

Profile **Steven Winter and the Office of Climate and Sustainability**



Steven Winter has been involved in making New Haven a better place to live and work for several years now. With his foundational studies at Yale (a B.A. in Philosophy) and his advanced studies in electrical power systems, he has been able to put his knowledge to practical application in such areas as creating effective models for take-down and replacement of coal-fired power plants with updated technology based on renewable sources of energy and achieving this in the most economical way.

Steven has also served the people of New Haven directly in his community, as an Alder (21st District – Newhallville, Prospect Hill and Dixwell neighborhoods) for the last 5 years.

In December 2022, the Mayor and City Administration created a much-needed office, the **Office of Climate and Sustainability**, and appointed Mr. Winter as its Director. Its mission is “to help the City address issues related to climate change and sustainability and to take an approach that addresses the needs that residents are facing every day.” This could translate to conservation of natural resources, cleaner air, lower utility bills and perhaps lower taxes for the citizens of New Haven.

His appointment is recent, but Steven has hit the ground running. One of his major objectives has been to assist in the New Haven Health Department's application for a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (funded by the American Rescue Plan) concerning waste diversion and recycling. If the application is approved, New Haven will receive funds that will enable the formation of an initiative that will be able to study the participation, contamination and general recycling practices in municipal curbside recycling, and be able to come up with solutions to facilitate better practices. This in turn would translate to a smaller carbon footprint, as well as a smaller budget for waste removal for New Haven and its residents! The initiative would include the creation of three full-time positions and a team of part-time community ambassadors to carry out the mission, which would last three years, and would include messaging at the public school level and at Community Management Team meetings.

A major thrust of the Office of Climate and Sustainability would be the implementation of an organics recycling infrastructure, including backyard and porch composting, collection of recyclables, food rescue and aerobic composting and anaerobic digesters, which would help “close the loop” by reintroducing products back into the life-cycle of materials as feedstock (fuels). As you probably know, organic material is a major portion of the waste stream, at 23%, so any progress in this area would be a milestone. Steven points out that this progress would also have a very favorable monetary benefit in that net municipal waste costs could decrease.

Steven sees the establishment of the Office of Climate and Sustainability as a chance to collaborate with entities in the City such as the **Solid Waste & Recycling Authority**, the New Haven Parking Authority (re: electric vehicles, solar panels), and the Housing Authority (low income solar and energy efficiency) on present and future projects. He recognizes that the Office does not in itself have resources and employees to carry out goals, but that it can be instrumental in sourcing through other entities such as Parks and Public Works. Specifically, this author recognizes a great benefit for the area of studies on curbside recycling practices in the City that would be powered by the resources available to the new Office of Climate and Sustainability.

Regarding messaging, Steven perceives a “tremendous lack of trust” on the part of the public concerning the efficacy of recycling, and he would like to use the messaging capabilities of his agency to bridge that gap. One such idea to bolster the public's confidence would involve producing a video tracking the path of a particular item from curbside to the Transfer Station, to the materials recovery facility to market and then back into sustainable material life.

I asked Steven what progress he has made regarding outreach with schools: “Yes, there are a couple of schools that are already making efforts to improve recycling, food diversion, and composting.” (Namely The Sound School and Clinton Avenue School) He is looking at taking aspects of their programs and expanding them throughout the public school system, working with each school's administration to tailor the program to its curriculum.

He is working with the EAC (Environmental Advisory Commission) on advocacy for public policy legislation, particularly at the state level, an area where he has some experience.

What would he like to see the Office of Climate and Sustainability accomplish over the next 5 years? “Expanding what the City is already doing in energy efficiency and electrification, which reduces emissions and improves quality of living as well.” Deploying more clean energy. City building of affordable housing, getting a city-wide composting system curbside and getting more commercial establishments to participate in composting. He would like to see the composting site in West Haven attain expanded capability to handle curbside scrap collection by purchasing recovery machinery, so New Haven could avail itself of a local path for transporting compostables.

We wish Steven and the Office of Climate and Sustainability the very best and look forward to collaboration on some of his key initiatives.

If citizens of New Haven have any questions or concerns for Steven they may reach him at swinter@newhavenct.gov

Feature Tires, tires everywhere, tires!

Have you noticed tires by the side of the road in New Haven? Or dumped on unsuspecting residential lots in the middle of the night? How about that huge pile that appeared on Valley Street?



Before I begin, let me say that car and small truck tires (without rims) (4 tires per year total) are accepted from residents of New Haven at the Transfer Station.

Now where were we? Oh yeah, tires EVERYWHERE! Well it seems that tires are ending up on the street illegally dumped, apparently by less-than-reputable auto service businesses that don't want to

deal with disposal costs, or on properties from defunct auto businesses that did not clean up their stockpiles of tires before sale.

A good case can be made for increase in production together with poorly framed recycling statutes as a major reason for the problem.

Tire recycling in the U.S. wasn't really a thing until the early 90's, when a concerted effort was made to recover almost 1 billion of these rubber rings that had been languishing in piles for years. After attaining great success at clean-up and continuing recycling practices, tire recycling rates have slumped nationally since 2013, when approximately 90% of tires were processed, down to the current rate of about 72%. 'Add it to the pile' seems to be the prevailing sentiment, much to the chagrin of many of the citizens of New Haven, who are paying the price – often having to clean up piles left on their lawns, or simply view other piles as they go about town.

Aside from a saturated market for “crumb rubber” (the product made from used tires that is often employed in road construction and concrete production) due to more people driving more miles in more vehicles, there is another reason why more tires end up in more piles in CT these days:

In 1994, a “tire fee” bill passed in the Connecticut state legislature that instituted an up-front charge to the consumer of \$2.00 per tire upon purchase. At the end of 1996 that bill was repealed. Since then, various efforts to re-institute the law have failed, the main reasoning behind those against these efforts being that by putting the burden of responsibility for cleanup on local governments, there was much room for mismanagement of programs, as well as lack of an enforcement infrastructure. In the meantime, in the absence of any tire fee at the state level, certain dealerships have taken it upon themselves to impose up-front tire fees that are intended to remedy tire 'blight.' But with no accountability, these fees may or may not be actually used to address the problem.

The answer could well involve making the manufacturer responsible for end-of-use recycling, or what is known as EPR (extended producer responsibility). Such programs have had notable success with other items such as mattresses and box springs, paint and electronics. (you may know that the New Haven transfer station participates in programs for electronics and mattresses, and accepts these items at no charge from citizens). There is a strong argument that such EPR legislation would bring the same level of success that has been found in these other programs to tire recycling.

There may come a day when more uses for crumb rubber will be approved by industry, and the markets will open wider for used tires, but until that day, we will have to deal with the piles. In the meantime, here is what you can do:

If you find that you have a large pile on your lawn one morning, report it to SeeClickFix <https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>. They should be able to assist with disposal.

 **So you think you're smart, eh?**

Then maybe you can answer these q's about trash and recycling correctly! Maybe your children have all the answers?! (answers are on the bottom of the last page of this issue of R-N-H).

Which items below are recyclable in your blue bin? (check box if recyclable)

light bulbs ___ take out 'clamshell' container ____
cat litter ___ single use plastic cups ____
tin cans ___ pizza boxes ____
newspaper ___ plastic toys ____

What is the current amount of disposed material recycled in CT?

19% ___ 22% ___ 32% ___ 45% ____

What us the current amount of material recycled in New Haven?

19% ___ 22% ___ 32% ___ 45% ____

True or False:

Waste in CT is often burned to create energy ____

Waste from CT is never taken to landfills anymore ____

Most recycling does not actually get recycled ____

If you're not sure it should be recycled, it is better to just put it in the trash ____

Calendar of Events

Global Recycling Day, March 18. Awareness and commemorative day.
<https://www.globalrecyclingday.com/>

City of New Haven meeting schedule:

<https://newhaven-ct.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

New Haven Parks and Public Works info:

A Message from Parks and Public Works Resident Services:

Get a head start on spring cleaning! De-clutter your home by bringing unwanted clothes, toys, electronics and furniture to the residential drop-off station located at 260 Middletown Ave. Their hours of operation are Monday-Saturday 9am-12noon. New Haven residents can stop by our office at 34 Middletown Ave. Monday-Friday from 7am to 4pm to pick up a free booklet of vouchers to dispose of household items and yard waste at the residential drop-off station. Yard Waste collection remains suspended for the winter season. Please bring leaf bags and yard waste to the Residential Drop-off Station.

Just a friendly reminder that trash and recycling totes should be placed close to the curb the night before of your scheduled trash pick-up day. Weekly trash pick-up is for food waste and packaging only. Items such as clothes, toys, pieces of broken furniture and other household items are considered bulky items. They must be brought to the residential drop-off station. Bulky items placed inside black bags will be left curbside and may be subject to a fine. Please do not put trash or bulky items inside the blue recycling toter. Check out Recyclect.com for the list of items that can be placed inside of your recycling toter. If your trash or recycling bin does not get emptied out on your trash pick-up day, please call (203) 946-7700.

Links:

New Haven Public Works-
<https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/>

Public Works paving schedule-
<https://www.newhavenct.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/15028/637903861608081376>

See Click Fix-
<https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>

NHSWRA contact info and link:



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quiz answers:

section 1) pizza boxes and newspaper are recyclable. 2) 32%. 3) 19%. 4) True, False, False, True

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