BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting for the above referenced subcommittee held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 via Zoom meeting.

Present were: Councilor Anthony Harrington, Chair, Councilor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown, Rickford Kirton, Shamar Mahon

Also present were: Camilla Hillian, Director of Social & Youth Services, David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services, Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services, Sharon Mann, Bloomfield Beautification Committee, Chair, Paula Jones, Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee, Chair, and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Gail Nolan, Coordinator, Alliance for Bloomfield Children

Guest: Robert Berman, Chair of Bloomfield Housing Authority

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Introductions – Committee Charge and Purpose

As the new Chair of the Community Services Subcommittee, Councilor Harrington was introduced to the committee members who represent various departments, boards and commissions.

This committee will be bi-monthly, 2nd Tuesdays, to discuss a variety of community initiatives and programming.

Community Service Subcommittee Charge

This subcommittee is responsible for review and updates of health and social services, including youth and senior citizen services, housing, historic preservation, libraries, parks and recreation and cemeteries.

The goal is to improve community spirit and cohesiveness through the development and implementation of special events to help to build a stronger community; and improve the local cultural sector through the development and implementation of a broad and varied range of programs for interested residents and groups.

Discussion and Brainstorming Community Needs regarding the American Rescue Plan Act Funding

Bloomfield Housing Authority

Mr. Robert Berman, Chair of the Bloomfield Housing Authority gave a brief overview of need to address affordable housing options in the Town of Bloomfield.

The Bloomfield Housing Authority is in the process of applying for a 501c3 to be eligible for additional grants to support their mission. They are looking to partner with Habitat for Humanity to repurpose and rehabilitate vacant properties in Town.
There was an ensued detailed discussion regarding the available opportunities to initiate the rehabilitation process and funding to achieve the goal of offering more affordable options in Town.

The subcommittee discussed the overall purpose and federal guidelines in place for allocating ARPA funds. Mr. Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager gave a brief overview of the latest funding guidance from the federal government.

There were some discussions regarding other community projects such as:

- Expansion of Broadband Internet Access
- Stormwater Infrastructure projects
- Climate Resiliency – Energy Plan – Climate Energy Resolution
- Social, Youth, Senior and Leisure programming
- Workforce Development opportunities – Capital Workforce Partners

The Town will send out an RFP for consultant services to administer and develop a plan for the $6.1 million dollar allocating that Bloomfield will receive. There will be a variety of community forums to solicit public input on how ARPA funds should be allocated.

**Report from Town Staff and Committee Chairs**

**Social & Youth Services**

Mrs. Camilla Hillian, Director of Social and Youth Services provided a status report of Social & Youth Services programs and services.

**Social Services Programming**

- There’s still time to apply for energy assistance. Contact CRT to schedule your appointment at 860-560-2694. Eligible households can get assistance with deliverable fuel, utilities and MDC bills. Eligible households may also qualify for furnace/boiler repair or replacement and home energy audits to increase heating and energy savings.

- Operation Fuel is also now accepting applications for heating assistance. Applications can be submitted online at [www.operationfuel.org](http://www.operationfuel.org) or contact Social & Youth Services at 860-242-1895.

- Unite CT continues to assist renters with rental assistance. Eligible households can be approved for assistance up to $15,000 and an additional $1,500 towards your Eversource bill. Visit Unite CT website to apply online or contact our office for additional information and programs.

- Social & Youth Services continue to assist ALICE households with rent & mortgage assistance, through ALICE grant funding through the United Way.

Thank you to all that donated to our Annual Season of Giving program. Thanks to the generosity of our donors were able to distribute over 200 Thanksgiving Baskets and gift cards. We also distributed Holiday gift cards to over 200 children.

**Youth Services Programming**

- Youth Services has wrapped up fall groups and preparing for winter break activities and new programs beginning in January.
- Our Foster Care program continues to seek families and youth in foster care placement in Bloomfield to participate in our activities and programs. Contact Tiffany Grant, Youth Services Coordinator at Social & Youth Services to enroll. The FCSN is funded through a grant through DCF. Next year marks 30 years of this grant and providing this service to the Bloomfield community.
- The department is hiring a part-time Youth and Family Worker to assist with youth programs and activities.
- Information will be forthcoming early next year regarding our 3rd year of Summer Youth Employment

**Leisure Services**

Mr. David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services provided a status report of Leisure Services programs and services.

- Winter/Spring program publication has been completed and posted on the main page of the Town’s website, on the Leisure Services portion of the website, at www.bloomfieldrec.com, and on our social media sites. Please check out all of our program offerings; they vary from Special Events to youth program to adult programs to membership programs. A new program offering to highlight will most likely be a one and done program is the Rec League Youth Basketball program for youth ages 8-15. This is a co-ed league and designed for participants with all playing abilities with the focus on sportsmanship and introduction to the game. We are offering this program this season in place of the normal Bloomfield Youth Basketball League (BYBL), BYBL typically uses the school gyms to offer this program and at the present time the BOE isn’t permitting use of facilities to outside organizations or groups.

- Currently in the final stages of the Anti-Litter Campaign for the Town owned parks. Two sample signs have gone to print, once received we’ll verify that this is the final product that we’re looking to have posted throughout the parks. Once verified we’ll move forward with ordering the remaining 32 signs to be placed.

- For the winter season, for the second year now, we have made the decision to leave the tennis, pickleball, and basketball court nets up throughout the winter to support outdoor recreation play. This is in part due to the warmer winters we’ve experienced over the past few winters, as well as to provide outdoor play during a time of Covid and the current pandemic.
• Farmington River Park Trails Mapping and Kiosk project funded with both town funding and a grant provided to us by the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic organization is near completion. The mapping has been completed and the kiosk signage, as well as the trail markers have been designed and ready for print. My last project initiative is to have a carpenter make repairs to the kiosk on location. I’m currently working on this portion of the project now.

Senior Services

Mrs. Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services provided a status report of Senior Services programs and services.

• Bi-weekly CT Food Share distribution is now “market-style” instead of drive-through.

• Participating in new CT Food Share initiative, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CFSP) which provides a box of non-perishable items and a block of cheese on the second Monday of each month to residents who are registered for the program.

• Distributed 150 turkeys and “fixing’s” to Bloomfield residents for Thanksgiving.

• We have begun offering some day trips, which provide opportunities to help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

• 7th Aging Mastery Program® (AMP) graduation was held on Monday.

CEEC

Mrs. Paula Jones is the Chair of the Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee. Mrs. Jones stated that the CEEC engages in a wide variety of projects and education initiatives aimed at improving and conserving the environmental quality of life.

The Committee is in the process of prioritizing projects and reviewing the following initiatives: (See detailed project report attached)

- Trees in Bloomfield Initiative
- Climate Emergency Resolution
- EPA Portfolio Manager software
- Recycling/Composting/Solid Waste Management
- Home Energy Solutions (HES)
- Biodiversity

Beautification Committee

Mrs. Sharon Mann, Chair of the Bloomfield Beautification Committee gave a brief overview of various projects that have been completed in the past quarter. (See detailed report attached)
Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Mahon and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.
Bloomfield Beautification Committee - December 14, 2021 Report

The BBC meets the fourth Tuesday of each month from 5:30 – 7 pm and is meeting virtually via ZOOM until further notice. The BBC engages in a wide variety of projects and planting initiatives aimed at improving the appearance of our town gardens by creating sustainable gardens that encourage pollinators, and involve residents in gardening as a way to promote town pride. We make every attempt to make use of recyclable materials, native plants, and no pesticides. BBC receives a small budget from the town to assist in carrying out the jobs that we do.

This report covers BBC activities that occurred since the last meeting of the Community Services Subcommittee (June 22, 2021).

☐ MARCH – DEC - TREES FOR BLOOMFIELD Initiative:: This project to improve Bloomfield’s tree canopy was launched by the BBC in partnership with the Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee (CEEC), town departments, the Bloomfield Public Library (BPL), Filley Park Committee (FPC) and community volunteers. The Initiative hosted 2 tree webinars, 4 guided tree walks, a tree care & pruning workshop, a TREES FOR BLOOMFIELD photo contest with trees highlighted from our community, and planted 36 trees (on Arbor Day April 24 and on the first day of Fall Sept. 22) in 2021 on Rockwell Ave, Park Ave, 330 Park Ave Extension, and Bloomfield Ave. Many events were co-sponsored by Leisure Services.

☐ APRIL- DEC. - MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC GARDEN SPACES The BBC plants and maintains the following garden spaces. We are assisted by DPW. We manage the following areas: Town Hall, Town Green, the 2 libraries, 2 electronic sign planters, the Police department garden beds plus planters, 330 Park Ave (5 planters) and Mary Hill Green

☐ SEPT-The ARBORETUM at Bloomfield Town Hall. BBC committee members inventoried trees on 6-acre Town Hall campus and created a lovely arboretum with a kiosk and a self-guided tour with brochures. along with printed metal labels with common and Latin names attached to 23 trees. The Kick-off to announce the arboretum tied in with TREES FOR BLOOMFIELD GUIDED WALK FROM TOWN HALL TO FILLEY PARK led by a certified arborist and attended by 38 people. Co-sponsored by Leisure Services & Filley Park Committee.

☐ DEC- INSTALLATION OF PLANTINGS AT FARMINGTON RIVER PARK: Donations received from Monrovia, Designs of Mann and DMR MATERIALS. Native plantings being planted to attract birds and highlight the entrance to FRP funded by a Hartford Audubon Society Grant. Pea-stone entry used to create a new walkway. Recycled woodchips used as mulch. This is a project co-sponsored by the DPW. Work continues to spring of 2022.

☐ JUNE-NOV - 23 NOTABLE LANDSCAPE AWARDS GIVEN OUT TO HOMEOWNERS AND ONE BUSINESS. Articles published in Messenger. Door to door recognition and delivery of certificates and lawn signs. Waiting to be published in Town website. Since 1989 the committee has presented Notable Landscape Awards for outstanding property landscaping. A framed certificate and lawn sign is presented to the award recipients at a Town Council meeting the second week in September recognizing their garden achievements. Still waiting to have information published on Town Website.

☐ NOV- PLANTING OF 2500 BULBS FOR SPRING COLOR-15 Volunteers assisted in planting 1700 bulbs in front of town Hall.

☐ INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT GOES FROM 40 TO 130 users in 1 year: ONGOING: Instagram provides colorful pictures of plantings and other information pertaining to the BBC. 
https://www.instagram.com/bbc_bloomfield_ct/

☐ DEC- HOLIDAY GREENS for planters, decorate wreaths for 2 Libraries, DECORATIONS AT TOWN HALL AND Poinsettias Placed in OFFICES FOR PUBLIC ENJOYMENT.

Submitted 12/14/21 Sharon Mann, Chair
Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee’s (CEEC) Community Services Subcommittee December 14, 2021 Report

The Committee meets the second Thursday of each month from 4:30 – 6 pm and is meeting virtually via ZOOM until further notice. The CEEC engages in a wide variety of projects and education initiatives aimed at improving and conserving the environmental quality of life for Bloomfield residents.

This report covers CEEC activities that occurred since the last meeting of the Community Services Subcommittee (June 22, 2021).

TREES FOR BLOOMFIELD Initiative: This project to improve Bloomfield’s tree canopy was launched by the CEEC in partnership with Bloomfield Beautification Committee (BBC), town departments, the Bloomfield Public Library (BPL), and community volunteers. The Initiative hosted 2 webinars, 4 tree walks, a tree care workshop, a photo contest, and planted 36 trees (on Arbor Day and on the first day of Fall) in 2021.

Climate Emergency Resolution: The CEEC presented a resolution to the Town Council calling for the development of a long-term plan to phase out greenhouse gases generated by Town activity by 2030. The Council approved the Resolution in May, and approved funding in the FY 2021-22 Budget for the Town Manager to hire a consultant to help with plan development. The CEEC Interim Chair and the Environmental Planner are working with Nancy Haynes on the scope of services for an RFQ.

EPA Portfolio Manager software: CEEC transitioned its energy tracking spreadsheet to the nationally recognized EPA Portfolio Manager software in order to “weather normalize” and “benchmark” town and Board of Education buildings. The software automatically uploads electricity and gas meter data from Eversource and Connecticut Natural Gas and provide an analysis of trends independent of weather fluctuations. Town buildings can be compared to national averages to highlight high and low performing sites.

Home Energy Solutions (HES): On October 15, 2021 the CEEC in partnership with the Bloomfield Public Library presented a home energy efficiency expert to talk about the HES program promoting the free energy assessments and generous rebates on energy efficiency projects such as insulation that are available for homeowners, as well as renters and multi-family dwelling units, with a focus on increasing participation by low income residents. CEEC developed and distributed information to publicize the HES program.

Recycling/Composting/Solid Waste Management:

- In addition to producing educational materials on “Recycling Right,” CEEC hosted its annual “Shred Day & Electronics Recycling” event on October 2nd, recycling 4 tons of paper and a truckload of electronics.
- On September 23, 2021 the CEEC co-sponsored a program on composting at the Bloomfield Public Library with a speaker from the UCONN Master Composter program.

Biodiversity: The CEEC monitors seasonal Bird Counts and a Summer Butterfly Count in Bloomfield. The 2021 result was disappointing for state-threatened Bobolinks, with 14 counted versus 32 last year. The Monarch butterfly count declined as well. Year-to-year variation can be due to a number of factors but these counts are valuable for assessing bird and butterfly population trends (so that some action locally might be taken to mitigate population declines).