

## Westport News (CT)

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**Section:** News

### A new name and an expanded mission

*Frank Luongo*

The town committee that was appointed by the first selectman to help Westport make its contribution to the development of an environmentally smarter society, did less to achieve more at its monthly meeting Wednesday when the Green Energy Task Force changed its name to the Green Task Force (GTF). According to the GTF chairman, Kimberly Lake, reducing the size of the town's carbon footprint and encouraging clean-energy conversion will now take their place within a wider range of initiatives by the group.

"We want to make sure that how we act today will not place the future in jeopardy," Lake said, as the group committed itself to the expanded mission of promoting sustainability in the advice it gives to the first selectman, town commissions and departments and in its educational programs and assistance for town residents.

The new mission statement adopted at the GTF meeting sets a course for "transforming Westport into a green sustainable community," a goal the group found not only daunting, but defying definition.

"It would be like trying to define democracy," **David Mann** said about the concept of sustainability, as the task force decided to let the concept take shape from what it does, rather than from what it says.

Right now, the group is focused on helping the Green Village Initiative (GVI) complete the first of a number of edible-garden installations in town, starting this spring and summer with a site at Staples High School, to promote a food model that avoids the long-distance, high-energy consumption of today's agribusiness.

Another project discussed at the meeting was the installation of solar panels at Staples High School, which the task force expects to complete by October.

The panels were obtained without charge from the state's clean energy fund in return for a requisite number of conservation pledges, many of which had been obtained by members of the high school's Green Club.

Looking to the future, the task force has engaged an intern to survey the best practices of municipalities around the country that have developed zoning and building codes to assure sustainable development in their land-use regulations .

Westport resident David Silver, who graduated this spring from Syracuse University with a major in architecture, concentrating on sustainable principles and practices, has begun an online search for the most successful municipal land-use programs to provide the task force with a basis for making recommendations to the Westport Planning and Zoning and Building departments.

Silver, a 2004 graduate of Weston High School whose family owns a long-established gift and luggage store in Westport, will complete the survey by the end of the summer.

His graduation thesis project included the design of an 85-unit development of attached housing for the Harbor Point area of Stamford that employs many sustainable building principles.

In his "perspectives" for the thesis, Silver drew accommodations for solar heating, greenhouses to store energy from the sun for release as heat in winter, and south-side windows for open ventilation in the summer.

He said that the houses were designed compactly with a reduced square footage to conserve on the amount of energy used for heating and cooling. The houses are stretched out along a park, with provisions made for stores within walking distance. The location also provides easy access to rail service and public transportation.

"I would like to see my town more green in the future," Silver said at the GTF meeting.

The survey sub-committee begins its deliberations next week to identify town policy on land-use that might have to be adjusted for sustainability.

Lake said that the impetus for the name-change and the mission-revision for the task force came from a conversation with First Selectman Gordon Joseloff in January.

"He said that people have been coming to him with many different ideas on the environment, and that he needed a place to send them to for help," said Lake.

The GTF tacked on a to-do list of proactive and reactive actions, including taking up and analyzing proposals from the community to evaluate them for their potential impact on the growth of sustainability.

At its next meeting, on Sept. 9, the task force will take up a proposal for restructuring its operation to include an action committee to be made up of task force members and other members of the community, on an ad-hoc basis, as new ideas are submitted to the task force for assistance.

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