

Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting
July 14, 2016

Present: Jane Knox, Noaris Burgos, Rita Kornblum, Pene Williams, Hollie Stephens (guest), Virginia Walton (staff)

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Chairperson Knox. Hollie Stephens was welcomed.

The May 12, 2016 minutes were accepted on a motion by Kornblum/Burgos.

The committee viewed about 10 minutes of the DVD "Just Eat It", which was purchased with grant funds to be used in the Food Too Good To Waste effort. Walton was hoping to have a community screening. Walton will find out if the Connecticut Recyclers Coalition would like to jointly hold a movie screening. Kornblum will find out if the Unitarians would like to show the film on one of their Monday movie nights.

Walton reported on the stellar results of the library June 28, 2016 waste audit. It was suggested to conduct the next audit at the Senior Center.

The committee reviewed the draft zero waste event guidelines that were modified using the Bellevue Event Planning Guide for Waste Reduction and Zero Waste. Burgos had some grammatical edits. Walton and Kornblum will refine it based on input from key staff members. Involving the Eastern Highland Health District in the development of the event planning guide may also lead to future collaboration with business recycling inspections.

Burgos and Kornblum set up a low waste station at the June 18, 2016 John Jackman bike tour. Using the new canopy and banners, it took about 20 minutes to put together and 10 minutes to breakdown. About 240 people participated in the lunch that was offered. There was a lot of interest in the compostable forks and spoons. About a 1/3 of a bag was composted from the lunch. It was pointed out that in general there is confusion as to what can recycled.

Walton will be doing a Recycling 101 presentation on July 25 at the Mansfield Senior Center, intended to address confusion about what is and is not recyclable. Walton will send out an e-mail announcement. Kornblum will announce the Recycling 101 presentation and talk about litter and food waste on the next WHUS radio show. Burgos agreed to write an article about litter for the September/October Neighbors newspaper. The October 1, 2016 Repair Café should be submitted to list in the Neighbors' community calendar.

Knox reviewed her notes from her conversation with Westport, CT soon after they enacted their plastic bag ban. The process took several years and involved collaboration with environmental groups, outreach to vendors and culminated with a contest to produce a logo for a reusable bag. Knox will contact Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr, who spearheaded this year's CT plastic bag legislation (which did not pass) and Brookline, Mass. Kornblum agreed to speak to Mary Sherwin at CT DEEP about other resources. As part of the process, it was suggested that grocery store staff receive education about plastic bags. Walton reported that at this time with oil prices low, Willimantic Waste Paper is unable to find a buyer for plastic film. Instead, she has signed the town up to participate in a State plastic film recycling program, called WRAP. As a WRAP sponsor, Walton will work with retail chains that have established plastic film take back programs to expand their in-store film recycling to allow drop-off by residents.

The committee discussed a business mailing that would include the recycling sticker and information about the town's zero waste efforts. Walton stated that grant money is available until December 2016 to pay for a mailing. It was decided to hold off on the mailing until the zero waste planning guide is finalized. There was brief discussion about a business competition.

There was conversation about anti-littering strategies. The committee was not amenable to negative reinforcement. Instead, there was interest in regular postings of people who pick up litter, attending meetings with landlord, having Rid Litter Day as an Earth Day event and making phone calls prior to Rid Litter Day.

Kornblum stated that she is signed up to listen to the "Harnessing Food Waste" webinar on August 26, 2016.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2016. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Walton