

## **Regional Composting Working Group Meeting Minutes**

### **March 15, 2021 12 pm**

#### **I. Call to Order 12:05 pm**

**Members present:** Maggie Morrison (ORCSD), Jenn Andrews (UNH Sustainability Institute), Nell Neal (Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee), Mary Caulfield (Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee), Chuck Cox (Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee)

**Members absent:** Dean Rubine (Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee)

**Public Present:** N/A

#### **II. Approval of minutes from March 1, 2021**

[Tabled to next meeting]

#### **III. Introductions N/A**

#### **IV. Public comment N/A**

#### **V. Updates**

##### **a. Agriculture Commission, Madbury and student representations**

Nell proposed and it was decided that the Durham Agriculture Commission be made aware of this Compost Working Group offering to keep them informed of our progress going forward. Agriculture Commissions often play an integral role in community composting programs. Nell will be the connection.

Chuck reported he has not heard back from Madbury as to whether they would like to be part of this group.

Maggie reported on the Oyster River High School Sustainability Club. She suggested and will look into the possibility of students surveying food related businesses in Durham to assess how they dispose of their food waste. Jenn mentioned combining the inventory with related energy and climate information.

##### **b. Rotary**

Mary reported on her meeting with members of the Rotary club made up of representatives from Barrington, Newmarket, Lee, Madbury and Durham. The Rotary had previously discussed the topic of community composting at their meetings and had reached out to Jennifer at UNH to learn about possible UNH or other local compost initiatives. They expressed a desire to be kept informed of our work and they offered to provide names of organizations or individuals who could possibly be helpful with this initiative. Mary felt they could be a good resource for this group. Mary will be the connection.

##### **c. Strafford Regional Planning participation**

Nell reported that Strafford Regional Planning Commission would like to stay informed as to our progress.

Maggie commented on the importance of staying connected with these groups and of continuing to build a network of groups with this common interest.

##### **d. Other?**

Jenn made us aware of REAP - a summer Research and Apprenticeship Program for grad students to work with faculty or a mentor to do research full time and receive a stipend for that work. Jenn feels a student in this role could be helpful to the RCWG in terms of focused research. Jenn presented her first crack at a project proposal for a UNH intern and asked the group to read it over and send her feedback by March 25. Deadline to submit to REAP is March 29. The research would focus on what we need to know in order to make composting recommendations to UNH and communities involved.

#### **VI. Continuing to clarify our purpose / Development of problem and goal statement**

The focus of the meeting then turned to a discussion around clarifying our purpose. The discussion centered around two possibilities with a third added in as the discussion progressed. Is our purpose to

reduce our waste footprint in part driven by climate reduction goals? In other words post-consumer waste diversion. Or is it to focus on education and to develop plans that reach people with the intent of reducing organic waste initially and helping people develop better food shopping habits. The question was raised as to whether viewing it solely as a waste management plan would be the best use of UNH's time?

A good discussion followed with committee members sharing their immediate thoughts.

Maggie - not an either or

Chuck - need a balance

Jenn - address every step of the hierarchy

Nell - waste diversion keeping in mind that the involved towns are interested in reducing landfill costs

Mary - education component but a facility is needed

Maggie - social justice - addressing food waste

Jenn - how much food goes to the landfill

We recognize that all of the above are important. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

## **VII. Settling on regular bi-weekly meeting schedule**

Meeting closed proposing to meet again April 1st at 4:00. It is hoped this will become a regular meeting time making it possible for an OR student to attend. Maggie will check with Dean to see if this time works for him.

## **VIII. New Business**

Working group members are encouraged to send further thoughts and feedback to Jenn by March 25.

## **IX. Adjourn 1pm**

Thanks to Nell Neal for taking minutes in my absence.

Respectfully submitted, Dean Rubine.