

Regional Composting Working Group Minutes

Thursday July 08, 2021

I. Call to Order 4:02 pm

Members present:

Maggie Morrison (ORCSD)
Chuck Cox (Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee)
Dean Rubine (Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee)
Chloe Gross (UNH Sustainability Institute)

Members absent:

Nell Neal (Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee)
Evy Ashburner (ORCSD)
Jenn Andrews (UNH Sustainability Institute)
Mary Caulfield (Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee)

Public Present: N/A

Call to order: 4:02pm

I. Approval of minutes from June 17, 2021

Tabled until next meeting.

II. Public comment N/A

III. Updates

a. Lee Select Board meeting

Dean: LSC Chair Paul Gasowski and I attended the Lee Select Board meeting last Monday. They reviewed the survey. There was no official vote, but they gave their approval. The most interesting question was about whether our efforts would increase trash and recycling volumes at the transfer station, which I don't think they want to happen as it imposes costs on the town. I said I didn't think so, and that the survey would help us find out. I read the list of businesses and asked if we had email addresses or other ways to contact. I didn't get any reply at the meeting.

Chloe: I got some email addresses for businesses, including eight from Lee Town Administrator Julie Glover. I'll have to resubmit the survey to the IRB to get additional approval for email in Lee, which shouldn't be a problem.

b. Other

Chuck: Still no Madbury representative to our committee.

IV. Survey status

Chloe: We should be getting approval in the next day or two. There were a few things we had to change in response to the IRB comments; we made the changes and submitted them for reapproval; we should hear tomorrow. Once the IRB says yes we're good to go, we can start canvassing. We plan to run an article in the 7/16 Friday update in Durham. "There's a survey coming out..."

Dean: We can run the same thing in Lee E-Crier under the Sustainability Committee banner. I'll need to get approval from the LSC.

Chloe will send Dean what's running in Durham.

Dean: We don't want everyone to reply. Are we going to list the businesses? Will there be a link in the article?

Chloe: No link, just a request to be on the lookout for the email. Those emails will go out early next week; Friday update references email. After a week we'll go around with the fliers. Naomi Kornhauser, Durham IWMAC will accompany Chloe to Durham businesses, Dean accompanies Chloe in Lee.

Maggie: What would be an acceptable response rate?

Chloe: Our proposal anticipates 20 to 25 responses.

Chuck: Flag Hill Winery is very interested in the process. They might be interested in taking food waste.

Dean: Can we add them to the survey?

Chuck: What about Cow Palace ice cream? They're connected to Flag Hill. Are they in Lee?

Maggie: No, Epping.

Chuck: I talked to John Hutton at Coppal House Farm. He's interested in the compost process, might be able to have input.

I also talked to Coyote Springs Stable, they're very interested in composting. They compost their own stuff. He'd be happy to be a resource on technical composting stuff. Very wary of yard waste because of the chemical contamination. Emery Farm -- haven't contacted them yet; should be able to compost.

Dean: Let's add them to the list too.

Chuck: I talked with Steve Haendler, Mildred's Drumlin Farm on Lee Hook Rd. He's an organic farmer. He doesn't want to take in material. May be interested in finished compost.

Chuck: Re Madbury, Powder Major Farm, the Gosses, they have a venue for weddings.

Maggie: Also, if we're thinking of catering, Thompson Inn on Bennett Rd.

V. Data Inventory

Chloe: I have slides, did some calculations. [Shows presentation, has some missing data.]

Dean: I'll forward Lee recycling data Chloe. Total recycling data in tons. Total annual cost for recycling.

Maggie: I've been trying to get Oyster River data from Mr. Fox.

Dean: Let's check if the Durham MSW includes hauling. Chloe will email Sam, Durham DPW.

Dean: For recycling, do we count income, i.e. are we computing net costs? Also what's the best period? Is it 2018-2019, 2019-2020? Answer: Flexible but ideally one year ending in Dec 2020.

Dean: That includes the pandemic. Do we want a more 'normal' time?

Chloe: McGill University has a study that reports 60% of MSW is food waste.

Dean: Usually we use 20-22% as our number for that. Let's research, check the Community Composting book.

Chloe: I did research on Garbage to Garden, a business in the Maine/Seacoast NH/Mass area. They do curbside compost services for schools, commercial businesses, including meat and dairy, to renew local soil. Medford MA paired with GtoG to get a good rate. I sent an email. I will possibly interview someone in Medford. How did they partner with Garbage to Garden?

Chloe: Arlington and Somerville could also be a model of how we could do it.

Dean: Massachusetts has a restaurant compost law -- they're not allowed to toss their food waste in the MSW.

Chuck: That could really push things along, but NH is unlikely to pass a statewide ban.

Dean: Can individual towns do ordinances?

Maggie: NH has a "home rule" issue; the state legislature prohibits municipalities from passing their own rules about recycling, composting, etc. The Styrofoam ban in Portsmouth is currently testing that. The grocery store lobby in NH is very strong. Durham (in 1974) used the home rule law to reject the Onassis oil refinery. The Seacoast Reliability Project used home rule because they didn't want different towns deciding whether to accept Eversource or not.

Portsmouth made Styrofoam rules for government buildings. It didn't cause a legal issue until it was expanded to restaurants.

Dean: I'll research some of these rules.

Maggie: Anything else on the data? Chloe, thanks for all your work on that.

VI. Deadline for our recommendations: September

[Maggie reiterated the proposed date; no one balked.]

VII. Next meeting date: July ? 2021 4 pm

July 22, 2021 4pm 2nd floor conference room, Durham Town Hall

VIII. New Business

Dean: Let's invite Naomi to the next meeting.

IX. Adjourn

Dean moved, Maggie 2nd. Adjourned 5pm, vote 4-0.

Respectively submitted,

Dean Rubine