

Mansfield takes aim toward more green operations

By **CLAIRE GALVIN**
Chronicle Staff Writer

MANSFIELD — The Mansfield Town Council has committed to municipal sustainability by joining a new sustainable certification program.

Recently, the council voted 7-1, with councilor David Freudmann opposing, to begin participation in the Sustainable CT program.

The Sustainable CT program is a voluntary, action-based credibility program 12 other towns currently have participated in.

For example, a town would receive points if it develops, implements and maintains a “buy local” campaign, develops an open space preservation plan or hosts an educational program on stormwater issues and low impact development.

Sustainable CT began a few years ago through Eastern Connecticut State University’s Institute for Sustainable Energy. It is an independently funded, grassroots, multi-municipality effort.

Mansfield Recycling coordinator Virginia Walton will serve as Sustainable CT’s contact during the certification process.

As of now, Mansfield is registered for the program, but has not yet achieved sustainable certification.

Mansfield resident Peter Millman spoke in favor of the resolution before the council voted at the Jan. 22 meeting.

“This is a good time to put sustainability front and center, so that it’s not a second-thought, not a frill,” Millman said. “It’s part of the process from the very beginning.”

Millman said climate change and saving money are two important reasons for passing the resolution.

Lynn Stoddard, chairman of Mansfield’s sustainability committee, fielded questions from the council about the resolution and the program.

“Towns pick and choose what they want to do on the list,” Stoddard said. “As they implement actions, they’re eligible for receiving points for recognition and certification.”

Stoddard stressed the actions are voluntary and credibility is a third-party validation of the town’s sustainability efforts.

Mansfield Interim Town Manager John Carrington wrote in his memo the resolution does not commit Mansfield to any specific actions, but it will enable Mansfield to benefit from

interaction with the 12 other towns that are part of Sustainable CT.

Mansfield has already done many items on the list.

Councilors had concerns that, eventually, these tasks would cost the town money.

For example, councilor Freudmann said mapping existing brownfields, as is listed on the action list, will cost money.

“My observations over the years with government has been that today’s guidelines become tomorrow’s unfunded mandates,” Freudmann said. “So I’m very concerned about that. These things are not with zero financial impacts on the town.”

Councilor Peter Kochenburger said there may be costs in the future, but not doing anything might create even more costs.

“There are costs to not doing this, and there are also benefits, some financial and many livability,” Kochenburger said.

Stoddard said by gaining Sustainable CT certification, Mansfield could be more attractive to residents or vendors.

Councilor Ben Shaiken said Mansfield is falling behind its neighbors like Coventry, Stafford and Killingly in terms of sustainability.

Killingly is one of the few northeastern Connecticut towns part of Sustainable CT.

More information about the program and the action list are available in the council’s packet at mansfieldct.gov.

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