

Town of Cape Elizabeth Recycling Committee

Minutes of June 25, 2009 meeting

Members present: Mary Brock, David Ernst, Jennifer Hansen, Mike Pulsifer, Greg Walsh

Members absent: John Kane, Bill Wadman

Guests: Six members of the South Portland Energy and Recycling Committee

Meeting called to order by Jennifer at 7 pm. and introductions around the table were made. This was our first joint meeting of the two committees for the purposes of exchanging ideas, learning from each other what works for their town, and discussing possible joint ventures with the purpose of lowering costs.

Stan Cox from South Portland began with a brief history of recycling in SP. They have had curbside trash pickup for many years. Their recycling rate really took off with the simultaneous introduction of larger recycling bins to every household, automated recycling pickup, and **ecomaine's** single stream recycling. We shared Cape's history including the recent decision not to go to pay-per-bag or curbside pickup.

SP has had household compost bins for sale in the past and would now like to offer them again, subsidized. They would like us to consider coming together for a group purchase to increase buying power. Their goal is to keep the food out of the waste stream and out of the garbage disposals (the water waste stream). They are also interested in promoting rain barrel usage for water conservation and to decrease runoff of contaminants into streams, ponds, and Casco Bay. They have some potential funding sources for the above and would like CE to consider joining them in these efforts. We are interested and a decision was made to continue these discussions.

There was a lengthy discussion on ways to increase each town's recycling and conservation rates. SP sends out updated recycling info and reminders with each of their quarterly tax bills. One of their members recommended CE consider issuing standard recycling bins to each household. We agreed that the three major components to a successful recycling program are education, education, and education.

Our towns' citizens need to be constantly reminded about **what** can be recycled and that recycling **saves money** by reducing municipal costs and hence taxes. Members of both committees felt strongly about the double dividends of intensive recycling efforts in the schools, especially the lower grades and middle school, where the children will learn the benefits early and bring this message home to their parents.

We also compared notes on our various composting programs. More intense efforts are needed to increase household composting, not only to decrease solid food waste in the hoppers and reduce water used in garbage disposals, but also to reduce chemical fertilizers in our gardens and on our lawns. More education about these benefits will be part of our future joint effort strategy.

SP currently does not have a Swap Shop, would like to start one, and asked us to share our experiences, both positive and negative, with them. A good discussion ensued.

Finally, those present agreed that this mutual exchange was helpful for both towns, that we both learned from one another, and that we would meet again in November for followup discussions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm. **There will be no meeting in July. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Aug. 27, 2009**, at the same location.

Respectfully submitted, David Ernst, secretary.