



Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting

Approved Minutes February 17, 2021 7 PM

Virtual Zoom Meeting ID: 923-766-4832 Password: 136658

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9237664832> or Telephone: 1-646-558-8656

I. Call to Order 7:02 pm

The chair read the COVID-19/Zoom Meeting statement pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order 12.

Members present: Paul Gasowski (chair), Jennifer Messeder, Dean Rubine.

[Roll call attendance, no one else in anyone's room.]

Members absent: Chuck Cox

Public Present: N/A

II. Discussion Item

A. Municipal Composting Initiative: Our Goals and Our Involvement with the Regional Composting Working Group (RCWG)

Paul: We sent our letter to Julie. Julie recommended we talk to the Select Board. The Board will pass an opinion on what our role should be.

Dean: I thought we already got approval.

Paul: We did communicate with Julie; she said OK. They were busy with moving and COVID. We've cc'd her and Steve on emails. They have many priorities at this time. Steve recently responded.

Dean: How is the question about us being framed on the Select Board's agenda?

Paul: Probably either as a separate agenda item, or in the Town Administrator's report. Early is better for me.

Dean: Will we all speak on Zoom?

Paul: What they've done with the library is designate one person to speak; the other people are available if they're called upon.

Dean: I already represented to the Working Group that we had gotten approval. To me the issue is what is the proper way to behave under the rules?

Jen: Steve is too busy for meetings.

Paul: List of discussion items for this meeting: Our goals, educational outreach. Our history regarding the waste stream and composting. RTK as it pertains to the working group and us. What is it we want to share with the Select Board?

Jen: Along with RTK, if two of our committee members attend does that constitute an LSC meeting?

Paul: Julie already said it does not constitute a quorum.

Paul: LSC is almost 4 years old; almost everything we've done is educational outreach. This is different from educational outreach. It's bigger. What is our goal? So far relative to waste stream and composting we've been trying to change behaviors. Dean has been following numbers and volume. I'm just wondering if we're straying from what we've done.

Jen: What is the committee's mission? If our mission is to be an educational body we're straying. If not... We got started on this because it seems to be the next step. We supported Mr. Fox.

Dean: That was the Lee Solid Waste Committee, which I joined because I thought this committee should be involved there.

Jen: This is the next step beyond Mr. Fox; how we expand composting beyond the town, make it more financially effective.

Paul: We met jointly with solid waste, they dissolved themselves, and we absorbed some members.

Dean: We were dissolved by the town.

Paul: I thought us joining Mr. Fox was an extension of their Mast Way run.

Dean: They would have been happy to take our waste even without the nearby school pickup.

Dean: I've been interested in municipal composting from the first LSC meeting. How many meetings have I droned on about Martha Fuller-Clark's 2015 law? The Solid Waste Committee had Matt Smith as a member; he was on the DES task force that was rewriting the municipal composting rules. Education is already mentioned as a major component within the RCWG, with UNH and Oyster River participating.

Jen: Durham IWMAC?

Paul: There's a department (in Durham) that runs waste management. IWMAC is an advisory committee to the town council.

Paul: Dean has been talking about municipal composting before anyone. Dean, what if the site can't be in Lee?

Dean: We find a regional site, wherever that may be, and if participating is in Lee's interest, they will.

Paul: Don't you think we should be asking Steve if he wants us to represent his views?

Dean: I try to walk the line keeping him informed while not bothering him too much.

Paul: Do you accept that if Steve doesn't want us to participate we can't?

Dean: Sure.

Jen: Steve mentioned Kingman Farm.

Jen: At the December 2019 climate summit a speaker told us of a success story in Portland ME, a storm water project. They were successful by setting up a task force whose only purpose was to get the facts, get prices, and determine obstacles. It was separate from the board. They brought in a variety of stakeholders including people who were dead set against it; everyone worked together; by the time they took it to the Select Board, they couldn't vote no because every objection had already been addressed. Get consensus or it's DOA. It's important to bring in enough of the stakeholders, including those dead set against it, so problems and objections can be addressed.

Paul: That makes sense. Are you suggesting that's what's happening now?

Jen: We're all for it. I'd love for Steve to be a member of the RCWG but he's busy. He's an important stakeholder.

Jen: I could track down the speaker at the conference if we wanted to get him to a meeting.

Paul: Steve is the paid professional here. I want his opinion. I want to find out what the Town Administrator & Select Board think. We're in over our head. There are other options. We could consider the onsite Lee version. We could go back to Mike Nork who seemed to be suggesting there were a number of ways to do it. I'm surprised he's not in the RCWG. His presentation was excellent. I'm not sure we're ready for it. We can do something right here in Lee.

We're dealing with a whole slew of bad behavior (by the residents). You could say they're not going to change. You could say our first obligation is to adjust behaviors.

I would rather see a compost pile I can hold than a biodigester creating methane they can burn. That would be UNH's interest. They're the big player. They will determine what happens.

Jen: Kingman Farm is UNH.

Dean: UNH is only sending pre-consumer dining hall waste to Kingman Farm. The rest goes to Agricycle Energy in Maine.

Paul: The LSC's ultimate goal is to get people to change what they do. Not just food waste, every aspect of sustainability.

Paul: The RCWG backed up in order to go forward. They had some early conversations that made pretty clear what they wanted to do. At the same time they're looking for structure.

Paul: Dean, what do you want from the Select Board?

Dean: I want the Select Board to say they support the LSC exploring regional composting by sending representatives to participate in the RCWG, and that they'll consider in good faith any proposal which the RCWG produces and the LSC approves.

Paul: I'd rather see us look at the Lee site and see what we could do here. Not the regional thing.

Dean: So we shouldn't participate in the RCWG because we might do something in Lee?

Paul: The RCWG should be public, and adhere to the statutes even if they maybe don't quite qualify as such. They're doing big work, there are big expectations. They are unwilling at this point in time to publicly post meetings, unwilling to take their own minutes, unwilling to invite the public into the process. They're even unwilling to read the governor's statement on COVID. That is contrary to everything this committee (LSC) is about.

Paul: Meetings get posted. They created a post, we put it up. It was only posted in Lee.

Jen: If the working group needs to operate in accord with RTK, which seems like it should, then Durham would need to post the notice on their site, as would the school district.

Paul: I don't buy that these are folks with good will doing research work. Somewhere down the road money will have to be spent, maybe from the town, maybe in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. That's beyond our realm. That's UNH's realm; that's why they're at the table. I have a major disconnect about why you wouldn't want to be a public committee with a paper trail, approved minutes, everything.

Jen: How does this move forward, with two towns involved, maybe more.

Dean: Chuck is tasked with talking to Madbury about a member.

Jen: Multiple towns, contacts, funds, location somewhere. For the Durham solar farm in Lee each town had a warrant article whether or not to go forward. Isn't it possible we will need a warrant article on the town's ballots; all the towns approve to move forward? I'm torn; I'd rather do the research, and then make a decision about whether this is too big, too unfeasible. This is big.

Paul: In the ideal world they would have structure, their own minutes, Dean and Chuck would report to us on their activity. Their minutes would become part of the report. That's not what's happening right now.

Jen: It doesn't necessarily mean the RCWG wouldn't change to become that if that's what they have to do to move forward.

Dean: I want to do it by the rules; if the RCWG isn't by the rules then we shouldn't participate.

Paul: When I was at ORHS I had a whole lot of freedom as a teacher. Whenever I was venturing into territory they might hear about, I always told my supervisor in advance. These volunteers all have supervisors.

Jen: Select Boards, town councils.

Paul: Good communication is the lynchpin of everything.

Jen: I don't want to kill the RCWG this early in if there's a chance the RCWG can be convinced of the need to be more formal. If after a couple more attempts they don't want to then it's DOA.

Paul: They're in a grey area of officials meeting informally/formally. Todd Selig has a different opinion than Julie Glover. Julie says just do it (eg. adhere to RTK guidelines). I agree with her, it's good practice. It depends on what the Board wants us to do. Our members would be taking notes, not minutes, and report back to us. Right now Dean is taking their minutes because they don't want to own them. They're taking minutes because we said take minutes.

Jen: If the workgroup moves forward somebody needs to take minutes. Whoever does is a member of some constituent body. When you're in the workgroup you're a member of the workgroup. If Dean was going to take the minutes of the WG he does so as a member of that group.

Dean: Paul, you're complaining they're only doing it because we asked. They're agreeing to do things we ask; that's what counts.

Paul: We're the only ones that posted the meeting, at my insistence. It's not our meeting, Julie said. We were taking minutes because it's the right thing to do. Those minutes have been adopted by them. They will only appear on our website.

Dean: To be fair, I was under the impression that was what the LSC wanted, and they went along.

Jen: The RCWG needs to approve the minutes. They need to come up with a process to make sure all parties get copies of those minutes. Every meeting's approved minutes are shared.

Paul: Now that we're talking about procedure. If you own the minutes, you own posting the meeting, you own the records of it, and you must allow the public to watch, all in.

Dean: Does the school post workgroups?

Paul: You attended a July 29, 2020 joint meeting of ORCSD and the towns.

Dean: That was a meeting of the ORCSD Finance Committee where the towns and UNH were invited.

Paul: I'd feel a lot better if the RCWG would take ownership as a group, going public. There is going to be a lot of hours, a lot of record keeping, other things that need to be shared.

Somebody needs to host all that. Lee shouldn't host that. Get them to say they'll post meeting notices; invite the public, do it the right way. That would take one monkey off my back. The other is how to keep Steve Bullek involved. If he says he's not interested, we don't participate.

Dean: He's busy but supportive. There's no indication that he's going to reject the proposal; he'll consider it.

Paul: He didn't want to get sucked down a tunnel where his budget would be compromised.

Jen: I'm sure the Select Board would have the same concerns about finances.

Jen: One idea, for the Monday Select Board meeting, if they're open to us doing research, is to get some guidelines about financial objectives.

Dean: I was only looking for solutions that saved money. If it costs too much, it's not sustainable.

Paul: For Monday I was going to give the Select Board minutes to look at.

Dean: I'll get these draft minutes in shape.

Paul: Pass them by tomorrow? Maybe the older minutes; Dean's involvement, Jen's involvement, we have an excellent track record paying attention to the waste stream. The Select Board knows but needs to be reminded.

Paul: Do we want to be an agenda item or in the Town Administrator's Report? I think all three of us should be able to speak. 6pm on Monday, February 22, 2021.

Jen: I have a 5:30 and 7:00 Zoom.

Dean: I'll be there.

Paul: Can we share the minutes from the RCWG?

Dean: Sure, they're my notes.

Paul: I'll create a timeline of the things we've done.

Jen: Increasing recycling, reducing food waste in MSW, support of Mr. Fox program, increasing composting as a potential next step.

Paul: If Chuck and Dean took on an obligation with the working group, Jen and I continue outreach work.

Dean: I will still work on LSC as always.

Jen: Education is still a priority.

Paul: I'll put together a list of talking points

Jen: My personal computer isn't turned on until after supper. Trials of a day job.

Paul: These are things we've talked about; we're willing to talk about. We'll get more attention as an agenda item. I'll try to get Julie to do that.

Dean: I'll send you the notes.

III. Public Comments N/A

IV. Closing Actions

A. Future Meeting Dates

Lee Select Board 6pm Monday, February 22, 2021.

LSC regular meeting 3/9/21 at 7:00PM via Zoom

VII. Adjournment

Jen moved, Dean 2nd. Roll call vote 3-0, Adjourned 8:16 pm

Respectfully Submitted, Dean Rubine