

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

July 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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

An audio recording is available at:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2020/2020-07-21_WPCAG.mp3

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Karen Burnaska	CT Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Christian Joseph (alt.)	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Ingrid Jacobs (alt.)	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Tom Tyler	MDC

Other Participantss:

Jonathan Avery	Hazardville Water Co./Jewett City Water Co.
Corinne Fitting	DEEP
Alexandra Hibbard	DEEP
David Kalafa	
Iris Kaminski	
David Kuzminski	Town of Portland
Gail Lucchina	PURA
Sarah Ridyard	CT Water Co.
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Bruce Wittchen	OPM

Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
John Hudak	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
David Knauf	Darien Health Department
Joan Nichols	CT Farm Bureau Assoc.
Jeff Pugliese	Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

1. Call to Order

The WPCAG meeting was called to order at 1:32 and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the [minutes of the June 16, 2020 meeting](#). The motion passed unanimously.

3. Water Planning Council Update

a. Implementation Work Group (IWG)

Virginia de Lima provided an overview of the IWG meeting that preceded this meeting. She described the presentation by Mary Ann Dickinson of the [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) (AWE), who said the previously discussed conservation rates workshop is scheduled for 3/18/2021.

Virginia recommended people complete the survey recently distributed by AWE. She said Mary Ann had reported that the two leading suggestions, based on initial responses, are to have CT laws for plumbing fixtures follow [WaterSense criteria](#) and to modernize utility water loss accounting.

Virginia said the IWG discussed the process for review of reports prepared by the topical subgroups. The private well topical subgroup's white paper has been distributed and Virginia explained the WPCAG role in the review. She said that, if the IWG disagrees with any input received from the WPCAG, the IWG will include a write-up of the point of disagreement when submitting the report to the WPC. Virginia also provided a brief update on the work of the topical subgroup that is reviewing the implementation of the state drought plan during the last drought.

Virginia said the IWG presented recommendations for three new topical subgroups at this month's WPC meeting. The first, which was approved unanimously, is to replace the private well group with one focused on domestic well water quality. Mike Dietz has agreed continue as the lead of the new group. A second group, approved by a 3-1 vote of the WPC, was originally described as a marketing & outreach group, but will be renamed to replace the word "marketing". Lou Burch volunteered to take the lead at this time.

A third group, also approved by a 3-1 vote, will focus on regional interconnections and Virginia highlighted that the WPC asked the group to also consider wastewater. Virginia said there was a lengthy discussion of this group during today's IWG meeting and the description will be re-written to reflect the WPC response.

Fred Klein asked if there have been any drought actions by the state or water utilities and Virginia said the state is at the [1st Stage of the drought plan](#). Bruce Wittchen said some water companies have announced restrictions and said DPH posts [water company status information](#) online. Fred Klein said the state should declare drought on a more granular basis and report the status of water supplies on a more granular level as well.

Margaret Miner said someone has told her of a property owner along the Shepaug River who installed an irrigation well near the river and is running sprinklers non-stop. She asked if there are any limits, perhaps a town ordinance? Virginia de Lima said a diversion permit would be required if it exceeds 50,000 gallons per day and Corinne Fitting said irrigation systems are usually less than that. There was a

discussion of the possibility for such an issue to be addressed by town ordinance or code.

There was further discussion of water utility drought triggers and Alicea Charamut pointed out the difficulties that towns can face when different areas have different water sources. Jonathan Avery said his companies experienced record outflows during June, especially on weekends. Rain since then has reduced water usage.

There was further discussion of the private well subgroup's white paper. It was noted that John Hudak has submitted the only comments to date and Alicea requested that any other comments be provided to her by Friday. She will compile them in advance of the next IWG meeting.

b. Other WPC/State Water Plan matters

There was no further discussion.

4. Old Business

a. Water Utility Coordinating Committees

Jonathan Avery said there is nothing to report from the Eastern [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) and Ingrid Jacobs said there is nothing to report from the Western WUCC.

b. COVID-19 issues for water-related agencies and other entities

Alicea Charamut noted the high rates of water use attributed to people being home.

c. Interagency Drought Work Group update

Alicea Charamut noted that some streams are very low and pointed out that the public water reservoir data available on the state drought webpage are out-of-date. She asked for an update on the state's Interagency Drought Work Group and Bruce Wittchen said the group has scheduled a meeting on Thursday. The meeting notice is in the state's public meeting calendar and he will add it to the drought page later today.

Alicea said the interagency group receives good information from the US Geological Survey and other sources. She noted that the recent tropical storm did not deliver much precipitation and there was further discussion of the situation and response.

d. Alliance for Water Efficiency work

Alicea Charamut said Virginia de Lima has covered this and asked if there are any further comments or questions. Denise Savageau encouraged people to respond to the AWE survey, but said she disagrees with the separation of drought and conservation, which she does not consider to be separate issues. She noted the current problems being experienced due to unusually high water consumption and

said we have to talk about conservation sooner rather than later. Ingrid Jacobs mentioned that Aquarion's SW CT system is at its second drought stage and provided an overview of the status of other Aquarion systems. She added that the drought status of Aquarion's systems is available at [Aquarion's water supply update page](#).

5. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Karen Burnaska provided an overview of recent discussions regarding the questionnaire used by legislators requesting land conveyances and this group's desire for more information to be considered when source water areas might be impacted. She also mentioned that DEEP recently sent a letter to the Town of Cheshire regarding noncompliance with the [Aquifer Protection Area \(APA\) Regulations](#).

Margaret Miner provided additional information about the proposed Cheshire conveyance, noting that part of the land is in Southington. She described an approach for the next legislative session and asked how well the APA program is working. She said it appears to work well for new construction, but relies on the honor system.

Margaret mentioned that Betsy Gara had circulated [draft language of a possible bill](#) regarding residential zoning that could affect local protections in source water areas. She said this underscores the importance of looking at land not owned by water companies in water supply watersheds. We need broad protections for source water areas.

Karen Burnaska said she would like to schedule another meeting of the work group and mentioned a desire to have a discussion with DPH about possible legislative language for the 2021 session. She added that the assumption that existing APA protections are adequate might be invalid.

Margaret Miner said she is not against affordable housing and there was a discussion of source water protection language. Margaret said she will forward the zoning proposal, which she said would rewrite state zoning law.

b. Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis

There was no update.

c. Utility Merger Analysis Workgroup

There was no update.

6. New Business

a. Return to place-based meetings

Alicea Charamut said this had been a placeholder and said it should be removed from the next agenda.

b. Nominating Committee

It was noted that committee chair John Hudak is away and Karen Burnaska said the group is considering members' attendance in assembling a slate for members whose terms expire at the end of the year.

c. Other

There was no other new business.

7. Public Comment

Iris Kaminski said she is concerned about some of the pesticides and chemicals being used in CT and said some are not allowed in NY. She asked if anyone is addressing this. Margaret Miner said this topic could be taken up in the Watershed Lands Work Group regarding chemical use in those areas. She added that the IWG is another option. Iris said pollution prevention is more cost effective.

Alicea Charamut said the state water plan's focus is on water quantity, not quality. She mentioned the [CT Council on Environmental Quality's](#) annual reporting and asked where can this issue be addressed. Legislation is proposed every session.

Denise Savageau said water quality is addressed by various DEEP programs and mentioned the Section 319 funding available through DEEP's [Nonpoint Source Program](#). She highlighted that such funding has focused on impaired waters but they are looking at source waters too.

Iris said the problem is described as having a nonpoint source, but pesticides are applied from a hose. There was a discussion of the distinction between point and nonpoint sources and Margaret Miner said she will circulate a relevant court ruling.

Denise said the [CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation](#) has received source water protection funding totaling \$275,000 and noted that it took a while to get going. She explained that UConn is doing parcel mapping of water supply watershed and aquifer protection area lands. DPH's Eric McPhee is involved. She also described watershed management planning projects. There will be training and outreach and she described upcoming workshops.

8. Next Meeting Date

Alicea said the next WPC meeting will be on August 4, 2020 and the WPCAG and IWG meetings will be August 18, 2020.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM