

WEAC MEETING Minutes - October 2022

In person meeting, Thursday, 10/20/22 @ 7:30 PM

Members in attendance: Brian Bayer, Maria Costantini, Julie Gervais, Leslie Greffenius, Steve Harte, Kate La Croix (chair).

Others in attendance: two members of the public

Routine business: the minutes of the September 15, 2022, meeting were approved.

Topics discussed w/next steps:

Debrief of Westwood Day

1. Kate said that there was a good response to the composting initiative, but noted that some people didn't know what compost was. We were able to do some public education about it and direct some interested people to the Black Earth Compost representative. The take-home message is that we need to supervise what goes in the barrels. Having a central area for collection of all the materials did not prove useful. People primarily used the barrels that were placed around the eating area. At some point our volunteers took control of those barrels to sort the materials as they were being discarded. Kate expressed her gratitude for the support of the Recreation department staff. In the future, we can try asking the Recreation Dept again if we can have one central waste station with no other barrels in the food court. If that is not allowed, then we should consider how we can best oversee the various barrels to encourage composting.
2. The cost of all the supplies was \$3452.70, which was paid directly by the town using funds collected by WEAC for that purpose.
3. A motion was passed to approve the reimbursement of Kate's personal expenses of \$190, which covered the Vendor Village table fee, paid to the Recreation Dept., and Black Earth Compost's fee

Solar Phase 2 update and debrief of recent presentation

1. An article on the phase 2 solar program (written by Claire Galkowski and WEAC members) appeared in the Hometown Weekly
2. Julie reported that posters with rendering of the canopies at the High School were on display at the WEAC booth on Westwood Day. They attracted people, who, in general, were in support of the project.
3. Lemma Jn-Baptiste Jean Baptiste (Director of Finance and Operation of Westwood Public Schools) gave an excellent presentation at a recent School Committee meeting (9/9/22)
4. Julie reported that there was a public meeting (on zoom) on October 12 to present the Solar Phase 2 project to the public. Ameresco gave an overview of all the projects. Julie noted that the meeting was not well attended. There was a suggestion to send a link to the presentation to all the students' families.
5. The phase 2 solar program will be discussed at the October 24 meeting of the Select Board at 6:15. Tom Philbin will be presenting it.

Approved on December 15, 2022

Next steps: Julie will contact the Information Technology Director to ask for help in setting up a link to the Westwood solar projects

CCE Update

Maria reported that, after the DPU approval, Good Energy updated their Westwood CCE web site and Patricia Healy updated the Town website. The next steps will be for the Town Council to review the Electricity Agreement and for Good Energy to go out for bids. The CEA Working Group will work to finalize the video script once we know the product that will be offered. Good Energy will help with the publicity. It was agreed that WEAC will write an article for the Hometown Weekly and the town newsletter when we have a better idea of the timeline for the launch of the program (probably in November.)

Update on pollinators/sustainable gardening grant proposal

1. Kate reported that she submitted a grant proposal to the Westwood Cultural Council for funds to support a speaker on gardening for pollinators. She noted that the proposal she developed in collaboration with Maria and Sue had to be shortened substantially once she accessed the submission page of the Cultural Council website.
2. Maria reported she recently attended a meeting of the Mass Pollinators Network where several panelists reported on actions their towns had taken to advance pesticide reform and pollinator-friendly policies. It was inspiring to see the progress that many communities, especially in Western MA, have made. One important message from these speakers was the importance of collaborating with DPW departments. One panelist (from the town of Wellesley) mentioned the name of an expert on organic maintenance who can provide advice to DPW departments on an organic regime for organic field maintenance. Maria suggested asking the Select Board to set up a Task Force to study what types of policies and actions MA towns have taken and come up with suggestions for actions Westwood could take to protect pollinators and reduce use of pesticides. WEAC members were in support of this approach.
3. Maria mentioned that WEAC members have been having regular meetings with DPW (Sue organized the recent one) and the topic of pesticide-free maintenance was discussed before with them. She suggested that we continue having this conversation and mention the possibility of hiring a consultant at the next meeting.
4. **Next step: Kate will get in touch with Mr. Gotti to present the idea of the Task Force. Sue will set up a meeting with DPW.**

Update on New Life Furniture

1. There was nothing new to report

Articles for the Hometown Weekly

1. A motion was passed to authorize WEAC members to write the following articles:
 - o How to dispose of textiles and mattresses (Steven, Kate, and Claire Galkowski)
 - o CCE (Maria and Leslie)

New business: none

Approved on December 15, 2022

Comments from the public

1. The two members of the public expressed concerns about the spraying of herbicide/pesticides in private yards and the aerosols can spread to neighboring yards against the will or the knowledge of the neighbors. One reported feeling ill for a couple of days after the spraying in an adjacent yard.

Adjourned: 9:00 PM

Next meeting: November 17, in person (Maria will reserve a room)