The meeting was called to order at 11:06 AM by Chairman, Rep. Demicco M. 021.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Cohen C. S12; Haskell W. S26; Kushner J. S24; Miner C. S30

Representatives: Arconti D. 109; Borer D. 115; Demicco M. 021; Dillon P. 092; Dubitsky D. 047; Gresko J. 121; Gucker K. 138; Hayes R. 051; Horn M. 064; Kennedy K. 119; McGorty B. 122; Michel D. 146; Mushinsky M. 085; O'Dea T. 125; Palm C. 036; Piscopo J. 076; Reyes G. 075; Simms T. 140; Slap D. 019; Vargas E. 006; Wilson D. 066; Young P. 120

Absent were:

Senators: Harding S. 107; MacLachlan J. 035; Ryan K. 139; Zupkus L. 089

Representative Demicco asked if the Co-Chair had any remarks. Hearing none, Representative Demicco asked for a motion to raise concepts listed under Section III as Raised Bills.

The motion was made by Representative Mushinsky and seconded by Representative Gresko.
Senator Miner expressed concerns that some members will not be present at the meeting if the items listed under Section III were to be voted as a group, but had no problem voting in this manner. Senator Miner then asked if votes will be held open. Representative Demicco stated that the committee will hold the votes open until 4:00 PM in the Environment Committee on the third floor. Representative Demicco continued by explaining that the committee has a tradition of voting such bills in a group.

Senator Miner commented that the committee has heard these bills in the past and will support raising bills in Section III to continue the conversation.

Representative Piscopo shared that he has concerns with the “concept of concepts” in committee and asked if any individual members of the legislature has proposed bills in regards to the concepts listed in Section III.

Representative Demicco explained that, due to the breadth of all the issues listed in Section III, there has been interest expressed by members of the legislature and the leadership of the committee. The representative continued by expressing his opinion of the importance in having the conversation on these issues moving forward.

Representative Dubitsky expressed that he has no problem voting on these items as a block with the understanding that any vote in favor of raising the concepts does not mean a vote in favor of the substance of the bill.

Representative Demicco announced that the committee will be standing at ease.

The committee meeting was called back to order. Representative Demicco reminded members of the committee that the members are only voting to draft the concepts.

The motion passed by voice vote.

Representative Demicco asked the Committee Clerk to note that the vote was not unanimous.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to draft the proposed bills listed under Section IV as committee bills.

A motion was made by Representative Mushinsky and seconded by Representative Reyes.

Representative Dubitsky asked for a roll call vote on each bill.

Representative Mushinsky and Representative Reyes withdrew their motion and second, respectively.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed S.B. No. 7 AN ACT ESTABLISHING CALF PASTURE BEACH IN NORWALK AS A WILDLIFE REFUGE.

A motion was made by Representative Simms and seconded by Representative Michel.
Senator Miner explained that there are a number of bills on the agenda that he may not be able to support when the time comes to vote them out of the committee; however, for the purposes of the meeting, the Senator explained that he will be supporting the first item, and most likely all items, under Section IV to allow proposed bills to be heard.

Representative Piscopo asked if the proposed bill is a proposed bill from a member of the General Assembly.

Representative Demicco confirmed that the proposed bill is one that has come before the Environment Committee.

Representative Piscopo asked why this proposed bill is not being scheduled for a subject matter public hearing, but instead, up for a vote to be drafted as a committee bill.

Representative Demicco explained that the Environment Committee has a typically voted to draft proposed bills as committee bills before holding a public hearing for such bills.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco reminded committee members that the committee is simply voting to draft the bills. Furthermore, Representative Demicco reminded members that votes will be held open until 4:00 PM in the Environment Committee office.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed S.B. No. 20 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT, SALE AND POSSESSION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANTS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, BLACK RHINOCEROS, WHITE RHINOCEROS AND GIRAFFES.

A motion was made by Representative Mushinsky and seconded by Representative Horn.

Representative Dubitsky stated he is unsure if he will support the bill once drafted, but he may, and will vote in opposition to draft the proposed bill because it is being drafted as a committee bill.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 24, Nay – 2, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed S.B. No. 21 AN ACT CONCERNING THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTERS.

A motion was made by Senator Cohen and seconded by Representative Mushinsky.

Representative Dubitsky explained the history of the Trask Force on the Humane Treatment of Animals in Municipal Animal Shelters, in that the task force has had numerous extensions on their reporting deadline over many years. Representative
Dubitsky stated he will support drafting the bill this year; however, this will be his last time.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed H.B. No. 5092 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISTRIBUTION OF UNSOLICITED MARKETING FLYERS TO HOMES.

A motion was made by Representative Gresko and seconded by Representative McGorty.

Representative Mushinsky asked if the intention is to limit unsolicited marketing flyers that are “dropped on the street” or if it also pertains to those that are placed in a mailbox as well.

Representative Demicco explained his understanding that the intention is towards unsolicited flyers that are dropped on driveways and anything other than going through U.S. Mail.

Representative Michel shared his belief that this bill is in regards to stormwater issues.

Representative Gresko explained that Representative Michel’s comment in regards to stormwater issues is an unintended consequence when it comes to unsolicited flyers, many of which are in plastic bags, go unattended and are washed away down catch basins during stormy weather.

Representative Palm asked if such flyers include campaign flyers.

Representative Gresko said it would not, and shared his belief that candidates dropping off materials at people’s homes are not legally considered solicitation.

Representative Demicco reminded committee members that there will be opportunity to debate the items listed on the agenda at later times during the legislative process.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed H.B. No. 5251 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE POSSESSION AND TRADE OF SHARK FINS.

A motion was made by Representative Dillon and seconded by Representative Michel.

Representative Dubitsky asked if the intent of the bill to prohibit the possession and trade of sharks. Representative Dubitsky explained that if a person is in possession of a shark, that person is also in possession of a shark fin.
Representative Michel explained that the intent is to prevent the possession and trade of shark fins. Representative Michel explained concerns in that fishermen who catch sharks may remove the fin from the shark and return the shark into the ocean.

Representative Dubitsky asked if a person in possession of a shark is allowed to be in possession of that shark because the shark will have a fin.

Representative Michel clarified that the intent is only on the sole possession of shark fins.

Representative Demicco explained that the bill has not yet been drafted, but that Representative Dubitsky’s concerns will be taken into consideration.

Representative Dubitsky expressed concern of that the intent of the bill may be directed towards the fishing of sharks.

Representative Demicco shared his belief that Representative Dubitsky’s concern is not the intent of the bill.

Representative Michel explained that is not the purpose of the bill, and that the bill is directed specifically to shark fins.

Senator Miner shared his knowledge in regards to the process of “finning,” and is not aware if it is currently illegal in the United States. Senator Miner shared his belief that the points shared by Representative Dubitsky is well founded, and will support the drafting of this bill because there will be an opportunity to continue the discussion about this item and about fishery issues in Connecticut.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed H.B. No. 5254 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPOSE A BUYER’S CONVEYANCE FEE ON REAL PROPERTY TO FUND THE PURCHASE AND STEWARDSHIP OF OPEN SPACE.

A motion was made by Representative Gresko and seconded by Representative Simms.

Senator Miner expressed concern for the addition of more taxes to the conveyance of real-estate; however, the Senator will support the effort of the committee to allow the bill to be drafted.

Representative O’Dea stated he will vote for this bill as a concept because his first selectman has asked him to support it; however, the Representative expressed concerns for the bill.

Senator Haskell shared that his community has raised some concerns about the bill, but will also vote to draft the proposed bill as a committee bill.
A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 22, Nay – 4, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed H.B. No. 5308 AN ACT CONCERNING VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ALONG STATE HIGHWAYS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

A motion was made by Representative Dillon and seconded by Representative Palm.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed H.B. No. 5314 (COMM) AN ACT PROHIBITING THE RELEASE OF HELIUM BALLOONS INTO THE ATMOSPHERE.

A motion was made by Representative Mushinsky and seconded by Representative Gucker.

Representative Dubitsky expressed he may have concerns about the bill depending on how it is drafted; however, he will vote in support on drafting the bill.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to vote to draft as a committee bill Proposed H.B. No. 5384 AN ACT REQUIRING THE ELIMINATION OF SINGLE-USE STYROFOAM CONTAINERS. (ENV)

A motion was made by Representative Mushinsky and seconded by Representative Dillon.

Representative Dubitsky expressed he may have concerns about the bill depending on how it is drafted; however, he will vote in support on drafting the bill but may not support the bill once drafted.

Representative Borer stated that “Styrofoam” is a trademarked name and asked that these products be referred as polystyrene foam.

Senator Miner expressed that, during the screening meeting, the conversation was in regards to single-use cups. The Senator shared concern that, once drafted, the bill may include other types of polystyrene products, such as building materials.

Representative Demicco expressed his understanding that the bill is directed solely towards containers.

Senator Miner asked if the intent of the bill is directed towards single-use containers as it pertains to food, or if would it include polystyrene used for packaging; such as, packaging for a television set.
Representative Reyes clarified that the intent of the bill is in regards to cups and food containers, and not product packaging.

Senator Miner thanked Representative Reyes on the clarification and explained that it better helps him understand what the bill might look like once drafted.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco asked for a motion to draft as a committee bill Proposed H.B. No. 5394 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE AND TRADE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN IN THE STATE.

A motion was made by Representative Michel and seconded by Representative Gucker.

Representative Dubitsky explained that similar bills have been brought to the House of Representatives a number of times over the last couple of years and there have been major concerns in regards to antiques in that many antique items includes materials listed in the proposed bill. Representative Dubitsky encouraged the drafting of this bill to take into consideration such concerns.

Representative Demicco thanked Representative Dubitsky for his comments and shared the intent of the proposed bill addresses such concerns.

A roll call vote was taken: Total Voting – 26, Yea – 26, Nay – 0, Absent and Not Voting – 4. The motion passed.

Representative Demicco announced that Representative Ryan is unable to attend the meeting because he is out of the state attending to legislative business and that the Environment Committee will hold a committee meeting on Friday, January 25, 2019 at 11:30 AM in Hearing Room 2B. Additionally, Representative Demicco announced that the votes and attendance will be held open until 4:00 PM in the Environment Committee Suite.

Senator Miner announced that Representative Harding is unable to attend the meeting because of a family matter.

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

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Ussawin Robin Bumpen
Committee Clerk