

**MINUTES**  
**NEW HAVEN CLIMATE EMERGENCY TASKFORCE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2024, 5:15 PM**

The New Haven Climate Emergency Taskforce (CETF) met on Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 5:15 PM on Zoom to discuss the following items:

1. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting. A majority of the CETF (6 of 10 members) constitutes a quorum. *A quorum was not present, so previous minutes were not approved.*
2. Project updates from the Office of Climate and Sustainability (OCS) staff
  - a. EPA Government-to-Government grant. OCS is continuing final budget negotiations with EPA and may receive an award letter in April.
  - b. I Heart My Home canvassing campaign continues. Since canvassing began, we've knocked on over 3,000 doors, and 100 participants (52 income-eligible) have enrolled and received I Heart My Home consultations. 13 participants (7 income-eligible) have received energy assessments in that time, and 21 (11 income-eligible) more participants have assessments scheduled. Some participants are part of multi-families, bringing the total number of units receiving consultations to 146 (83 income-eligible units).
    - i. We're running a small pilot to see whether incentives can improve signups.
    - ii. *Linda Reeder inquired about why over 3,000 household contacts have only translated to 100 consultations. Max Teirstein responded that when canvassing, folks are rarely home or come to the door, and when they do, they are wary of canvassers, or else are too busy/otherwise disinterested in participating. He and Lewis leave flyers at every resident's door, regardless of whether anyone answers.*

- c. Healthy Homes, Clean Cooktops project is underway—all participants now have air quality monitors installed in their homes. In early March we'll distribute cooktops/cookware sets.
  - i. *Max Teirstein reported that the air quality monitors measure PM2.5 and CO2 flow. Melissa Kops followed up to say that gas stoves primarily release NOx and benzene, whereas particulates would be emitted in higher quantity from cooking food.*
- d. Funding the Climate Justice Schools program directly through New Haven Climate Movement (NHCM) for Fiscal year 2023-2024. We are working with NHCM on updating their proposal to see if can meet requirements from Corporation Counsel. The teachers for CJS will be paid through NHPS.
- e. Recycling Educator: OCS has extended an offer to a candidate for the part-time Recycling Educator role.
- f. Solar installations. Surveying has begun at the landfill and project planning is underway for the school parking canopies.
  - i. *Steve Winter shared that the City should consider solar along airport runways, and that OCS would look into this.*
- g. Styrofoam enforcement: OCS and the Health Department have visited 429 restaurants and food trucks to educate them about the City's ban on the use Styrofoam products. We have recorded 130 businesses in violations of the ordinance (numbers as of 2/22).
  - i. *Linda Reeder asked whether the fines can replace the nips money. Steve Winter replied that it is unlikely we would have a steady stream of income through this route.*
- h. Shellfish shell recycling program: No update for this month.
- i. Housing Authority: has not yet completed their inventory of the mechanical systems in their portfolio buildings.
- j. EcoPark: Public hearing at the North Haven inland wetlands commission continues on 2/28. The firm withdrew its New Haven City Plan application and intends to resubmit it.

3. Debriefing of our discussion with Laura Brown, Executive Director, City Plan Department on the intersection of zoning reforms and climate action
  - a. Are there climate-related zoning items the Climate Taskforce would like us to explore in partnership with City Plan?
  - b. *Steve Winter said that the Accessory Dwelling Units amendment went to the City Plan Commission and then will go to the Legislation Committee of the Board of Alders, which would be an opportunity for testimony.*
  - c. *Alder Marchand added that the Legislation Committee meeting in March will be dedicated to other items so it is likely that it would be discussed in April. The Commission added items for the BoA to review and recommended retaining the current owner-occupancy requirement that the amendment would remove from the ordinance. It was pointed out that a large percentage of housing stock in New Haven that would be amenable to having an ADU developed are not owner-occupied. Alder Marchand recommended sharing this perspective at the committee hearing.*
  - d. *Steve Winter recapped that the owner-occupancy requirement is currently in effect now. City Plan proposed to remove it, and the City Plan Commission recommended for it to be retained. The Board of Alders do give weight to the recommendation of the Commission, but aren't required to abide by their recommendation.*
  - e. *Steve Winter said that retaining the requirement lowers the number of eligible properties. How many of the properties remaining would be able to afford the cost of developing an ADU? If you can do this as of right, you can reduce some of the complexity involved—you wouldn't have to hire an attorney to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals. Even if you don't have the as-of-right, you probably still need to hire an attorney to place a deed restriction on the property to require that it is owner occupied. If you go to sell the property, the deed restriction would narrow the pool of potential buyers.*
  - f. *Alder Marchand relayed the concern that eliminating the owner occupancy requirement would be good for the large management companies that have gobbled up so many properties. There should be*

*some other way to address the issue of deed restriction, perhaps based on income.*

- g. Linda Reeder inquired whether there were examples in other cities of how they handle this issue. Latha Swamy said there are many examples.*
- h. Steve Winter reflected the concern that the ADU housing might now be safe and well-made, but that if it's new construction, it'll have to meet the building code and go through the inspection process, and similarly if it's a substantial rehab. Landlords that are good actors might get barred from this because they're grouped in with the behemoths.*
- i. Alder Marchand reminded the group that it wouldn't be possible to legally bar larger landlords as a class.*
- j. Steve Winter echoed that it may be a good idea to braid this with residential licensing so that landlords who have demonstrated a pattern of poor energy management would be restricted from ADU construction.*
- k. Linda Reeder said that new construction is expensive and takes a long time so people wouldn't be interested in building an ADU just for a quick buck.*
- l. Melissa Kops agreed, saying it would take a really long time to recoup the \$150,000-\$160,000 it costs to build a unit through rent.*
- m. Alder Marchand encouraged the group to consider how the current Comprehensive Plan process could promote sustainability and climate resiliency. The City is sincere in seeking public participation. Everyone should feel free to offer their perspectives on this document. It is an important document in framing regulations.*
- n. Steve Winter said it would be really impactful if the citywide planning process were to produce clearer climate and emissions goals for the City. Hopefully we can play a role in spreading the word about opportunities to participate. You can sign up for updates on the website here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/UuUwNsq>*
- o. Steve Winter also said that the Office of Climate & Sustainability is actively meeting with City Plan staff about electrification of new construction and electric vehicle charging as they can be integrated in*

*City ordinances. City Plan staff has said that they are capable of enforcing the state statute that requires some EV charging capacity at buildings with 30+ units. Linda raised the tension that there is appetite for removing parking spaces, and Steve said that our approach is focused on installing EV charging capacity at existing spaces.*

4. Discussion Items: Additional CETF activities this fiscal year:

a. **Indoor Air Quality Education Event**

- i. Per person budget for materials is \$73.50
  1. Filter: \$40, Fan: \$30, Weather Stripping: \$3.50
- ii. At 20 people, plus \$50 for refreshments, the total budget is \$1,550.
- iii. How do we get the word out about this event in a way that would produce meaningful public participation? Who would this event be aimed at? Is there a partner or partners we could collaborate with?
- iv. *Linda Reeder asked if we were identifying diesel hotspots and suggested these as a potential audience. Melissa Kops said that the air filters would likely do more for that population than the cooktops.*
- v. *Steve suggested following up with participants in the cooktops program. We would have to think through how we reach people near those hotspots to get the word out.*
- vi. *Melissa asked why we were aiming for 20. Is this something we would want to broadcast publicly?*
- vii. *Steve said this would be best for a small workshop, but the numbers could go up or down.*
- viii. *Linda asked whether the graphic designer could put a how-to guide together if participants gave it to their neighbors.*
- ix. *Steve said that the graphic designer we've been in touch with has gone radio silent. We could fold in hotspots to our canvassing, do a mailer, and ask the libraries to help us publicize it. The Health Department could be helpful as well.*

x. *Max Teirstein asked whether this was a solution we could bring to participants in the cooktops campaign and whether the filters could actually successfully filter PM2.5 and CO2. Melissa Kops responded that the filters would be good for particulates, not CO2.*

**b. Composting in City Hall**

i. *This activity could potentially be part of the USDA grant so OCS hasn't developed a budget for it yet.*

**c. Other ideas?**

i. *Bike education (partnering with CPEN, working with schools). Joel LaChance contacted OCS and would like to replicate this Washington DC [curriculum](#).*

ii. *Melissa Kops asked whether we had extra funding to spend. Steve Winter replied that he tried to get an answer from the Budget office on whether the NHS allocation we made would be applied to this year's CETF budget or last year's. The cooktops campaign didn't eat up much of the budget. OCS will provide an update on the budget next meeting.*

iii. *Alder Marchand reported that the Mayor would present his budget to the BoA and the Finance Committee's hands for much of April and May. There's not much attention paid to the money allocated to this taskforce, but we don't know for sure. We should think about whether it's been useful to have that money, whether we need more, what it would do to give this body more or less strength and substance. It's important for this taskforce to have a good narrative around what's been done with existing funds.*

iv. *Steve Winter responded that there are lots of opportunities for comment on the budget process, those will be going public soon. First public hearing on the budget will be Thursday, March 14.*

- d. *Reminder about the March 14th event that Melissa Kops shared:*  
<https://buildgreenct.org/tour-buckley-elementary-the-first-verified-zero-energy-public-school-in-new-england/>
- e. *A number of people wanted to join the taskforce. OCS will look into that before our next meeting.*