizing to focus on that. She also mentioned the work of the USGS data work group.

4. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska mentioned the group's 3/10/2023 meeting with OPM's Paul Hinsch (see [draft notes](#) and [recording](#)) and said Margaret Miner had sent follow-up questions and the conversation will continue. She highlighted that he had said that [state agency land transfers](#) are subject to [CT Environmental Policy Act](#) reviews if an agency imposes conditions on the future use of the property.

Margaret Miner provided an update on this session's legislative land conveyance bills, which are listed at the [GAE Committee webpage](#). She highlighted that one of the bills would convey additional [Aquifer Protection Area](#) (APA) land adjacent to land that was the subject of a previous conveyance bill. She said the APA regulations are weak and described a recent artificial turf athletic field project on a wellfield in Wilton. Karen said committee hearings regarding those bills will probably be in late April or early May.

There was further discussion of APA protections and CEPA and that there should be a CEPA review when certain properties are to be transferred. It was noted that placing conditions on future uses of such a property can impact its market value.

b. Source Water Protection Work Group: [Source Water Protection Outline](#)

Alicea Charamut sad this will be discussed next month.

- c. Solar Siting Work Group: [Draft Solar Siting Recommendations & Work Plan](#)

Alicea mentioned DEEP's recent energy procurement and siting workshop (see [Notice of Proceeding and Public Meeting](#) and [Meeting Recording and Unofficial Transcript](#)). She said the public comment period has ended and described some of the comments submitted. She does not know if this is the extent of what DEEP intends for the [STEPS process](#) and there was a discussion of the process.

- d. Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis Work Group

Alicea Charamut said the group held its first meeting and pointed out the importance of the perspective of municipal and small water systems. They are looking at data needs and will meet 1st Thursdays. Denise Savageau mentioned that some commenters during the recent drought webinar had asked why water utilities are not conserving already.

5. Old Business

- a. Legislative update (see [2023-04-17 Bill Update](#))

Alicea Charamut said [HB 5214](#), *An Act Concerning The Conservation Of Certain Waters And Lands Of The Upper Farmington River*, did not get out of committee. [HB 6809](#), *An Act Concerning Financial Incentives For Certain Streamside Buffers And Training For Inland Wetland Commission Members*, now includes a wetland commission training component that had been in a different bill. She mentioned bills moving forward, including [SB 985](#), *An Act Incentivizing Housing Production*, and said its language limiting the review of applications to the Zoning Board of Appeals is problematic. Alicea also said language regarding the MDC in [SB 1139](#), *An Act Concerning The Metropolitan District Of Hartford County*, has been moved to another bill.

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

Alicea Charamut said it was reported at the WPC meeting that the WUCC implementation group is regrouping for a meeting in July. Jonathan Avery added that the WUCCs he is a member of continue working on requests they receive but have been postponing meetings. The Western WUCC might be meeting.

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

Bruce Wittchen said the interagency group met earlier this month and did not vote to go to any drought stage, but he noted that conditions have been deteriorating. Martha Smith pointed out that the US Drought Monitor now identifies coastal CT as being abnormally dry and Bruce said the edition released later this week might expand that.

Denise Savageau described the Outreach & Education Work Group's discussion about education not being included in the drought plan and what that group is doing. Denise said conservation should be year-round and also showed stream flow levels available online.

- d. Nominating Committee

There was no update.

- e. Hydrilla update

There was no update.

6. New Business

Martha Smith noted the earlier reference to artificial turf and mentioned a Norwalk webinar about artificial turf. There was a discussion of concerns and uncertainties regarding toxins in those materials. It was noted that studies have tended to focus on off-gassing into air, not the toxins that might be released as the material degrades or potential impacts on water.

7. Public Comment

Christine O'Neill said NVCOG is hosting a rain barrel and composter sale and Alicea Charamut pointed out that Saturday will be Earth Day. Becca Dahl mentioned that the Interagency Drought Work Group will recommend the WPC appoint her to be the state's drought coordinator and invited people to contact her with any questions.

8. Next Meeting Date

Alicea read the list of upcoming meeting dates:

May 2, 2023:	WPC
May 4, 2023	Conservation Pricing Work Group
May 9, 2023:	IWG
May 16, 2023:	WPCAG

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:37.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM