

**Regional Composting Working Group Minutes
Durham Town Hall, 1st Floor Conference Room
Monday November 8, 2021 4:15 pm**

Members present:

Maggie Morrison (ORCSD)
Dean Rubine (Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee)
Nell Neal (Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee)
Mary Caulfield (Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee)
Chuck Cox (Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee)
Chloe Gross (UNH Sustainability Institute)

Members absent: Jenn Andrews (UNH Sustainability Institute), Evy Ashburner (ORCSD)

Public Present: N/A

Call to order: 4:20pm

I. Approval of minutes from October 25, 2021

Nell moved to approve Sept 27 minutes, Chloe 2nd. 6-0 approved unamended.

II. Public comment N/A

III. Updates

Maggie: The Town of Durham has a yearlong agreement with UNH to have a sustainability fellow, working closely with Durham Energy Committee and Town Council to fulfill the Global Covenant of Mayors. Please see the email I just sent. [Excerpted here:]

The Town of Durham has signed as part of the Global Covenant of Mayors. This document gives some guidance on how to incorporate food waste into the Global Covenant Mayors.

<https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/eli-pubs/eli-toolkit-incorporating-food-waste.pdf>

Maggie: I talked to Todd Selig before the meeting; every year they have to come up with a project for the fellow. They have to write a proposal to UNH that is approved. The deadline is December 1. Jen Andrews is part of the process. Couldn't food waste be part of that work? It could be a bridge between the school district and the town.

The Global Covenant of Mayors is a document that makes member cities responsible for reporting and coming up with solutions. I sent around a report about food waste from GCM.

Durham reps here may want to look at that document and use the language of reducing food waste in the CGM. Put the proposal under the Global Covenant of Mayors. Todd's only talking to the energy committee / Jim Lawson. But food waste is part of GCM so could be included.

Mary: Who is in GCM?

Maggie: It's a long-term vision to combat climate change among cities who have adopted the Covenant to a lower emission future. Food waste is an element of this.

Nell: Durham will develop a sustainability plan.

Maggie: Durham may want to consider using the language and umbrella of GCM. Since the Durham Town Council have made a commitment to GCM, the language would be familiar and parallel.

Nell: Todd said no sustainability plan for Durham, The Climate Committee is the closest we come.

Chloe: Would make sense to have a team doing all the sustainability stuff

Maggie: Once you sign up for GCM as a city, there are requirements for year 1, year 2, and year 3.

Nell: Durham is signed up. That's where the emphasis is coming on the fellows.

Nell: I will work to incorporate GCM language into Durham's recommendations. Nell: Mary had recommendations.

Maggie: GCM has multiple scopes.

Chloe: Scope 1: greenhouse gas emissions from the city boundaries.

Scope 2: Use of energy generated outside but used inside the city.

Scope 3: employee transportation.

Maggie: Scope 3: All other greenhouse emissions

Chuck: It sounds like it should fit within that. Greenhouse gas. Anything we can do locally rather than long distance should fit into that. Also, compost goes back to the ground. We're eliminating the use of other fertilizer, heavy tiller equipment.

Maggie: What Chuck just said, there are many more farms in Lee than Durham. Instead of trying to focus on residential usage, there's more education with farmers in Lee. Reduce fertilizer, increase compost, decrease tillage.

Chuck: To use resources like compost rather than fertilizer means producing more composite rather than landfilling it.

Dean: We should consider the farmers more in the Lee-specific recommendations.

Maggie: Partner with the Ag Commission in Lee?

Chuck: Durham has an active Ag Commission as well. If the compost comes from Lee. Community gardens are more inclined to use compost. Lawn and yard care. All the leaves that people basically throw away are a source of nutrients for compost. The food waste needs high carbon materials in with it.

Chloe: It sounds like Lee might want to start their own composting. Farmers can bring food waste to a location. Less about shipping it away.

Chuck: Most of the farmers are already recycling yard waste, picked up at the transfer station. See how much of that compost can be made more efficiently; education for local residents, fertilizer put on lawns. Education.

Dean: Lee should add more farming stuff to our recommendations.

Chloe: Transition from Mr. Fox to local compost for farmers. Increase education around town. Residents support local farmers. Sounds better than Mr. Fox, we don't know where it's going next. You're supporting the local farmers by bringing your food waste.

Chuck: A lot will depend on the new rules.

Dean: Proposed new rules arrived on Friday; it's public comment period to December 20 with a public hearing on December 13. It looks like a PERMIT BY NOTIFICATION facility (the free and automatic permit which everyone prefers) will no longer require a waiver to process meat and dairy. There are other changes I haven't reviewed yet. I'll share the links with RCWG and LSC via email. [Here they are:]

<https://www.des.nh.gov/news-and-media/rulemaking-notice-amendments-composting-facility-requirements>

<https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/env-sw-102-ip.pdf>

[Env-Sw 408.08, Env-Sw 600, Env-Sw 1503.10 and 1503.18: Amendments to Composting Facility Requirements INITIAL PROPOSAL](#)

Chloe: I can meet about actual composting with Durham, I can meet with Agricycle.

Dean: We never determined the costs involved in a municipal compost operation.

Chloe: Let the farmers pick up waste, do the composting.

Maggie: Have a dialog with the farmers, how can we reduce our carbon footprint, do they want the compost?

Chuck: Some were interested, some not. The concern was about yard waste contamination, grass clippings with pesticides. Not food waste. More willing to add food-based compost.

Dean: Add some farm stuff to our plan. Reduced travel time, reduced carbon footprint, community connections. Call it: **Table to Farm**.

Maggie: Table to Farm instead of Farm to Table would be a great marketing thing.

Chuck: It involves education; it's better if you compost at home.

Chloe: We could get a sustainability fellow over the summer to do some of this work for Lee.

Maggie: It's a great opportunity; we need someone who will mentor that fellow.

Maggie: For Oyster River, Mr. Fox is the contractor. OR can switch, if that will help packaging with Agricycle. If it's cheaper than Mr. Fox, the district would be happy to do that. I have data on bins for each school. If we do go down that road with Agricycle, what's frustrating with Mr Fox is you can't get data very easily. I don't know if they have a staffing issue. I would want Agricycle to make a commitment to provide data so that we can better educate consumers.

Maggie: Oyster River has a different contract with Mr Fox, we don't get data.

Maggie: I'm leaving as ORCSD Sustainability Coordinator at the end of December. OR does another district wide food audit, which they were about to do in 2020 before pandemic. Have that be an educational opportunity. Great student participation opportunity. Also opportunities for designed video modules that can be used to educate teachers, staff students about what and how to compost in school. Intern can supervise. When there's Advisory, teachers need activities, maybe during snack time in elementary school. Offer to be buying partners with Durham to help reduce all our cost by changing vendors.

Chloe: The more stops Agricycle has in town, the less cost it would be for everyone. Maybe include businesses.

Nell: They're picking up in UNH.

Chuck: With the rule changes UNH can get back to composting.

Chloe: One goal is to get Kingman farm up and running again.

Maggie: They see Agricycle as a bridge;

Dean: Kingman stopped selling compost; they could start again.

Dean: Is someone volunteering on putting the report together?

Maggie: Is Mary interested in working with Chloe into synthesizing all recommendations into one report?

Chloe: That would be great.

Dean: I'll be the backup but I hope Mary can do it.

Nell: Maggie you talked about changing the language in the opening paragraph, anything about the rest of it?

Maggie: I just had this idea an hour ago. The 2022 goal; I just don't know if there's a requirement in the GCM in year 3 commitment that Durham will target food waste reduction.

Dean: Tie it to CGM to help Durham buy in.

Nell: I'm concerned with tying this up in one meeting.

Dean: We need to get done before Maggie's gone.

Chloe: Use the recommendations as the end of this chapter, what the towns do going forward is the new chapter.

Maggie: If you go on the Sustainability Committee at the ORCSD website, under School Board Appointed Committees, you can find Kendalls' Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report. In that report is a visual that tells us about Scope 1, Scope 2, Scope 3 in the GCM. You'll see that Scope 3 includes wastewater treatment, organic waste disposal, waste to incinerator and landfill. This visual help understands GCM.

Dean: Scope 3 is the third year?

Maggie: Chloe will research.

Nell: Are you recommending to Lee that they also write in terms of GCM.

Maggie: No, for Durham they've already signed on to it.

Maggie: OR doesn't have anything to anchor it except for they adopted the United Nations sustainable development goals.

Dean: LSC and Lee DPW want to see draft before approval

Nell: will meet with Mary this week; will contact Chloe. Not until the first week of December.

Dean: Chloe and me, maybe Mary,

Nell: She may be too busy.

Dean: Let's include in these minutes Chloe's notes about her conversations with the three vendors.

From: Chloe Gross

Date: November 15, 2021, 12:16pm

I met with Garbage to Garden, Agri-Cycle, and Mr. Fox recently to discuss adding/shifting Durham to their pickups. I attached my notes, but my main takeaway is that hiring Agri-Cycle would be the simplest bet. The town could contract with them for a few pickup locations (transfer station for resident access, main street for student access, etc.) and market Agri-Cycle as a custom, low-cost, frequent pickup service for businesses. The more pickup locations in Durham, the less costly for everyone involved. In talking with GTG and Mr. Fox, it seems that figuring out a curbside pickup situation would be complicated contractually, financially, and logistically.

I look forward to seeing everyone this afternoon and hearing what you think!

Agri-Cycle:

- Do you do residential pickup or only commercial? **Commercial and town location pickups**
 - How large must a commercial pickup be?
Durham businesses would not be too small
- What are your prices for commercial pickup?
 - **The more locations in Durham already picking up, the less costly for businesses**
 - **Can do small pickups since they're already in Durham,**
 - **Can do pickups on call, every other week, twice a week, custom, emergency service**
- What would you need from Durham?
 - **Requested service frequency, number of totes, service agreements, addresses of pickup locations**
- Contracting
 - **If doing town pickups, contract with town**
 - **Contract with businesses separately**

Idea: Town contracts with Agri-Cycle to pick up at multiple drop-off locations in town accessible to apartments and neighborhoods

Introduce Agri-Cycle to businesses, the more involved the less costly

GTG: phoebe@garbagetogarden.org

- Would you be willing to add Durham, NH to your routes
 - **yes**
- Would you be willing to work with the Town to come up with a discounted rate for pickups?

- **yes**
- What are your thoughts on neighborhood pickups versus house-to-house (like a neighborhood creates a cooperative to pay for just one larger pickup)
 - **For a cooperative, not completely opposed, but agreed upon central locations (transfer station) and curbside are best**
 - **Can get complicated with payment, for drop-off locations the town is in charge (DEP standpoint bc it is still a transfer station because multiple household's MSW)**
- How often would you pick up?
 - Commercial?
 - **weekly**
 - Residential?
 - **weekly**

**For town providing composting, pilot basis (shorter duration) contact or RFP process committing to pay annual/monthly rate, provide bins to every house
Unusual for a place that doesn't already do curbside trash/recycling**

In apartments, either personal agreed spot or landlord contracts with GTG for trash room pickup

GTG is open to negotiation with town for decreased rate without compost available, like a hybrid of town contract and private- contract for committing to lower rate and private households pay

Sally Nedell on IWMAC - spoke to Tyler at GTG, said town wanted to focus on recycling rather than composting at the moment, spoke to DPW

- **What is the status of this? True? Miscommunication?**

GTG needs to know the specifics of what the town's objectives want, before moving forward

Mr. Fox:

- **Would you be willing to work with the Town to come up with a discounted rate for commercial and residential pickups?** I will bring this up at our monthly meeting and get back to you!
- **What are your thoughts on neighborhood pickups versus house-to-house (like a neighborhood creates a cooperative to pay for just one larger pickup)**
 - **What about residential and neighborhood** Unfortunately, we have found that contamination significantly increases in drop-off locations other than Transfer Stations. House-to-house gives us a chance to educate residents when our drivers spot something that may not belong.
- **How often would you pick up?**
 - **Commercial?** We are currently in the Durham area two days a week for commercial services but do take our composter's needs in mind when adjusting our routes!
 - **Residential?** We are in Durham each week on Wednesdays for residential composting!

- What about more frequent pickups and how much more would it cost the customer? Bi-weekly service is \$16.00/month and weekly service is \$32.00/month. Composters can also add additional bins for \$6.00/bin.
- What do you provide as part of your commercial service?
 - Residential? Mr. Fox provides a bin and liner when composters sign up and a fresh liner at each service! When signing up, customers can opt-in to have a free bag of compost delivered each Spring! Each residential composter also has a Mr. Fox account which has some great features like a service calendar and a place to skip service should they be out of town. We also have an online shop with countertop bins, liners, and more, which we deliver on the composter's route!
 - Commercial service? Depending on their needs, commercial composters have two size options - 32G and 64G. Additional bins can also be added. We also offer a variety of compostable products!
- Would you provide outreach materials or would that be on the Town? Absolutely! We have also worked with towns to design specific signage for the bin locations!
- Would you price-match and what about competing vendors? We certainly do our best to be cost-competitive and are always open to discussions when it comes to composting!

I hope this helps but please let me know if you have any questions! I'll be sure to reach out after our meeting!

V. Next meeting date:

Monday, Dec 6, 4:15 pm, Durham Town Hall

VI. New Business

VII. Adjourn

Adjourned: 5:15 pm

Respectively submitted,

Dean Rubine