

Town of Hopkinton, NH

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Recycling Committee Minutes 07/11/06

Hopkinton/Webster Recycling Committee Meeting Minutes July 11, 2006

Present: Chris Lawless, Debbie Augustine, Katherine Mitchell, Laura Mason, Don Lane, Will Merrow, Chris MacKenzie, Michelle Wheeler

Guest: Stephen Rasche, Chair, Canterbury Recycling Committee

The meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m. and introductions were made. Will Merrow will replace Laura as school representative as she will be leaving for college in September. Chris MacKenzie will serve as alternate for Will. Both Will and Chris are members of the Hopkinton High Environmental Club. The minutes from the June meeting were approved with a few minor changes.

Katherine and Debbie reported on their recent trip to Peterborough. They confirmed Steve Clough's hunch about the town's 79% recycling rate - some residents, apartments and businesses have their trash picked up by Waste Management, which operates a regional solid waste facility in Peterborough. Some of these same parties may also bring their recyclables to Peterborough's Recycling Center, thus increasing the recycling rate. They learned from recycling center manager, Scott Bradford, that approximately 50% of the residents use the recycling center. He also said that no C&D waste is calculated into their recycling rate. Debbie and Katherine were impressed with their swap shop, signage consisting of framed photographs of the various recyclables and head-in parking at the recycling building. The space is ample and well organized and there's even a garden, complete with park bench. Food waste, wood ash, anti-freeze, CDs, videos, DVDs, books, and eyeglasses (collected for the Lions Club) are also recycled there.~They also had a large "Thank you Peterborough" sign showing how much was recycled that month and cumulatively for the year and how many tax dollars the town had saved.

They also met with town administrator, Pam Brenner who said that implementing pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) took about a year and a half and that was with the full support of their Board of Selectmen. The town held public forums and went out to various service clubs and retirement groups to explain the fundamentals of PAYT. They found that visual presentations worked best, such as filling a trash bag and emptying its contents onto the floor and showing how much of it can be recycled. She said it was important to tell seniors and retirees why PAYT benefits them - right now they get "nailed" paying for schools, and even though their taxes may not go down with PAYT, the waste budget won't increase them either. Those unable to afford the PAYT bags can fill out an assistance application with the town. Their special revenue fund pays for their bags, compactors, etc and they must get permission at town meeting to spend any surplus.

Debbie introduced Steve Rasche, chairman of the Canterbury Recycling Committee. He said that it took the town of 2,000 residents approximately 6 months to get PAYT underway there. Public attendance dropped significantly at their second informational meeting, so they felt they could move forward within six months rather than the typical eighteen months. PAYT was voted in at their town meeting by a 2 to 1 margin. The program officially kicks off on August 26th. A delay in their bag order kept them from starting in early July. He said that the proposed landfill near the Merrimack River in Canterbury was instrumental in expediting the implementation process and that reducing the town's waste by going PAYT made good sense economically and environmentally. He compared the proposed landfill threat there to Hopkinton's situation with Bioenergy and C&D waste. It's anticipated that the price of waste disposal will significantly increase when the 27 compact town's contract expires in 2009. An anti-landfill organization called the Oxbow Initiative, which he compared to REACH, helped distribute information

and notices about the town's two educational meetings to its large e-mail list. They also had the support of their Select Board. Besides good newspaper coverage, they also used church bulletins to dispense information. They kept their message positive: "We're working towards this - here's why."

Steve said that their former co-chair would send us samples of the educational pamphlets they used there. Shaw's in Concord and Tilton are selling the town's PAYT bags at cost; the large sized bags are \$1.50 apiece and the small ones are 75 cents apiece. Chris Lawless said that he was concerned that the town would spend the money saved by PAYT on other things. Steve said that the savings could be put into a special revenue fund to ensure that doesn't happen. He said that Liz Bedard uses the three "E" words - economics, equity and environment when discussing PAYT at various forums. Economics because it saves money. Equity - why subsidize non-recyclers? Environment, because it helps protect it. Steve offered the group the opportunity to get together with their recycling committee once they have experienced PAYT for a while. They meet the same time as Hopkinton every month but had July off which made it possible for him to attend this meeting. Debbie thanked him and presented him with a cloth grocery bag from Colonial Village with Contocook's covered bridge design on it.

Don said he feels that PAYT is inevitable. He also said town education about recycling hasn't happened and that the committee needs to work on educating residents about recycling in general - and not just PAYT. They need to be trained on what can be recycled and how to recycle, keeping in mind the 2009 target date the waste compact contract expires. Katherine expressed her support for getting PAYT implemented in two years or by 2008. Don said that goals need to be set and the process started. Some time will be spent at the next meeting developing a plan, laying out a timeline and thinking about how to gain support from the Board of Selectmen.

Debbie told the group that Angie may not be able to be on the committee much longer because she's very busy with work and possibly buying a real fixer-upper home. She's hoping to attend the next few meetings, but will be away in August. She'll need to step down sometime soon. Debbie reminded the group that Angie had reported that Holly was resigning her seat on the committee at the June meeting. Katherine asked Don if he knew how many members make up a full committee. He said he would look into it.

Will offered for the Environmental Club to make some new signs from recycled materials for the Transfer Station. The group agreed that sounded like a good idea and that it should be run by Steve Clough to see what he thinks about it.

The meeting concluded at 8:10 p.m. The next meeting will be on August 1st at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Augustine