

## 17-Water Planning Council Advisory Group

### September 15, 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\\_2020/2020-09-15\\_WPCAG\\_recording.mp3](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2020/2020-09-15_WPCAG_recording.mp3)

#### Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	<a href="#">Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments</a>
Karen Burnaska	<a href="#">CT Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound</a>
Alicea Charamut	<a href="#">Fisheries Advisory Council</a>
Virginia de Lima	<a href="#">USGS CT Water Science Center</a>
Mike Emmons	<a href="#">CT Nursery &amp; Landscape Assoc.</a>
Carol Haskins	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition</a>
John Hudak	<a href="#">South Central CT Regional Water Authority</a>
Patrick Kearney	<a href="#">Manchester Water &amp; Sewer</a>
Fred Klein	<a href="#">CT Power and Energy Society</a>
David Knauf	<a href="#">Darien Health Department</a>
Dan Lawrence	<a href="#">Aquarion</a>
Margaret Miner	<a href="#">Rivers Alliance</a>
Jeff Pugliese	<a href="#">Middlesex Chamber of Commerce</a>
Denise Savageau	<a href="#">CT Association of Conservation Districts</a>
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	<a href="#">Lake Waramaug Task Force</a>

#### Other Participantss:

Jonathan Avery	Hazardville Water Co./Jewett City Water Co.
Jack Betkoski	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Alexandra Hibbard	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Leslee Janusonis	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Iris Kaminski	
David Kuzminski (alt.)	Town of Portland
Gail Lucchina	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Sarah Ridyard	CT Water Co.
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance

#### Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	<a href="#">CT Forest and Park Association</a>
Joan Nichols	<a href="#">CT Farm Bureau Assoc.</a>
Tom Tyler	<a href="#">MDC</a>
Brenda Watson	<a href="#">Operation Fuel</a>

#### 1. Call to Order

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

#### 2. Approval of Minutes

There was a discussion of two corrections and a motion was made and seconded to approve the [minutes of the 8/18/2020 meeting](#) as amended. The motion was approved unanimously, with Carol Haskins abstaining because she had not attended the meeting.

### **3. Water Planning Council Update**

#### **a. Implementation Work Group (IWG)**

Virginia de Lima said the Implementation Work Group (IWG) has shifted its meetings to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Meeting immediately before WPCAG meetings had been more efficient for in-person meetings.

She provided an overview of the [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#)'s (AWE's) work on behalf of the WPC. She described expectations for the rates workshop currently scheduled for Spring, 2021 and that it might be divided between two days. Virginia added that the AWE's Mary Ann Dickinson provided information regarding conservation approaches in CT and other states but had pointed out that some of those things are too controversial to be recommended in CT.

Virginia provided updates on the drought and private well topical groups are completing their work and described the process for providing reports to the WPC. She described the new Outreach & Education work group, which sees two target audiences, professionals involved in water planning and the general public. They are starting with the first.

Virginia also mentioned the new Regionalization & Interconnections topical group and explained that the WPC had previously asked for wastewater to be added to the proposal. At this month's meeting, DEEP's Graham Stevens asked to postpone approval of the updated proposal until he can review that further. Virginia also reminded everyone that the private well group is reorganizing to look into issues of private well water quality and should have its first meeting later this month. There was a discussion of how to recruit members for new groups.

Dan Lawrence asked Virginia about the focus of the AWE rates workshop and Virginia said increased conservation reduces revenue and outlined that there will be a detailed analysis of data from the Regional Water Authority (RWA) and, if possible, also a municipal system. The AWE will begin that work this fall and the AWE's model will be available to all. She added that private water systems are not being considered because of they can recover revenue losses through the Rate Adjustment Mechanism. John Hudak said the RWA is already working with the AWE and he is looking forward to it.

#### **b. Other WPC/State Water Plan matters**

There was nothing further to report because the WPC did not meet.

### **4. Old Business**

#### **a. Water Utility Coordinating Committees**

Dan Lawrence said there has not been much change since the previous meeting, but mentioned that he and DPH's Eric McPhee are discussing a joint meeting of the three [Water Utility Coordinating Committees](#) (WUCCs). He added that the western WUCC is seeing more activity relative to recent years. Jonathan Avery said there has been a little activity in the eastern WUCC and noted that the group is trying to encourage a new system to be managed by the ESA holder.

b. Interagency Drought Work Group update

There was a discussion of the availability of the data the interagency drought group considers and Alicea Charamut said information is more accessible than in previous years and is kept updated at: [www.portal.ct.gov/water/drought](http://www.portal.ct.gov/water/drought). Virginia de Lima asked about the frequency data are updated and Bruce Wittchen said many data are only updated monthly, although the frequency can increase when needed at more intense levels of drought. Mike Emmons asked if Drought Stage 3 is being considered and Alicea said decisions are based on the drought plan.

c. Nominating Committee

Mike Emmons announced that he will step down as a member at the end of the year. Christian Joseph will continue to serve as the [CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.'s](#) (CNLA's) alternate, but someone else will be designated to be the regular member. Alicea thanked Mike for his contributions

John Hudak said he will update the slate to show Mike is leaving and a motion was made and seconded to send an amended slate to the WPC. The motion was approved unanimously and John Hudak will provide the updated version.

**5. WPCAG Work Groups**

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Margaret Miner reminded the WPCAG that the work group's efforts are divided between two related issues. One focuses on a legislative conveyance of land in Cheshire designated as an aquifer protection area (APA). The other focuses on improving the process for requesting a conveyance. She said the WPC accepted the work group's recommended addendum to the legislature's conveyance form and also expressed concern about the proposed solar facility in an RWA watershed that was discussed at the previous WPCAG meeting.

John Hudak explained that a solar developer [has submitted a petition](#) to the [CT Siting Council](#) (CSC) for a large solar array on non-RWA land in the watershed of the RWA's Lake Whitney. He said the CSC's public comment deadline has been extended to 10/6, but they also approved the Town of Hamden's request for a public hearing and a site visit. The latter, however, may not be possible given the Governor's emergency orders concerning COVID restrictions on gatherings. John noted that the DPH has submitted a comment letter to the CSC.

Karen Burnaska recommended that the work group schedule a meeting with DPH to discuss disturbance of watershed lands and there was further discussion of the issues raised at the WPC meeting. Alicea Charamut mentioned that the WPC asked for

statutory citations to be included in the proposed addendum to the legislative conveyance questionnaire and that will be done. There also was a discussion of the WPC intending to send a letter to the CSC.

Denise Savageau said there are a number of challenges with large scale photovoltaic (PV) solar arrays. She mentioned [PA 17-218](#), which applies to some, and noted that the legislature directed the CSC to get input regarding agricultural soils from the Dept. of Agriculture and from DEEP regarding core forest. She also pointed out that many forested areas in water supply watersheds do not qualify as core forest.

Denise said the record for the Lake Whitney watershed proposal shows that the applicant had discussed it with DEEP and said it was not in an aquifer protection area or core forest but did not mention that it is in a water supply watershed. She added that the plan is lacking in certain aspects, including storm water management.

Denise mentioned the value of ecosystem services by undisturbed watershed forest, including its water supply and carbon sequestration benefits. She said PV solar siting should consider the significance of watersheds and highlighted that the storm water management plan, as presented, is inadequate to address site conditions. There was a discussion of updating PA 17-218.

There was a discussion of the work group mission and Denise said the CT [Council on Environmental Quality](#) (CEQ) is doing good work regarding solar array siting. Margaret Miner recommended the work group meet again and there was further discussion of the group and of broadening participation. Margaret said the CSC process gives more scrutiny to a single cell tower than to a large solar array.

Karen Burnaska recommended the work group meet with Peter Hearn of CEQ and Denise asked if we have to change the state's solar siting process. She said we should look at distributed generation with rooftop solar. Large scale is the old model and anti-consumer. Iris Kaminski thanked Denise for explaining the conflict with solar energy and there was clarification that the proposed solar array on the Lake Whitney watershed is not an RWA project.

b. Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis

Alicea said the WPC's Jack Betkoski and Lori Mathieu asked to meet with her regarding the scope of work for this group and there was a brief discussion.

c. Utility Merger Analysis Workgroup

There was no update.

**6. New Business**

a. Other

There was no new business.

**7. Public Comment**

There were no further comments.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

Alicea said the next WPCAG meeting will be on 10/20; the WPC will meet 10/6; and the IWG will meet 10/13. She noted that the IWG and WPCAG will use a passcode for future Zoom meetings.

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*