Middletown Resource Recycling Advisory Commission  
Regular Meeting - June 27 2022

Members Present: Alison Johnson, Deb Stanley, Krishna Winston, Tisha Zawisky  
Members Absent: Rebecca McLaughlin, Izzy Guy, Eleanor Nettleton, Raffie Bianco  
Others Present: Nicole Charles, Jeff Myjak  
Staff Present: Kim O’Rourke, Recycling Coordinator

Call to Order
The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

Public Comment
There was no public comment.

Acceptance of Minutes
The minutes of the May regular meeting were accepted as mailed.

Recycling Coordinator’s Report
Ms. O’Rourke followed up on her written report. She said the CCSMM would be resuming regular meetings soon. A recent initial meeting had included a review of legislative accomplishments, including funding in the fiscal-year budget for waste reduction, permanent funding for recycling and waste reduction, extension of the deadline for redemption-center grants, and EPR for gas cylinders. A priority for the upcoming session would be EPR for tires and packaging. General permits for transfer stations were due to be renewed this year and might include new language. The Commissioner was also holding regional meetings to discuss what infrastructure would be needed to handle organics.

Ms. O’Rourke turned to the commercial food-waste program in Middletown. She reported interest in moving the program forward. Blue Earth Composting would provide a proposal to do more outreach and analyze the current system to see whether restaurants could be incentivized to divert more food waste.

The EPA contacted Ms. O’Rourke with the exciting news that they would be awarding a Healthy Communities Grant to the City of Middletown to encourage restaurants to adopt reusable takeout-container programs.

Ms. Winston asked about getting a glass container for the Recycling Center. Ms. O’Rourke said the City would in fact be getting a container source-separated glass; it would be ordered after July, with the glass most likely being delivered by City staff to Strategic Materials.

Ms. Winston asked about the Eye Recycle program. Ms. O’Rourke explained that Eye Recycle collected redeemable containers curbside and transported them to their redemption center in Waterbury. The convenience was appealing, but she said she had concerns about the feasibility of the program.

Concerning Steve and Tina Gomes’s proposal to site a redemption center in Middletown, Ms. Winston asked if there was anything the Commission could do to support the application. At this point, there wasn’t.

The update on Simple Recycling (for textiles) was that the company was doing collections again, but Ms. O’Rourke reported that there had been complaints. Ms. Johnson felt it was better that people needed to
schedule pick-ups, because having the company drive around looking for bags seemed very wasteful. The Commission briefly discussed the drop-off textile bins at the school, noting that it was not advisable to schedule one’s drop-off for times when students were arriving at school or being picked up.

Ms. O’Rourke confirmed that the Discover Books bin was still at the Recycling Center, but she had received no reports on its being emptied.

Chair’s report: Ms. Winston said she was planning to do a major clean-out of the Swap Shack, which was overflowing with items and rather very chaotic. She felt people were continuing to leave inappropriate and unduly large items.

**Swap Shack Schedule:**  
June 29 (Wed) KW  
July 2 (Sat) DS  
July 6 (Wed) KW & NC  
July 13 (Wed) DS

Ms. Johnson said she had been focusing on the litter pick-up in city parks and other areas. She noted she had probably picked up thousands of pieces of glass. She reported that fishing line was definitely an issue problem at Crystal Lake.

Members discussed going down to once a week for the Swap Shack cleaning.

**Commission Activities**  
Members discussed the Friday Farmers’ Market. Ms. O’Rourke said she had volunteers for July and August, but would need volunteers for Sept. and Oct.

Members discussed the Coffee Cup Passport Program and suggested additional shops that might participate. Ms. O’Rourke explained how the program would work. The kick-off would take place in mid-July.

**New Business**  
Ms. Winston asked how prices for recyclables were trending. Ms. O’Rourke said prices are slightly better, but the City was still paying about $30/ton for single-stream recycling. Cardboard was bringing about $60/ton. She said she would provide a chart with the next report. Ms. Winston asked about the major expansion of the MRF. Ms. O’Rourke said she had heard the revamped facility was supposed to open in July, but she hadn’t heard anything yet. She would like to set up a tour for the Commission once the facility was up and operating. Members discussed the importance of knowing where the local trash was being taken for processing.

Ms. Charles said her class had done a lot of research on textiles and found that much of the discarded clothing was being shipped overseas and because only a small fraction of it could be sold, most of it was ending up in overseas landfills. She said she’d been looking into other alternatives. Ms. O’Rourke offered to invite Baystate Textiles to come and speak to the Commission about what happens to their textiles.
Ms. Zawisky volunteered to go through the greeting card box to see what was appropriate for the Swap Shack.

Ms. Charles asked if there was a social-media page for the Swap Shack. She thought it would be helpful if we had a presence on social media to encourage people to come and take items. The Commissioners noted that any dedicated page would have to be maintained.

The next meeting was scheduled for August 22nd. Ms. O’Rourke mentioned she would need volunteers for the Open Air Market. She will have the City’s new bottle filler station available for that event.

Ms. Stanley made and Ms. Johnson seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim O’Rourke

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Middletown Recycling Coordinator