

STATE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
MEETING #8 – FACILITATOR’S SUMMARY
August 28, 2012, 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Connecticut Forest & Park Association, Middlefield, CT

Members Present: Timothy Bockus, Teri Brown, Mark Goetz, David Goodson, Jim Govoni, Eric Hammerling, Jane Harris, Mary Hogue, John Jasinski, Leslie Kane, Kevin Kelly, JoAnn Messina, John Mitchell, Karl Reichle, Bruce Villwock, Jeffrey Ward. Alternate: Ken Bullard. **Members Absent:** Kim Barbieri, John Parry.

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environment (DEEP) Participants/Ex Officio Members: Chris Donnelly, Susan Whalen.

Observers: Mike Musinski. **Facilitator:** Bill Logue

Welcome, Introductions and Administrative Issues. The agenda was reviewed¹.

I. Meeting with Commissioner Esty. Eric Hammerling reported on a meeting he, Chris Donnelly, John Jasinski, Deputy Commissioner Susan Whalen and several other DEEP staff had with Commissioner Esty on August 27 to discuss the recommendations. He noted that the Commissioner was familiar with and excited about the recommendations; in particular the tree warden certification, model roadside forest management plan, the need for improved coordination and clear roles, and the concept of a pulse in funding to address deferred maintenance. He was also sensitive to the issue of limited resources which many municipalities face. He expressed appreciation for the work of the Task Force and indicated that he may call on members in the future in some role as implementation decisions are made.

II. Discussion. Flowing from the report on the meeting with Commissioner Esty, the Task Force engaged in a wide ranging discussion.

The Task Force discussed ways of providing information and incentives for homeowners to better manage their trees. Several members noted that there needs to be a compelling case made in a way that connects with homeowners and with municipal leaders. Suggestions for incentives for homeowners included:

- Work with the Board of Realtors to develop a “certified property” label based on the Right Tree Right Place concepts such that a home buyer would gain confidence in the current state of the trees and future management and the home seller would benefit through increased value of having properly managed trees on the property.

¹ Most documents from the meeting are generally available at:
<http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2697&q=503040>

- Model a program based on the East Hartford graduated tax credit program for home improvements. This would need to be adapted to include tree work and may need legislation so that it is not limited to “blighted” neighborhoods.

Some of the discussion centered on sources of possible funding. Several ideas were proffered:

- General fund, bonding and excise taxes.
- Vehicle registration fee increases due to the logical nexus to road use.

III. To Do List. The Task Force reviewed the To Do List column by column, made final edits and confirmed who would be the Primary and Secondary party for each item. During the discussion the utilities noted that they were comfortable with the roles indicated for them but that this could change based on any decisions made through the regulatory process by PURA.

[there was some back and forth over small items – would you like it included? E.g., DOT training, see click fix, data collection, technology transfer center.

IV. Conclusion. Deputy Commissioner Whelan expressed sincere appreciation on behalf of DEEP for the efforts of the Task Force and the quality of the work in such a brief time. The Task Force signed the transmittal letter to Commissioner Esty for the Final Report. Following that, they expressed appreciation to each other for the focus, hard work, and collegiality of the process. In particular Task Force members expressed appreciation to Chair Eric Hammerling for his leadership style and drafting work on the report.