

Town of Cape Elizabeth
Recycling Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2018

Present: Chair, Kara Lavender Law (KL), Matthew Faulkner (MF), Chelsea Torrey (CT), Tim Trachimowicz (TT), and Nicole Boucher (NB)

Absent: Jennifer MacDonald (JM), Aubrey Miller (AM)

Staff: Robert Malley, Director of Public Works

Public/Guests: None present

Call to Order: Kara Lavender Law (KL) Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of April 5, 2018 Draft Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved (4 Yes, 0 No)

Citizen Opportunity for Public Comment Not On the Agenda

None

Recap of May 12th HHW Collection Day

RM reported that the HHW/E-Waste Collection Day held on May 12th was very successful. In excess of 400 vehicles came through with items for the event. RM stated that this was the first year working with a new vendor for the HHW portion of the event. Environmental Projects, Inc. did a good job and was less expensive than the previous vendor. There was a discussion about the merits of hosting the event twice a year, which was suggested by some of the survey respondents. RM stated it has cost implications, but it is worthy of consideration.

KL asked the members present for feedback they received from those residents in the vehicle queue, including on the new food waste collection offered at the Recycling Center. Most all was positive and some responded they would pay a fee for a second collection.

Update on Recycling Center Food Waste Collection

RM reported that the program is off to a good start and the attendants have been receiving a fair amount of positive feedback. Bins were placed in front of the single-stream compactors on May 8th. Just over 2 tons of food waste was collected in the bins between May 8th and June 6th.

KL spoke with Bill Crawford from We Compost It! and received some guidance regarding acceptable material that can (or cannot) go into the bins. They do not want plastic bags in the containers and limited quantities of compostable dinnerware. They suggested that kitchen pails should be lined with newspaper.

NB asked if any backyard composting bins were available. RM reported that the department ordered 20 to have on hand. A notice will be placed in the Cape Courier to advertise that a limited quantity is available. NB will also post this on the Town's FB account.

Recap of May Food Waste/Composting Outreach Activities

The food waste compost bins were placed by We Compost It! on May 8th.

There was a small attendance at the Home Composting Class 101. 16 people registered but only 8 showed up. Only 7 people attended the "Just Eat It!" movie shown at the TML. 3 of those were Committee members, another person was the representative from the NRCM, and another was TML staff assisting with the event.

Discussion of Collaboration & Outreach with Pond Cove School

KL has received limited information on the ecomaine grant. It was her understanding that Perry Schwarz (School Facilities Manager) has ordered bins. KL will reach out to Perry to get an update. MF reported that the PC/MS cafeteria & janitorial staff expressed their appreciation to him on a recent visit. KL reported that Cathy Stankard (School Curriculum Director) put her in touch with the kindergarten teacher leading new science curriculum development. Amanda Marsden said they would likely meet in August and would welcome help from committee members to develop content on waste and recycling. KL asked TT what Little League was doing for recycling at their concessions. TT reported that it was not very extensive but that they did not appear to be using PS foam. TT to check with the Football Boosters regarding any packaging they are using at their concession building at the Hannaford Field.

Discussion of Webpage & Communication Materials

NB reported that she has recycling-related Facebook (FB) posts scheduled through the end of June. NB asked whether the Committee should have their own FB page. The consensus of the Committee was that it would be more beneficial to stay on the Town's. MF suggested that pictures of unacceptable items left behind Town Hall should be posted on FB. NB reported that she has a meeting with the Town's webmaster (Wendy Derzawiec) on June 20th to discuss recycling informational-related options for the website.

Strawberry Festival Planning

There was a general discussion about the planning for this year's event that is scheduled for Saturday, June 30th. AM had spoken with the event coordinator and suggested the Cape Farm Alliance sell reusable water bottles rather than bottled water at the event, and felt it might be too late to implement this year. MF suggested that we reach out to someone in a leadership position in the Farm Alliance in advance of the 2019 event. Plastic bins are needed for the "waste sorting game" so KL will purchase them. RM stated the Town will reimburse her for the purchase. A new sign will be designed with messaging about plastic bags not belonging in the recycling collection.

Committee Member Updates & Correspondence

CT reported that one her neighbor's has spoken to her about the amount of plastic bags in the single-stream containers, and that he may attend a future meeting.

Other Business

RM reported on the email from Lissa Bittermann from ecomaine dated June 6th regarding higher-than-average contamination levels in the "Silver Bullets" and in the stationary compactors at the Recycling Center. Items such as tarps, upholstered items, and plastic bags have been placed into the containers. Cape Elizabeth is a member community so we are not being assessed a financial penalty at this time, but it is cause for concern that needs to be addressed.

There was a general discussion about the pros and cons of the current staging of the "Silver Bullets" and OCC container behind Town Hall. RM stated it does provide an opportunity for residents to bring their recyclables on days the RC is closed, but there is a fair amount of non-recyclable items and bulky waste left behind that needs to be picked up on a regular basis by Public Works crews.

It was felt that education should start with plastic bags and performing outreach with an insert and/or FB posts to let people know they are no longer acceptable in the single-stream program. NB offered to do some research on a sign that could be attached to the inside of the stationary compactor doors. KL will work on the insert for the Courier.

MF reported shared an article in the Portland Forecaster with the Committee that describes how the City of Portland is dealing with contamination of single-stream in their curbside program. They are checking containers before dumping them and are assessing fines to homeowners.

There was a general discussion about purchasing some promotional items, or “swag” to give to presenters at outreach events. RM suggested the Committee go through the current inventory of promotional items after the meeting.

TT suggested putting up a banner on the single-stream compactors that might be helpful in messaging. There was a general discussion about the value of separating traditional recyclables versus putting them into the waste-to-energy stream.

Citizen Opportunity for Discussion of Items On the Agenda

There was no public comment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM

The next gathering of the Committee will be held at the Strawberry Festival on Saturday, June 30, 2018

The next regular meeting of the Committee will be Thursday, August 2, 2018

Respectfully Submitted,
Robert C. Malley