

Middletown Resource Recycling Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting, March 28, 2022
On WebEx

Members Present: Izzy Guy, Alison Johnson, Eleanor Nettleton, Deb Stanley, Krishna Winston, Tisha Zawisky

Members Not Present: Chantal DeArmitt, Rebecca MacLachlan, Raffie Bianco

Others Present: Erin Deleon

Staff: Kim O'Rourke, Recycling Coordinator, Chris Holden, Acting Public Works Director

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, K. Winston, at 7:05 p.m.

II. DEEP Sustainable Materials Management Grant Resolution

The Chair reviewed the history of the Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) grant process. Ms. O'Rourke summarized the grant proposal. If received, the grant would fund a one-year pilot co-collection program for residents in the Sanitation District using carts. Customers would be given two trash bags a week and one bag of a different color for food waste. The bags could all be put in the same container for collection. District crews would collect the material and consolidate it at the Recycling Center for delivery to a facility in Wallingford, where it will be separated. The food waste would then be transported to Quantum Biopower's anaerobic digester in Southington. This pilot program would be expected to reduce waste and offer data to enable the City to decide whether—and how—co-collection or some other unit-based pricing system should be implemented in the future. With the grant covering all additional costs, the pilot program would pose no financial risk to the City. The program would include significant public outreach, undertaken in cooperation with local groups and leaders.

Members discussed aspects of the program, including who would participate and how residents would be aided with separating food waste separation in their kitchens. Ms. Winston suggested training members of the Commission to provide this practical assistance.

E. Nettleton joined the meeting at 7:15 pm.

A. Johnson made and D. Stanley seconded a motion to accept the Sustainable Materials Management Grant Resolution as drafted and move it to the Common Council. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Recycling Coordinator's Report

Ms. O'Rourke referred the commissioners to her March Recycling Coordinator's Report. She added that she was considering applying for an EPA Healthy Communities Grant to address the problem of single-use disposable take-out containers.

She also mentioned that the City would be receiving funds from the new legislation that adds a five-cent surcharge on miniature liquor bottles ("nips"). The first installment would be coming in April. At this point she was unsure of how much the funding would be.

Ms. O'Rourke reported further that the Rockfall Foundation had awarded her a grant to fund the "Refill, Not Landfill" campaign (see VII below).

Staff from the Center for EcoTechnology would be coming to Middletown to assist restaurants with food waste. Ms. Winston suggested photographing CET working with businesses; the pictures could be used to publicize the food-waste-diversion effort and encourage additional restaurants to participate.

Ms. Johnson reported that she had been picking up litter on her street (Pine Street) and in other parts of the City. She had been focusing on Pine Street recently because of the upcoming Gilead Road Race. She suggested making this clean-up more of a community effort next year, organizing residents along the route to walk and clean up their streets before the race.

IV. Acceptance of Minutes

The Minutes of the February 21, 2002 meeting were accepted with no corrections.

V. Chair's Report

Ms. Winston reported that she had removed a bureau from the Swap Shack, along with many other bulky and undesirable items. Little by little she was getting things tidied up and the shelves labelled.

Ms. Winston said she was currently lobbying the Board of Education and the building committee to not install another synthetic-turf field at the High School. In addition to the potential health effects on athletes and degradation of the environment, synthetic turf once discarded became a major hazardous-waste problem. She invited any commissioners interested in helping with this effort to contact her directly.

VI. Swap Shack Schedule

Wed., March 29: D. Stanley
Sat., April 2: I. Guy
Wed., April 6: K. Winston
Wed., April 13: K. Winston
Sat., April 16: I. Guy
Wed., April 20: E. Nettleton

VII. Coffee Cup Passport Program

Ms. O'Rourke explained this educational program, intended to encourage customers to bring their own coffee cups for take-out coffee and other beverages. She would be reaching out to all the coffee shops and would welcome assistance from Commission members.

VIII. Upcoming Events

Members signed up to assist with the Earth Day Fair at Harbor Park, the Compost Bin and Rain Barrel Sale, and the Paper Shred Event. Ms. O'Rourke said she was trying to borrow the Wesleyan Wishing Well water-dispensing station for the Pride Event on June 4th. Commissioners would probably be needed to staff the station from approximately 12 to 4 p.m.

Members decided that because there so many events were occurring in April, the April Commission meeting would be cancelled.

IX. Adjournment

I. Guy made and E. Nettleton seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim O'Rourke

Kim O'Rourke, Recycling Coordinator