Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting
March 15, 2022

Present: Rita Kornblum, Ted Busky, Nikki Pedersen, Susanna Bekman, Julie Sherman, Brian Smith (guest), Mae Flexer (guest), Virginia Walton (staff)

Acting chairperson Kornblum called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

The minutes of the January 18 and February 15, 2022 meetings were approved on a motion by Kornblum/Busky.

Senator Flexer and Representative Smith attended the meeting to discuss the three extended producer responsibility (EPR) bills in the legislature. Senate Bill 115 (consumer packaging EPR) did not get voted out of the Environment Committee because of a vocal, unsubstantiated concern that there would be a significant rise in consumer prices. Both House Bill 5139 (tire EPR) and House Bill 5142 (gas cylinder EPR) did get voted out of the Environment Committee with unanimous support. Flexer and Smith spoke in support of the bills and encouraged continued engagement with legislators. Walton will send Flexer and Smith a copy of the RRS study on the effect of EPR packaging laws on consumer prices. Kornblum will draft an article on EPR for the Neighbors newspaper. Walton was asked to send the bills and bill numbers to the Committee.

Walton made a proposal to the Celebrate Mansfield Festival Committee to pilot washable food service for the 2022 festival. In the proposal, she gave estimates of the cost for polypropylene and melamine washable plates and bowls and the quantities that would be needed. Neither materials are free of toxics issues. Walton brought samples of polypropylene plates and a bowl for SWAC members to see and test out for durability. Walton will continue searching for non-toxic washable bowls and plates. Pedersen offered to ask Fresh Fork where they purchase their metal trays.

As of July 1, 2022, the new tire vendor, awarded through the regional Mid-Northeast Recycling Operating Committee, will be charging $3 per passenger tire. The current vendor charges $2 per passenger tire and this amount is charged at the Transfer Station. On a motion by Kornblum/Bekman, the Committee recommended changing the charge for passenger tires at the Transfer Station from $2 to $3 per tire. Walton will bring this to Town Council for their consideration.

Walton reported that after discussing with the Director of Public Works, a sustainable purchasing policy probably will not get traction this year because of finance department staff turnover and a new finance system. Offering the Ecology Center sustainable purchasing training module to staff members who make purchases may however be a viable option for this year. Walton will revisit with Carrington in May, after the budget process is complete.

The Committee agreed on Saturday, April 23, 2022 as Rid Litter Day. Walton will send notice to the Adopt A Road participants. The Adopt A Road participant list should be current since Sherman and Kornblum contacted everyone on the list last year. Walton will send Sherman Adopt A Road and Rid Litter Day information to post on Mansfield Connections Facebook.

April 20, 2022 (rain date April 27) is the annual UConn Spring Fling, 11 – 2. Members thought it would be beneficial to have a presence at the event with a recycle sort activity. Bekman offered to volunteer on the 20th and Sherman on the 27th. Walton will assemble the activity and also attend the event.
Future Meeting Items: (1) Judge *Composting for our Climate* entries, (2) April 23 Earth Extravaganza event prep, (3) form swap shop subcommittee and (4) compost campaign activities.

Sherman will not be available for the April 19 meeting. Kornblum offered to serve as chairperson for the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia Walton