

Resource Recycling Advisory Commission Meeting
Regular Meeting
February 28, 2022
Draft Minutes

*Present: Alison Johnson, Krishna Winston, Tisha Zawisky, Rebecca MacLachlin,
Not Present: Debbie Stanley, Chantel DeArmitt, Izzy Guy, Eleanor Nettleton
Public Present: Jacob Fain, Megan Perkins
Staff: Kim O'Rourke, Recycling Coordinator*

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. Jacob Fain and Megan Perkins, Wesleyan students, introduced themselves.

The minutes of the January 24, 2022 meeting were accepted as mailed.

Recycling Coordinator's Report

Ms. O'Rourke provided comments on her written report. She discussed the proposal being submitted to the DEEP for Sustainable Materials Management grant. The project will be focusing on co-collection (food waste and trash, bagged separately but collected together) in the Sanitation District. Members asked questions and discussed the project.

Ms. O'Rourke mentioned that the City is entering into a new contract with Murphy Road Recycling for the mixed recyclables. The basic cost calculation has changed, and not in favor of the municipality. The processing charges have increased, and the waste eligible for recycling has changed, with certain materials now being considered trash and their processing billed accordingly. MRR is building a new facility, due to open in the summer. Although glass, currently not being recycled, will be sent to Urban Mining in Beacon Falls, where it will be used as feedstock for Pozzotive™, an innovative concrete product, the pricing will not be adjusted.

Ms. Winston said she was excited to see the interest in and funding support for a bottle redemption center in Middletown. She asked that Ms. O'Rourke let the Commission members know if they could be helpful with moving this proposal forward.

Ms. O'Rourke noted that the "Refill, Not Landfill Coffee Cup Passport" program was moving along.

Chair's Report

Ms. Winston reported on the Earth Day event being planned for April 23. The Jonah Center would participate and would recruit other organizations. The event was meant to be simple to organize, effective, and enjoyable.

Ms. Winston announced that the Sustainable Middletown Team would be hosting the principal from Macdonough School to learn how sustainability functioned in the school's operations and curriculum. The team would be looking to understand the extent to which climate-change education could play a role in the schools and how sustainability considerations could play a part in everyday practices.

Swap Shack

Ms. Winston noted that many people were dropping off plastic crates. Because they were taking up too much space, she was putting some of them outside under the lean-to roof. The Shack was getting quite full. Ms. MacLachlan felt the shelf labels would be helpful, but they needed to be eye-catching. She recommended large, colorful labels. Ms. Winston noted need for some serious sorting. Ms. Zawisky pointed out that fewer people probably patronized the Shack in the winter it was to be hoped that in the spring more people would come and take items. The Commissioners decided that given the reduced traffic in March they would not need to sign up for Saturday clean-ups.

Swap Shack Schedule

Wed. Mar. 2: Krishna Winston
 Wed., Mar. 9: Debbie Stanley
 Wed., Mar. 16: Rebecca Maclachlan
 Wed., Mar. 23: Krishna Winston

Solid Waste Legislation

Ms. O'Rourke reviewed the solid waste bills that received hearings on the previous Thursday and Friday. This included the grant program bill, and the EPR bills.

Ms. Johnson called attention to two bills just raised to address the use of pesticides in state parks and the release of balloons.

Middletown Compost Garden

Ms. O'Rourke said she was planning a home compost garden next to Reboot Eco. She was looking for a small group of families to use the bins. Ms. Winston suggested asking Yasemin, the owner of Reboot Eco, to recruit some people who come to her store. Ms. Zawisky also mentioned using the app "Share Waste" to solicit participants.

Open Air Market

The Market is scheduled for August 28. Members decided to participate with the Wishing Well. Ms. Winston said she could commit to helping out.

Other Events

Ms. O'Rourke asked for volunteers for the following events:

April 23 – Earth Day
 April 24 – Compost Bin distribution
 April 30 – Paper Shred
 May – Kids' Health and Safety Fair
 August 28 – Open Air Market
 Oct. 1 – HHW

Plastic Whale Exhibit

Ms. O'Rourke described Kat Owens's plastic-pollution project, being worked on every weekend in the old Woolworth Building at 428 Main St., and Ms. Johnson suggested checking with Middlesex Hospital to see if the plastic whale, when completed, might be displayed in the lobby.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim O'Rourke

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Recycling Coordinator