

Cape Elizabeth, Maine – Recycling Committee  
Minutes of March 25, 2010 meeting

Members present: Mary Brock, David Ernst, Jennifer Hansen, John Kane, Mike Pulsifer. Members absent: Sharon Roberts, Greg Walsh.

Administration: Bob Malley

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm. Motion to approve the March 2 meeting minutes made by Mike and seconded by John, approved by all.

The town's recycling rate for February was 33.4%, slightly lower than January's 35.8% but holding steady in the low to mid 30's.

The RC agreed to have an educational presence at two upcoming Cape events: Strawberry Fest on June 26 and Family Fun Day on June 12. Specifics will be discussed at later spring meetings.

Most of the meeting was spent discussing the concept, introduced by Penny Jordan from the town council at our last meeting, of whether or not to develop a Pay Per Throw (PPT) or Pay Per Bag program for Cape Elizabeth, where residents would pay a nominal fee for each bag thrown into the hopper. Of note is that in 2003 a town survey sent to Cape households asking this question showed that only a minority of residents supported the concept at that time. Since the economic times have changed, since the costs of municipal waste disposal are projected to significantly increase in the future, and since there is still considerable room for improvement in our recycling rates, the town council is now re-opening this question.

Many aspects of the PPT issue were discussed, including: its merits as a way to more equitably distribute costs according to usage; a proven method to increase recycling rates; and a means of reducing future town waste management costs.

The committee felt strongly that a major factor in winning support for a PPT program would be avoiding a real or perceived increase in total costs, compared to what the projected costs of maintaining our current system would be. Significant educational efforts will be necessary to avoid the perception that this is just a new tax.

The following motion was made by John Kane: "The recycling committee has discussed the Pay Per Throw option and endorses the concept of moving forward with exploration of developing a PPT program; the committee has determined that such a program has the potential to reduce waste disposal costs by increasing recycling rates." The motion was approved by all five committee members present.

Penny Jordan will be present at our next (April 22) meeting for further input/feedback.

A series of Courier articles is planned to further explore the PPT concept, starting with a basic discussion of what currently happens to waste thrown in the hopper and **ecomaine's** role in that process.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm. The **next meeting will be at 7:00 pm on Thursday, April 22**, in the Public Works building.

Respectfully submitted, David Ernst, secretary.