

Chelmsford Recycling Committee Minutes
February 6, 2020
Town Offices, Room 200, 7:00pm

Members Attending: Rebecca Gore, Aaron Cunningham, Jocelyn Demuth, Cynthia Fiekers, Melissa Joyce, Lee Williams, Karen Willis, Mark Gallagher

Members Absent: None

Visitors: Michelle Ly and Drema Uttecht, CHS Eco Club

Business

Meeting minutes

The December and January meeting minutes were approved.

Schools

Michelle Ly and Drema Uttecht reported on school recycling activities.

The High School Eco Club is managing a marker recycling program. They are also developing flyers for the plastic bag restriction, which goes into effect July 1st. For next month they hope to design an electronic poster. This could be used for social media, the school newsletter, and other publications. They will also design some paperboard posters that could be displayed at different town venues.

The club also hopes to sponsor an Earth Day event, which would highlight environmental activities and may include a plant sale.

Michelle and Drema discussed the Town-Wide Clean-up, which will be held on May 2nd. The group has been considering an organizational table at the Town Common, where volunteers could pick up bags and receive information on the Clean-up. They may also consider satellite locations such as Roberts field, and Hart Pond for residents to gather and receive supplies and refreshments. The group is coordinating with the National Honor Society, whose members are looking to volunteer at the event in order to receive volunteer credits.

Karen created a note for the spring tax bill which details upcoming events and the Town-wide Clean-up. Members discussed the notice and agreed on edits.

Sustainability Coordinator's Report

Melissa discussed recent grants that the town has been awarded or is seeking. The town was recently awarded an \$85,000 grant from the state for municipal vulnerability preparedness. The funds will be used for culvert work near Dunshire Drive to prevent flooding. The town is also seeking close to receiving \$100,000 under the Green Communities Program for new energy conservation measures at the police station in the North Town Hall, and weatherization for vents at the McCarthy school.

Melissa has been working with Christina Papadopoulos on a rain barrel and compost bin drive, which will allow the town to satisfy requirements for recycling incentive dividend points. Residents will be able to go online to the vendor's website to purchase either rain barrels or compost bins at a discount. The bins will be distributed during the household hazardous waste collection at a separate location at the DPW site. The event will be publicized on various Chelmsford social media and print outlets.

She also met with the director of food service at the High School to investigate possible composting of food waste. The eco club will help with a food waste audit in order to provide volume estimates for potential composting vendors.

Cynthia provided background information on three commercial composters that may proposals for a composting collection. These included Offbeat Composting, City Compost, and Black Earth Composting. She discussed the merits and capabilities of each firm.

The town could solicit bids for composting at the high school as well as an organics drop off site, or resident subscription organics collection program.

There is some concern that black plastic is no longer recyclable. This is a potential issue due to widespread restaurant and residential use. The committee should verify with Waste Management whether this is the case or not.

Recycling website

Cynthia discussed her work with Marion to update the recycling website. She is verifying and updating the materials list, while Marion is updating the website design and functionality. She hopes to have an update at the May meeting.

Recycling event

Melissa will conduct recycling presentation at the library on April 16th between 7:00 to 8:45.

Publicity Subcommittee Report

The Publicity Subcommittee, which consists of Melissa, Karen, and Cynthia, met last week to review event publicity needs and communication channels. They designed a spreadsheet to track communication needs for various events. The idea was to identify what topics and when and where they should be communicated to residence. They identified a list of 17 different places where the committee currently advertises. The communications encompass the following areas: educational events; drop off events; the annual events, such as a town wide cleanup bottle drives, etc.; and regional events, such as the Ayer recycling day. Committee members suggested either a calendar or a timeline to organize the release of various communications.

Plastic bag reduction

Melissa and Cynthia will meet with the building commissioner and director of business development on Monday to discuss enforcement of the plastic bag reduction by-law. There is a need to communicate the new regulation to affected town businesses. The Board of Health enforced the plastic straw ban. Melissa will check with Christina Bruce to identify list of business that need to be notified.

GCI

The Committee discussed the Greener Chelmsford initiative. Members agreed that any program should be greatly simplified and limit the degree of oversight among committee members and town officials.

Hauler regulations

The Committee discussed the steps necessary for hauler regulations that would require that recycling be offered is part of business waste management collections. The Committee needs to identify the steps that would be needed to receive buy-in from the Board of Health and the Town Manager for a program.

Library of Things

Lee and Cynthia met with Brian from the library and identified that the town Library currently has 26 out of 30 items that are required for the town to receive a state recycling incentive grant point. The committee discussed offering to purchase items on the library's "wish list". This would likely cost between \$500 to \$1000 out of existing state recycling grant funds.

Repair Café

Lee is working with Phil Stanway to discuss the possibility of recruiting people to run a repair cafe at some date in the spring at Sunny Meadow Farm. Phil would host the event and the recycling committee could promote it and give support. The committee decided to propose May 9th as a possible date. The committee may also want to approach the Senior Center about posting a separate fix it event, as there are many seniors that may be interested in involved in fixing various items, specially textiles and items in need of sewing.

Winter Farmers Market

Cynthia and Jocelyn will attend the next farmers market on February 15th.

Mission Statement

Aaron discussed renaming the Recycling Committee to the Sustainability Committee and presenting a revised mission statement to the Board of Selectman. Members discussed changes to the mission statement. It was agreed that members should offer edits to Aaron's proposed mission statement in the Google docs directory.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 5th.