# Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Resilient Infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: October 6, 2022

Meeting Time: 2:00 - 3:30 PM

**Zoom Recording:** Resilient Infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions Working

**Group Recording** 

### **ATTENDANCE:** GC3 Working Group Members in bold

Name:
Doreen Abubakar
Samuel Alexander
Dominic Antonio
Tyler Archer
Susmitha Attota
Fred Behringer
Todd Berman
Beth Bernard
Amy Blaymore-Paterson
George Bradner, <i>Co-chair</i>
Alicea Charamut
Timothy Clark
Wayne Cobleigh
Gene DeJoannis
David Dickson
Brian Ennis
Rebecca French
Matthew Fulda, <i>Co-chair</i>
Bryan Garcia
Amber Garrard
Nicole Govert
Kevin Grigg, <i>Co-chair</i>
Eric Hammerling
Donna Hamzy-Carroccia
Mary-Beth Hart
Paul Hearn
Dawn Henning
Christopher Kelly
Jonathan Kinney
Robert LaFrance
Bill Lucey
Erik Mas
Adelaine McCloe
Mark Moriarty
Sara Morrison
David Murphy, S&T Liaison
Huan Ngo

Yaprak Onat
Mary Pelletier
Malaquias Peña, S&T Liaison
Nicole Petrozza
Emily Pysh, Co-Chair
Megan Raymond
Denise Savageau, EEJ Liaison
Hailey Simpson
Ashley Stewart
Kelsey Sudol
Tyler Theder
Brian Thompson
John Truscinski
Mark Urban, S&T Liaison
Sarah Watson
Joanna Wozniak-Brown
Michael Yeosock
Kim Zigich
Giovanni Zinn

#### **AGENDA & NOTES**

**Welcome:** Sarah Watson, DEEP Liaison

**Ground Rules:** 

- Meeting is recorded and a link will be posted
- Announcement that the chat is public record, but may be used for questions and comments by working group members
- Working group members are asked to post their names and affiliation in the chat
- Reminder that the discussion portion is reserved for working group members
- Announcement that non-working group members should mute and turn video off until public comment

**Presentation, GC3 context**: Rebecca French, Director, Office of Climate Planning

- Explains objectives of GC3: Monitor and report on greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies and develop and implement adaptation strategies
- Resulted in Executive Order 21, which included 23 different actions suggested by the GC3 process
- This year's GC3 working groups will be active through December
- Today, there are added lenses, like equity and environmental justice, as well as other cross-cutting themes
  - The 2021 GC3 report defined the equity lens

- EEJ working group also provided guidance for working groups
- Have assigned EEJ liaisons to ensure that perspective is present throughout the process

## **Welcome and Introduction of Co-chairs:** George Bradner, Matt Fulda, Kevin Grigg, Emily Pysh

- Matt Fulda leads recap of previous meeting
  - o Highlights the announcement of the Climate Resilience Fund
  - Notes the four topics selected by the working group:
    - Stormwater management
    - Resilient nature-based shorelines
    - Inland river and flood risk management
    - Coastal and flood risk management
- Notes that the working group will not be moving forward with a policy subgroup, but will revisit this in 2023
- Announces next meeting for Oct. 18th
- Gives brief outline of agenda for today's meeting and notes use of breakout rooms

## **Presentation, Flood Resilience Projects in Connecticut:** *Giovanni Zinn, City of New Haven and Brian Ennis, City of Meriden*

- Building a Resilient Future, New Haven: Giovanni Zinn and Dawn Henning
  - New Haven is affected by storm surge, sea level rise, and more frequent rain events
  - These factors create flooding, which disrupts both transportation (MetroNorth) and bio-tech industry
  - Dawn discusses challenges with infrastructure along the Long Wharf shoreline
    - Erosion, which affects sewage systems
    - Electrical systems are affected
  - Notes how the existing historical infrastructure associated with New Haven is being negatively affected by climate change
  - o Building a Resiliency Pipeline:
    - Create pipeline of projects and master plan to protect the city from climate events
    - Developed post Hurricane Sandy and Irene
    - Two main projects:
      - Hill to Downtown Storm Sewer Improvements
        - o 2.5 mil for green infrastructure
        - o 1.5 mil to study and design inland flood solution
        - Goal is to address inland flooding
        - Layered approach where every bit adds up to address the problem (began in 2015)
          - Key portion is water diversion
          - Reducing erosion while keeping the city dry
          - Increase bioswales

- Long Wharf Flood Study
  - 400k to plan and design strategy for coping with storm surge
  - Goal is to balance the need for protection with turning the mudflat into a different habitat
- FEMA BRIC: received funding for pipe structure
  - City applied twice and felt like they can share many lessons learned
    - o Benefit-Cost Analysis is challenging, but important
    - Partner early
    - o Understand how the application is being scored
- Funding from Connecticut for living shoreline projects
- Army Corp of Engineering project includes a full build with pump station
- Ashley Stewart asked how vulnerable populations are accounted for in this type of resilience planning?
  - Giovanni notes that each neighborhood has its own set of technical challenges, but that it is a city-wide issue that cuts across many issues and equity is a priority
- Harbor Brook Flood Control Project: Brian Ennis
  - Harbor Brook flood plain has been built out from ill-conceived development and now there is nowhere for the water to go during rain events
  - o Project that the city of Meriden is halfway through with
    - Replacing bridges
    - Constructing flood basins
    - Relief culverts
    - Some flood walls will come down in order to deepen and widen the brook
  - Will be working in concert with fisheries
  - o Harbor Brook is an urban channel
    - Will be installing certain fisheries features
    - Will be addressing invasive species
      - Replacing with native species
    - Implement a riparian buffer area and designate an open meadow space
      - Meadows will serve as a habitat for species and as a pollinator pathway
    - No wetlands involved in the urban channel, so they will be creating new wetlands adjacent to the channel
    - One factory site that needs a lot of remediation
      - Will design a skate park for this area
  - Funding is coming from both inside the city and from outside funding sources
    - Funding from Meriden demonstrates the commitment from the city

- Coastal properties here are in distress, as opposed to other cities where coastal properties generate funds
- Development within flood plains must go before the Wetlands Commission to satisfy flood plain development ordinances

**Working Group Discussion:** For full comments please see the Zoom recording and/or audio transcript

#### **Breakout Group 1:**

- 2/3 of the work being done in NE is in the nature-based solutions space
- How can green roofs be used to mitigate flooding?
- We have seen properties be moved out of flood plains
  - o There are opportunities to work with private landowners
  - Voluntary purchase of homes that can be torn down to make room for natural land
    - High-income, coastal private land owners are not receptive to this
    - But many opportunities exist for public/private partnerships
  - Do private landowners come into play with riparian buffers and other nature-based solutions?
    - Many projects do require permission to work on private land
    - There have been mixed responses to this, but note that it is in the interest to property owners to alleviate funding and it may come down to how you explain it
- Green infrastructure:
  - Look at what is occurring upstream
  - How do we ensure that development upstream does not impact projects occurring farther downstream?
  - Flooding also occurs outside the coastal areas and that should not be forgotten
    - Municipalities can help alleviate this or drive certain policies like buffers and meadows
- Coastal and Inland water interface:
  - Challenging
  - What do conversations around flood walls look like?

#### **Breakout Group 2:**

- Inland flooding:
  - Coastal communities have gotten attention, support, and funding, but how do you motivate city staff and state funding to drive these projects? Is there a cultural dimension to drive motivation on these?
  - More funding has gone to coastal communities, but some of that is because hurricane funding is tied to coastal communities
  - Hope is that for non-emergency funding, there will be more opportunities for inland and more understanding of how inland flooding and coastal flooding occur together
- New Haven:

- o Dawn and Giovanni have engineer backgrounds
- They have tried to promote the filter of sustainability for all engineering
- o For bioswale work, the sandy soil in New Haven has been an asset
- Yale School of the Environment has also helped drive quantitative data
- Projects are inherently situated in places that have experienced disturbances, but funding can help municipalities plan before emergencies dictate it
- Yale is working on their stormwater management systems to try to alleviate their effect on the city
  - Are there more opportunities to work together here?
- Bioswales:
  - o First installments in New Haven involved a lot of community involvement
  - o Designed intentionally so that vulnerable laborers helped install them

**Public Comments:** For full comments please see the Zoom recording and/or audio transcript No public comments made

#### **Discussion Wrap-Up:**

- Bryan Garcia:
  - o Struck by the centralized systems of New Haven and Meriden
  - Particularly appreciated the conversation about bioswales because it demonstrated how small pieces can result in big impacts
- Wayne Cobleigh:
  - o Connecticut allowing storm water fees could incentivize green infrastructure
  - Only two towns currently have this, but demonstrates that the public sphere can influence the private sphere
- Rebecca French:
  - Connecticut was in the top ten recipients of funding under FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities over the past two years
  - Also highlights the funding received from Biden's Justice Forty Initiative, which is a commitment to ensure that 40% of climate funding is going to environmental justice communities
- Denise Savageau:
  - Soil mapping is currently ongoing by NRCS, but samples should be completed this fall
  - o This will inform better resource planning for coastal communities

#### **Adjourn and Next Steps:**

Reminder that the next meeting is scheduled for October 18th at 11:00 AM

#### **Resources:**

**Governor's Council on Climate Change** 

GC3 Annual Progress Report, 2022

Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group Report, 2020

**EEI Recommendation: 2021 Investment in Community Engagement** 

**DEEP Climate Resilience Fund** 

#### **Green Infrastructure Options to Reduce Flooding, NOAA**

00:29:34

#### Chat Record: 00:14:48 Matthew Fulda: Matt Fulda - MetroCOG WG Co-Chair 00:14:53 Ioanna Wozniak-Brown: Joanna Wozniak-Brown - CT Office of Policy & Management 00:15:07 Mary Pelletier: Mary Rickel Pelletier, Park Watershed 00:15:10 Emily Pysh (CTDOT): Emily Pysh, CTDOT - WG Co-Chair 00:15:11 Erik Mas - Fuss & O'Neill 00:15:23 Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Amy Blaymore Paterson - CT Land **Conservation Council** Christopher Kelly | Save the Sound: 00:15:28 Chris Kelly - Save the Sound John Truscinski: John Truscinski, UConn/CIRCA 00:15:32 00:15:37 Denise Savageau: Denise Savageau - CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation Alicea Charamut, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut 00:15:39 Alicea Charamut: Kelsey Sudol, NWCD: Kelsey Sudol - Northwest Conservation District and Lake 00:15:45 Waramaug Task Force 00:15:51 Susmitha Attota: Susmitha Attota, Town of Stratford Office of Planning & Zoning 00:15:54 Todd Berman: Todd Berman - Avangrid 00:15:54 Megan Raymond: Megan Raymond, Principal Scientist, Wetlands & Waterways Lead, SLR Consulting 00:16:02 Beth Bernard: Beth Bernard - CT Forest & Park Association Nicole Govert: Nicole Govert. Sustainable CT 00:16:39 00:17:15 George Bradner: George Bradner CT Dept of Ins Jonathan Kinney - Connecticut State Historic Preservation 00:19:26 Jonathan Kinney: Office 00:19:47 Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: Working group members: please introduce yourself in the chat. 00:20:24 Yaprak Onat: Yaprak Onat - Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation 00:20:41 **DEEP Office of Climate Planning:** GC3 Website: https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/Governors-Council-on-Climate-Change 00:20:48 Mark Urban: Mark Urban - UConn Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Wayne Cobleigh: Wayne Cobleigh at GZA and CT Green Building Council 00:20:54 00:21:16 **DEEP Office of Climate Planning:** GC3 Annual Report Slides: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-2022-agendas-and-minutes/GC3-Annual-Progress-Report-060822.pdf 00:21:34 David Murphy: David Murphy, CIRCA today but sometimes Resilient Land And Water LLC 00:21:45 Tyler Archer: Hi all - Tyler Archer from Shipman Samuel Alexander: Sam Alexander, SCCOG 00:22:04 00:23:48 **DEEP Office of Climate Planning:** Equity and Environmental Justice 2020 Report: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-working-groupreports/GC3\_Equity\_EJ\_Final\_Report\_111320.pdf 00:24:50 DEEP Office of Climate Planning: Public Participation Guidance: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-2022-agendas-and-minutes/EEJ-Public-Guidance-Excerpt.pdf

Mary Pelletier: What time on Oct 18th?

00:30:12 Rebecca French, Dept. Energy & Env. Protection: Next meeting of this working group is October 18, 11-12:30

00:30:24 Tyler Archer: Register in advance for this meeting:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvcu-rqj4rHtY8Kkg8Uxr5-Z-HJ8VuXmzL

00:45:52 Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: If you have any clarifying questions for New Haven, please put them in the chat.

00:51:36 Wayne Cobleigh: New Haven is also protecting a new Hotel Marcel at former abandoned Armstrong/Pirelli Tire Building that is pursuing net zero energy, LEED Platinum and first Passive House hotel in the US.

00:52:31 George Bradner: BCEGS is 20 points

00:52:45 Ashley Stewart: What conditions determined the area in New Haven would need this type of resilience planning? Is this the lowest area of the city, or is the infrastructure in that area the most in need, how do vulnerable populations accounted for in these resilience plans? This looks mostly like downtown and Yale's campus... maybe I am wrong. How are you all ranking infrastructure and community vulnerability in the selection?

00:54:45 Huan Ngo: Are you expecting increasing flooding in Fair Haven? Any plans?

00:56:15 George Bradner: Are you looking at Green roof tops

00:56:15 Gene DeJoannis: Lots of parking areas. Would permeable paving help?

00:56:23 Denise Savageau: Are all storm drains being directed to the new pipeline and outfall so it is a closed system and won't be compromised by storm surge coming up the drainage system? And what design criteria for outfall so that surge can't go up?

00:57:59 Giovanni Zinn: @denise drains have backflow prevention, and all improvement will have it as well.

00:58:43 Giovanni Zinn: @Gene yes, permeable paving would help. Also our redevelopment standards require on-site stormwater detention and encourage green stormwater infrastructure

01:00:20 Wayne Cobleigh: Hotel Marcel has solar rooftop and battery storage and needs no fossil fuel to operate. Also has EV chargers and air source heat pumps. CTGBC, CT Passive House and Conscious Capitalism CT Chapter recently organized a building tour for their members.

https://resilientconnecticut.uconn.edu/resilient-fair-haven/

01:00:43 Giovanni Zinn: @George green roofs are a potential solution, although tend to be expensive and situational. Our regulations on private development are more performance-based, and can be a strategy to meet them

01:01:35 Giovanni Zinn: @wayne hotel marcel is a shining example of what could be. We are proud to have them in New Haven!

01:05:26 Joanna Wozniak-Brown: My apologies for having to leave early - I had a predetermined meeting before this was scheduled. Thank you, Brian, Dawn & Giovanni for your presentations today.

01:07:40 Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: If you have clarifying questions for Brian, please put them in the chat.

01:08:36 Denise Savageau: Brian - any opportunities upstream to protect land from further development.

01:10:30 Todd Berman: Very interesting presentation - I need to drop off for a different call Thanks

01:14:50 Denise Savageau: Info on some innovative storm water utility work in Milwaukee protecting upstream from City as part of flood control.

https://www.mmsd.com/what-we-do/flood-management/greenseams

01:17:00 Mary Pelletier: what is the size of the Harbor Brook watershed, upstream of the project area +

01:17:45 Mary Pelletier: Also, what is the % of development of the upstream watershed?
01:20:18 Amber Garrard: Are we meant to join a breakout group, or will we be

assigned to one?

01:34:55 Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: If you would like to sign up for public comment, please send me a DM

01:35:35 Bryan Garcia: My comment as a "novice" in this space of resilience and NBS is that the NH and Meriden examples were fascinating. What caught my attention was the micro projects like bioswales that Giovanni showed. The analogy that I had was small solar projects - lots of them all over the place, help the whole. How can people be incented to support those sorts of small projects?

01:35:50 Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: And I apologize to my break-out group for forging ahead with a follow-up question, but I didn't want my first comment to be misinterpreted! Thanks for indulging me!

01:35:55 Denise Savageau: Good comments in the breakout room Tyler.

01:35:57 Wayne Cobleigh, GZA: On the idea of private land owners to act on green roofs, municipalities could create land use permitting incentives.

01:36:36 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Bryan Garcia is CEO of the CT Green Bank and member of the Gov. Council on Climate Change

01:38:10 Bryan Garcia: Thanks Rebecca - sorry! I was so excited - cool stuff!

01:38:19 Denise Savageau: Want to make sure that we expand the definition of green infrastructure to include natural and working lands including forests, wetlands, riparian buffers.

01:39:01 Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: Number 7 nationally 01:39:16 Tyler Archer, Shipman: and farmlands too!

01:39:59 Sarah Watson, CT DEEP:

https://portal.ct.gov/connecticutclimateaction/executive-order/deep-climate-resilience-fund

01:40:11 Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Like the idea of incentives for private landowners, review of IWC regulations and allowable conditions, and the important point about engaging the wider community in the planning and implementation of these projects.

01:40:51 David Dickson: Just one note: green roofs are challenging as retrofits because of the weight. Roofs were likely not engineered/designed to support that potential weight. Not a no, just can be expensive to make that determination. Adds another wrinkle and challenge to consider.

01:41:05 Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Second Denise's comment (and Tyler's add-on!)

01:43:11 Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Great presentations, thank you!! And I liked the break-out structure!

#### **Breakout Group 1: Chat Record**

5:13:55 From Rebecca French, CT DEEP: • What did you hear in today's presentations from New Haven and Meriden about what worked in their approaches to addressing inland and coastal flood risk?

• Would that work in your community or organization? What barriers might you face to taking a similar approach?

15:19:35 From Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Feel free to use the chat for comments as well for the discussion.

15:21:01 From Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Thank you! And sorry to not state my affiliation - I'm ED of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (we are the umbrella organization for CT's land trusts)

15:22:07 From David Murphy: Quick comment: New Haven and Meriden can accept these grants because they have adopted & approved hazard mitigation plans. Brian is well engaged but many towns are not engaged in their updates. It's up to ALL of us to make these updates happen. Show up for your own town's public process during plan updates.

15:22:09 From Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Brian, just curious, what is the upland review regulated area within the city's IWWC regs?

15:23:05 From Brian Ennis : Our upland review area is 100-feet.

15:23:18 From Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Thank you, Brian!

15:23:47 From Rebecca French, CT DEEP: @bryan and @wayne want to type in a comment for time?

15:25:48 From Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: If you would like to sign up for public comment, please send me a DM

15:26:28 From Bryan Garcia: My comment as a "novice" in this space of resilience and NBS is that the NH and Meriden examples were fascinating. What caught my attention was the micro projects like bioswales that Giovanni showed. The analogy that I had was small solar projects - lots of them all over the place, help the whole. How can people be incented to support those sorts of small projects?

15:26:43 From Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: And I apologize to my break-out group for forging ahead with a follow-up question, but I didn't want my first comment to be misinterpreted! Thanks for indulging me!

15:26:48 From Denise Savageau : Good comments in the breakout room Tyler.

15:26:50 From Wayne Cobleigh, GZA: On the idea of private land owners to act on green roofs, municipalities could create land use permitting incentives.

15:27:29 From Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Bryan Garcia is CEO of the CT Green Bank and member of the Gov. Council on Climate Change

15:29:03 From Bryan Garcia: Thanks Rebecca - sorry! I was so excited - cool stuff!

15:29:12 From Denise Savageau: Want to make sure that we expand the definition of green infrastructure to include natural and working lands including forests, wetlands, riparian buffers.

15:29:54 From Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: Number 7 nationally

15:30:09 From Tyler Archer, Shipman: and farmlands too!

15:30:52 From Sarah Watson, CT DEEP:

https://portal.ct.gov/connecticutclimateaction/executive-order/deep-climate-resilience-fund 15:31:04 From Amy Blaymore Paterson, CLCC: Like the idea of incentives for private landowners, review of IWC regulations and allowable conditions, and the important point about engaging the wider community in the planning and implementation of these projects.

15:31:44 From David Dickson: Just one note: green roofs are challenging as retrofits because of the weight. Roofs were likely not engineered/designed to support that potential weight. Not a no, just can be expensive to make that determination. Adds another wrinkle and challenge to consider.

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#### **Breakout Group 2: Chat Record**

15:12:04 From Susmitha Attota to Sarah Watson, CT DEEP(Direct Message): Sarah, can't

hear you

15:12:27 From Sarah Watson, CT DEEP to Susmitha Attota(Direct Message): can you hear

me now?

15:12:44 From Susmitha Attota to Sarah Watson, CT DEEP(Direct Message): No, may be because I logged in by phone, too

- 15:13:00 From Sarah Watson, CT DEEP to Susmitha Attota(Direct Message): ahh ok. maybe your phone got sent to a different group, what number did you call in with?
- 15:13:04 From Susmitha Attota to Sarah Watson, CT DEEP(Direct Message): So, I started on computer audio and I can hear you now,
- 15:13:08 From Susmitha Attota to Sarah Watson, CT DEEP(Direct Message): 203 385 4017
- 15:13:16 From Susmitha Attota to Sarah Watson, CT DEEP(Direct Message): I hung up
- 15:25:49 From Sarah Watson, CT DEEP: If you would like to sign up for public comment, please send me a DM
- 15:26:29 From Bryan Garcia: My comment as a "novice" in this space of resilience and NBS is that the NH and Meriden examples were fascinating. What caught my attention was the micro projects like bioswales that Giovanni showed. The analogy that I had was small solar projects lots of them all over the place, help the whole. How can people be incented to support those sorts of small projects?
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