

**Naugatuck Cultural Council  
Environmental Initiatives Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting – October 23, 2012  
Naugatuck Savings Bank Community Room  
87 Church St, Naugatuck, CT**

Present: Suzanne Flores, Felipe Flores, Melissa Leonard, Vanessa Vowe, Sandra Heller, Bridget Mariano

Meeting called to order by Felipe Flores at 6:55 p.m.

Melissa Leonard volunteered to take minutes.

Felipe Flores spoke to Mayor Mezzo about the ideas for the community garden. The Mayor likes the ideas. Felipe recounted that Lena Warren stated that winter is important for planning, so we need to know that she can continue to participate with the group on this goal.

Sandra Heller stated that we need money to get started.

Felipe stated that we need a healthy environment for the town and that provides savings for the town as well. Naugatuck can be an example of what a small town can do. He asked the group to think about what we can use that already exists and what can be changed. He stated that scientists all over talk about the impact of climate change and that we've already passed the peak. So now we need to prepare; for example, storm runoff and the expenses associated with it. We need small, basic changes to raise awareness. He asked what, specifically, people can do to effect change and referenced a NY Times article on fixing farming which used to be done healthfully by rotating crops and now is done with two cycles and increased fertilization.

Melissa Leonard suggested that if the community garden project doesn't come through, perhaps we could start a storm drain labeling campaign to make people aware that dumping in storm drains is essentially dumping in the river. She told the group about a man from Beacon Falls who coordinated this type of project.

Vanessa Vowe asked how we could bring people on board with drain labeling.

Sandra Heller stated that Bree was very passionate about this committee. It would be good to get a high school group linked to an adult group. She asked if there is an environmental club at Naugatuck High School.

Felipe agreed with that idea and added that we need to define the vision of what we're looking for from them and for the town. For example, with a community garden, we'd want it to be visible and inclusive.

Sandra stated that the purpose of the group is to bring people together who might not otherwise get together.

Vanessa said that we need to try to bring in different groups.

Felipe asked, "Where do we start?"

Bridget Mariano suggested that Melissa invite the man from Beacon Falls to speak to our group.

The following steps were suggested:

- Melissa could find out the best way to get started on a drain labeling project
- Decide what groups could/should be involved & how to get them to come to a meeting
- Speak to the Town Planner, Public Works, Mayor Mezzo

Felipe stated that catch basins are important to prevent flooding. This project could create general awareness about the proper care, which saves the town money.

Bridget asked if we could use the Senior Center garden for the community garden.

Felipe suggested teaching gardening techniques to seniors and Lena could consult with the group.

Sandra suggested that the youth could work with the seniors on it, starting small.

Suzanne asked if Lena could explain to them about raised beds.

Melissa suggested that building a rain garden could be another option for a project if the community garden or drain labeling fall through.

Felipe said we should start with the drain project.

Melissa will contact the man from Beacon Falls to invite him to our next meeting.

Melissa Leonard made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20 meeting. Seconded by Vanessa Vowe. Unanimously approved.

Tentative date for next meeting is Nov. 8, 6:00 p.m. Alternate date is Dec. 11, 6:00 p.m.

Melissa Leonard made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Seconded by Bridget Mariano. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Leonard