

Conservation, Energy, & Environment Committee (CEEC) Report
Public Health, Safety & Environment Subcommittee, July 9, 2025
Submitted by Paula Jones, Chair, CEEC

June Highlights:

Sustainable CT: Sustainable CT Fellow Amelia Kearney reached out to the Town at the beginning of June, then attended the June CEEC meeting to talk about Sustainable CT. Amelia has offered to help the town work towards getting recertified as a Sustainable CT community. Jon Colman, Lynda Laureano, and I met with Amelia via Zoom last week, to get some additional questions answered and to develop a preliminary work plan for getting recertified. Amelia will assist us with uploading documents and the application process. (This is an aggressive goal since the application deadline is August 15th.)

CEEC Resolutions for Council Consideration: CEEC requested that the Governance, Policy, & Economic Development Subcommittee consider two resolutions. The first resolution concerned banning Artificial Turf installations, and the second concerned Bloomfield's inclusion in the "Highlands Region." Details regarding the Highlands Region and benefits of inclusion are provided on page 2 of this report.

Both resolutions were discussed at the July 7th Governance Subcommittee meeting. The Subcommittee voted to move the Highlands Region resolution to Full Council. All Councilors agreed that discussion between the Town Manager and Superintendent would be an appropriate follow-up to the Artificial Turf discussion.

Upcoming Events:

June 1st – October 23rd: 2025 Trees for Bloomfield Photo Contest registration. The Bloomfield Public Arts Commission is co-sponsoring this year.

August 6th: (with BPL) Webinar, 6:30pm – 8:00pm: *Dangers of Extreme Heat- What to Know About Heat and How to Stay Safe:*

For more information and to register for the webinar:

<https://bplct.librarycalendar.com/event/dangers-extreme-heat-what-know-about-heat-and-how-stay-safe-virtual-6932>

The CEEC meets the second Thursday of each month from 4:30pm – 6pm via a hybrid meeting format (in person at Town Hall, Conference Room 5). Next scheduled meeting – July 10, 2025

Background Information: Bloomfield Inclusion in the Highlands Region Resolution

The federal Highlands Conservation Act (the Act) was created in 2004 to protect the 3.4 million-acre landscape that stretches along the Appalachian ridge and hills of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The purpose of this act is to protect clean drinking water, forests, and farms, as well as wildlife. Designated Highlands Region communities have access to federal grant money for land protection opportunities that advance the Act's objectives.

In December, 2022, the Act was reauthorized, and the area in Connecticut eligible for inclusion was extended. This expanded area now includes the Traprock/Metacomet Ridge. East Granby (along with Farmington and Thomaston) sought and received the Highlands Region designation as of November 25, 2024. Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy (TRLIC) worked with the town of East Granby to apply for and receive the designation.

TRLIC was asked to approach Bloomfield and West Hartford, its other member towns along the Traprock ridgeline, about applying for the designation. The CEEC voted at its February 13, 2025 meeting to support pursuing designation. There is no downside; the upside is potential access to federal funding. Since federal Highlands Conservation Act grants can be combined with CT Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) grants, designation could be beneficial in the future should the town seek to conserve land that meets the criteria of these grants.

To move ahead, the Town Council needs to state (through a letter or a resolution) Bloomfield's willingness to be added to the Highlands Region. That document would be forwarded to the Connecticut DEEP which would make a recommendation to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which would make the final determination.

If voted on and approved by the Town Council, the CEEC and the TRLIC is happy to assist Building and Land Use Director Jon Colman in taking the next step with Connecticut DEEP. Mr. Colman is in support of pursuing this designation.