

DRAFT Chelmsford Recycling Committee Minutes**June 11, 2020****Via Videoconference**

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

Members Absent: Jocelyn Demuth, Cynthia Fiekers

Business**Meeting Minutes**

The March minutes were approved with revisions.

Sustainability Manager's Report

Melissa reported that several events were canceled this spring due to the pandemic emergency, including Shredding Day, Household Hazardous Waste Day, and Leaf Collection. The Leaf Collection will be rescheduled to June 20th. It will take a slightly different format. Residents will drop off their leaf bags at a designated spot, which will then be loaded onto trucks by DPW staff for transport.

The spring Household Hazardous Waste Day will not be rescheduled. However, a fall event is scheduled. In the interim, residents will also have the option to register with a group of reciprocal communities to use their hazardous waste drop off facilities. The Minuteman facility in Lexington may be available as well.

There will be no shredding event until the fall. Melissa noted that this is the least critical event to reschedule.

There are some issues with brush drop off at the Community Tree site. One of Community Tree's biofuel vendors, which uses donated wood chips and other debris as a fuel source, is not currently operating. As a result, the Community Tree facility does not have the space to hold large amounts of brush until the facility reopens or an alternative facility can be found.

The fluorescent bulb shed is now open again from 9 to 5 on the first Wednesday of every month and by appointment. Norm Eisenmann, a former member of the Committee, has agreed to volunteer at the site.

Melissa reported that there were some recent operational issues with Simple Recycling program. However, these appear to be resolved and the pink bag collections should be back up and running.

There is some confusion regarding plastic bag recycling at local stores. It appears that some stores are again accepting plastic bags for recycling. Melissa asked the committee to check on major retailers in town, such as Hannaford, Market Basket, and others, to determine the status of their plastic bag recycling. It appears to differ from store to store. Aaron mentioned that if the plastic bag recycling situation does not improve soon, then perhaps the Committee should try to identify new options for residents.

Melissa noted that the state municipal recycling incentive program application has closed. The town is likely eligible for a \$16,000 incentive grant based on the town's Recycling Dividend Points (RDP). She is also been working on other energy and environmental grants.

Melissa has been working on the final draft of the 2020-21 recycling flyer. She hopes to send a new version to committee members to review before submitting to the printer. The goal is to have the flyer printed and distributed by early July.

Aaron commented that the new state recycling website, recyclesmartMA.org, has some shortcomings. There is some lack of clarity regarding certain materials and their eligibility for recycling.

It is not clear if black "clam shell" #1 containers are recyclable at the Waste Management facility in Billerica. Aaron suggested it might be worthwhile to become re-educated on this type of plastic and get more information on its potential impact on our recycling facility. The Committee could therefore identify problems and communicate to residents. Melissa noted that the Committee may not want to create any confusion among residents, nor nitpick regarding what can or cannot be recycled. However, such black plastic containers are creating large amount of waste that may not be recycled properly. Restaurants or businesses should be encouraged to consider alternative, sustainable packaging.

Town-wide Clean-up

The Town-wide Clean-up was canceled in April. The Committee discussed alternatives. Aaron suggested that some sort of informal event for the fall might be worthwhile. This would allow the school Eco Club to become involved and help promote the event. In addition, the DPW could make bags available to residents who would like to participate. Melissa noted that the town's solid waste tonnage is up by about 20%, so it may not be wise to incur additional collection costs right now. Therefore, an informal cleanup event in the fall may be preferable.

Calendar Tool and Chelmsfordrecycles.org

Cynthia sent copies of the calendar tool for review following the March meeting. There have been no changes made in the interim. Karen suggested that we may want to simplify parts of the calendar. She plans to meet on June 25th with Cynthia to discuss revisions. It is likely that results will be presented at the next Committee meeting in July. Cynthia is also meeting with Marion to discuss the chelmsfordrecycles.org website and will provide the committee with an update. Melissa said that there are no longer any issues regarding domain registration and hosting for the site.

Town Website

Melissa has made some changes to the recycling pages on the town website. Members are encouraged to review and provide comments. The changes were intended to make navigation easier.

Short-term plans

The Committee discussed some short-term plans, centered around communications and supporting educational opportunities for town recycling. Although in person meetings were cancelled, Melissa and the Committee could participate in virtual events hosted by the town library. One of these activities may include a composting presentation.

Melissa noted that the DPW has created new videos on the Facebook page.

The compost bin and rain barrel drive has been quite successful. Almost 160 compost bins were sold - about four times what was expected. The bins were offered at a subsidized price of \$25, using RDP funds. The program is likely to at least partially pay for itself, as the town will receive additional recycling dividend points for sponsoring the program.

FY 2021 officer elections will be held at the July meeting. Melissa will post a notice for additional committee volunteers on the town Facebook page.

Next Meeting is scheduled for July 9th. (No meeting was held in July. The next meeting happened on August 20, 2020.