



Lee Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting

Approved Minutes May 11, 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 7:01 pm

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

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

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

Members absent: N/A

Officials Present: Katrin Kasper, Lee Select Board

Public Present: N/A

II. Preliminary Actions

A. Introductions: Invited Guests N/A

B. Approval of Agenda

No changes.

C. Minutes: Approve Minutes from 4/13/21

Committee reviewed changes.

Dean moved, Jen 2nd, Roll Call Vote 4-0, 4/13/21 minutes approved as amended.

D. Correspondence/Events: Julie Glover, Erika Hunter, Katrin: UNH Earth Day Conference

DRAFT of Glover Letter re. SRPC Membership

Erika sent an article from the Smithsonian about a process for consuming plastic with organisms.

Katrin attended the UNH Earth Day conference. She also attended a compassionate leadership conference that talked about sustainability topics, a Gender Justice Cafe: Climate Feminism conference, and a recycling 101 with NH Municipalities Association, a 2 day recycling conference.

There is good news about recycling as the pandemic is moving forward. Everything is going up in price. We could add more. Steve showed off the One Bin At a Time document. There's a company that Steve is planning to use to recycle razor blades and bread bags.

Paul: Katrin will send links; we'll talk about this again next time.

E. Other N/A

III. Discussion Items/Updates

A. Dean/Chuck: Municipal Composting Update

Dean: Representing the RCWG I contacted Mike Nork of NHDES. We had promised to keep him in the loop at our December, 2020 meeting. I'll include the correspondence at the end of the minutes. The most interesting thing he mentioned was that HB413, a bill in process, has language in it that directs the NHDES to rewrite the municipal compost rules by September.

The RCWG, really Durham IWMAC, is planning on doing a survey on Durham restaurants; they want to use the UNH summer intern to extend this to Lee. I told them I'd contact the Lee town administrator. The current thinking is to do an initial survey with just a few questions about food waste / compost-related topics and a check box that asks if they're interested in being contacted in the future. We had brainstormed questions and mailed them to Nell Neal, chair of IWMAC, to curate. I asked her for a draft to show at this meeting; she said it wouldn't be ready until her meeting on Thursday.

I did five minutes on Contamination at Municipal Compost Operations. In addition to the obvious trash/non-compostable matter that needs to be kept, picked and screened out, there's the scary possibility of chemical contamination. I relayed a cautionary tale of Green Mountain Compost in Vermont which sold compost that poisoned 500 gardens and cost them and ultimately the taxpayers a million dollars to set right. The problem was traced to a persistent herbicide used on hay consumed by horses whose manure was used in composting. The full presentation is available in the RCWG minutes of May 4.

One interesting thing that came out at the meeting was that the towns and ORCSD are looking for a solution for all its food waste so was naturally focusing on large sources while UNH was happy with how its large sources were being processed and was looking for a solution for dorms, etc.; sources similar to town residences.

Chuck: I've talked with farms to see if they have interest in doing this, what they're doing with their waste and how they might fit in, either as a provider or consumer of compost materials. Coyote Springs is doing compost on their own; careful with contamination. Flag Hill might be open to taking material in and using them. Erik Sawtelle is wondering what the regulations are now, if they're reasonable.

Katrin: At the NRRA compost talk they covered municipal compost operations: one problem mentioned was constant animals. I brought up Bokashi. That's an anaerobic, fermenting, pickling, degrading process that takes 10 days to break down a bucket of food waste to compost and Bokashi tea. The tea can be used to improve septic systems, diluted into a fertilizer, or mixed with leaves and yard waste to create a compost. (Too acidic to use with topsoil.). It can even be used to process meat and dairy. It's a completely closed system, no smell, no animals, no fires. Quick turnaround. Also uses leaves and grass cuttings; no one seems to know about it in NH. It's a matter of adding certain material in layers in compost; it cuts down the amount of space needed. We do it at home. Our septic vendor commented, "I've never seen a septic system so clean!"

Great article on The Spruce; Katrin will share. <https://www.thespruce.com/basics-of-bokashi-composting-2539742>

Katrin: It's definitely municipal scale; it can work in a closed bucket or container.

Paul: The minutes from the RCWG are tucked into our minutes. Are folks reviewing them? [Yes, Jen and Paul review RCWG minutes, Dean and Chuck attend RCWG meetings.] The presentation of contamination was interesting -- are you worried?

Dean: Sure. It's something that needs to be managed. One suggested method is bioassays, essentially sticking a seed in some finished compost and making sure it grows well for a few weeks before selling that batch. There are also more expensive lab tests.

Paul: I get wood chips and compost at Transfer station; I do not use that for gardening and raising food. There's no testing or screening on it. But it's a great service. Brought it home for the flower garden.

Dean: Do we need a sign warning folks of that?

Chuck: I don't understand what people dump in there. Is there any regulation on that? Lawn clippings have herbicides.

Paul: They're blending in manure.

Dean: Mike Nork said at our December 2020 meeting that by statute the state does not regulate lawn and yard waste. That pile is unregulated.

Jen: A sign at the site seems needed.

Paul: One of us should talk to Steve about the nature of the pile / the need for signage / get Steve's reaction. Dean will talk to Steve; do it by email; cc everybody.

Paul: My second question is more complicated: They were going to use an intern to survey Lee restaurants?

Dean: I'm supposed to talk to Julie and ask her how to do it.

Paul: I think Steve and the Select Board need to clear this; we need a draft through the committee, we can run it up the ladder, decide if the Select Board weighs in.

Katrin: Is it for all Lee or all the towns?

Paul: The working group isn't beholden to anyone.

Katrin: Lee is about to put out a huge survey.

Jen: My question was not just sending the draft survey to the Board but also the list of the worker plans to compost. WG survey will be a smaller scope.

Paul: We are obligated to run everything up the ladder.

Paul: My recommendation is that the folks above us need to be fully aware of this before it hits the public.

Dean: That will certainly be true in Lee.

Jen: We will have one draft survey in the working group; up the Durham chain and the Lee chain; we want them to be the same.

Paul: There are a lot of chains in Lee that are corporately run, including Market Basket. Responses are going to take time.

Katrin: There are two separate topics, residential and restaurant waste.

Paul: Maybe instead of a survey, just a communication to corporate headquarters about what they do and how they handle it.

Katrin: If employees don't know if they compost they could just look in their trash.

Paul: I suspect those places have those figures; a matter of how to access it.

Katrin: Market Basket might not be involved; they might be interested in becoming involved if it was easy.

Jen: Hannaford recently said something about zero (food) waste; have to look up. Corporate websites might already have information about how they're helping the environment.

Paul: You're suggesting there are restaurants and markets doing this already, have data.

Jen: It may be that they never thought about doing it because no one asked.

Chuck: A lot of it is exploratory to see if there's interest. We don't know our final design; we're just gathering information. As much of that as we can get; someone visiting restaurants is better than just mailing the survey. I'm trying to see where farms are at and encourage them to do that.

Katrin: Mr. Fox probably has a lot of information we don't know.

Dean: We're talking about taking away his business.

Katrin: Possibly, but we might expand it. Regardless, it would just be information about the waste we pay to get rid of.

Paul: As to process, the survey should come to this committee first; we decide about Julie / what happens next.

Katrin: If we're just talking to businesses individually, the town wouldn't need to be involved in asking a few questions.

Jen: The process has to be from the RCWG to this committee.

Paul: We have an obligation to communicate with the Board.

Katrin: The information is all in the minutes.

Dean: We don't assume anyone reads those. I'll try to get the draft survey, send it to the committee via email. Let's try to get back to them quickly so as not to delay things unnecessarily.

B. Paul: Lee Arts, Crafts and Cottage Industry Directory Update

Paul: Let's review, then edit online. Go back into the drives; review comments.

Chuck: Not sure the definitions are necessary.

Dean: Do we need to distinguish between artisans and craftspeople?

Katrin: Julie's point was if we use a term we should define it.

Chuck: Put in the dictionary definition.

Jen: How important is it to the index?

Paul: I restored the form (checklists) to the document

Katrin: Licensed? What level of business?

Chuck: Someone may have a number of different things they're working on; some they're expert in, some are a hobby. It should be a profile of the person rather than a list by carpentry or automotive.

Dean: Per person or per art?

Jen: Once it's online we need a way to search for things. Show me all the carpenters. Could have people fill out more than one if they do more than one thing.

Katrin: Have we checked other town sites doing something similar?

Jen: Time banking is a similar idea; there's one in the area.

Katrin: We can check to see how they define things.

Jen: A member says "today I'm available to help with yard work" or "I need someone to tutor my kids".

Katrin: Selectperson Cary Brown wants to have a phone book. They're talking about a Welcome Wagon with local businesses; advertising to pay for the book. Are we talking about a paper directory here?

Dean: The current plan was online only, minimal costs, no paper copies, shared on social media.

Jen: Welcome packet has URLS for town, etc.

Katrin: Yes, a person meeting new residents face to face

Paul: Dean, did you record everyone's comments?

Dean: I probably missed some.

Paul: I'll go through the tape to get everyone's comments and we'll look at it online.

C. Jen: Web Upload of Completed 'One Bin' Book Proof for Web Page

Dean: Nice job Jen. I thought we were going to get the main copy on the town website; we'd link to that one.

Paul: It's beautiful.

Dean: Do we want to host the link ourselves so it's easily editable or do we want Denise to host it on the town site?

Jen: Easily editable.

Paul: I was under the impression it would go on the town website; our blog would link to it.

Paul: We can update it as needed; Denise will take care of that.

Katrin: Will Steve be able to update it quickly?

Jen: No, well yes, if he asks me to do it. I have the source document. There are new market prices. Should I do the revisions updating new prices?

Committee: Yes.

Jen: Where do I send over the new word document and PDF?

Paul: Send to Denise.

Dean: I suggest sending the PDF only. Ask to put the link on the Sustainability Committee page. How about on the top left there, replacing the Fix It flyer with One Bin Book?

Katrin: The Transfer Station can access that copy.

Dean: Can we ask Denise if the link changes when we send an update? It would be best if it didn't.

Jen: I can ask.

D. Paul: Drought Educational Outreach / Water Stewardship Book

Paul: It's still abnormally dry, outlook doesn't look promising.

Jen: Here's the Water Stewardship book from the Low Carbon Diet people. There's overlap with Low Carbon, shorter showers, etc.

Paul: The next step is to look at the list and figure out a few articles to do about it.

E. Other

Jen: Re compost and contaminations; Green gardening reduces herbicide

Paul: List them make recommendation

Jen: I already sent the list

IV. New Business

A. All: Upcoming E-Crier Articles

Committee reviewed a draft article announcing the One Bin book.

Dean: Looks great, add a picture of the cover.

Paul: The town doesn't like to link externally.

Jen: I'll copy everyone on email.

Dean: No data re trash from Steve yet; bugged him a couple of times.

Katrin: He's been busy; down some staff.

Dean: I'll add 4Q20 and 1Q21 when I get the data and update the graphs and article.

B. All: Educational Outreach-Reducing the Waste Stream

Jen: Barrington's TREX Project

Jen: Steve is aware of the program; do we want to have Steve and someone from Barrington at an LSC meeting if it makes sense for Lee to do it?

Paul: We've shared this via email; hopefully everybody is up to speed. It wasn't clear how familiar Steve was with this particular program.

Jen: I thought he was aware of the Barrington thing; I was surprised because he seemed to say Barrington was dropping stuff off at the Lee Transfer Station.

Dean: Are we spread too thin to move on it now?

Jen: Steve said we have already signed up with a company for recycling razor blades and bread bags.

Paul: Jen, would you be willing to follow up with Steve casually and see what he's working on; how can we help him with what he's working on? Since he doesn't have staff, maybe we can help.

Katrin: One of the challenges is that the wind blows those bags around the transfer station. At the grocery store it's inside; it's a hassle to recycle bags outside. Maybe a container with a top.

Jen: For TREX they give two or three bins, a box with a lid and a slot.

Paul: Let's see what Steve has in mind and go from there.

Paul: Question about TREX: is that the end of cycle for a board that I buy?

Jen: I have heard people criticizing TREX; their mix of plastic and wood can't be recycled.

Katrin: It's 95% post-consumer plastic. Its trash anyway, we get one more use out of the bags before they're discarded for good. Makes sense, save a tree.

Dean: I forgot to check if MB is collecting bags, what happens to them?

Jen: Hannaford in Durham collects bags; I've never asked them what happens. They're both drop-off places for TREX but I don't know where it goes when we drop.

Paul: Jen will follow up with Steve, Dean will find out about Market Basket.

C. Chuck: Lee's Trees-Through the Years/Historical Society Lee's Trees- Residents Observing and Sharing Favorite Trees

Chuck: People think it's a great idea; nothing firm on how to approach it. The Lee Historical Society has pictures; we have ideas of getting individuals to document the changes over the years; some trees grow fast. For example, the Christmas tree in the town circle. Questions on the Larch across from town hall. We need to see how we are to approach it. It would be a great thing to have a picture by the Lee fair. Submissions before that. Maybe work through schools later.

Dean: I thought we were going to Launch at the Lee Fair.

Chuck: If we have examples by the fair that will be great.

Paul: There are only four of us.

Dean: I'll take a pass at a draft based on Lee Trees Brochure.

Katrin: Social media too.

Katrin: Scott Bugbee works on the Lee Historical Society Web page; that probably means I could help. I suggest a regular weekly post, add to it, build traffic.

Paul: Katrin, please find out if you can work collaboratively with Dean and Chuck.

Dean: Pictures from Historical Society, repurpose original brochure.

Paul: I'll send the layout of the original Lee Trees brochure.

D. Jen: Green Burial Update

Cemetery Trustees meet Thursday May 20, talk about green burial; I will report back in June.

Paul: Sounds reasonable.

Jen: The May issue of Readers' Digest has an article called Jerry's Dirt; burial on your property.

Paul: I saw something similar, from the Forest Society perhaps.

Chuck: Friends of Dover, some use green burial for members.

Dean: There seems to be two contrasting threads in the green burial issue: bury at home to save money versus increasing sustainability practices for funerals.

Jen: The end result is the same. There are lots of different ways to do it. One family had a medical professional do the death certificate, they did everything else. Another option is a funeral home assisting, but you still do the green burial.

Katrin: Someone bought a special box that cost \$200 to hold someone's ashes in an urn inside of, because you can't bury an urn with ashes on its own. The rules around cemeteries are really complicated and have not been updated to match the changes. There are lots of other places that do this; there may be a special area where we could have this type of burial.

Jen: There are state laws and each town has its own rules about who can be buried where. Lee allows present and past Lee residents in the town cemetery. Other towns and cities with bigger cemeteries may allow anyone. It's very much local law; follow up with the cemetery trustees. It's very much a local issue.

E. Dean: Repairability Index/Right to Repair

Dean: Nothing done this month

F. Other N/A

Chuck: Looking to get other people on the committee.

Dean: If it will help Paul's sanity, I can volunteer to be chair for a while.

Paul: I'll think about it; I'm very much a process person, I do believe in process and structure; it's a point of concern when things get bypassed.

Dean: If I were chair I'd hope you'd still be reminding us to keep the committee from veering from proper process.

V. Public Comments N/A

VI. Closing Actions

A. Future Meeting Dates: 6/8/21, 7/13/21, 8/10/21

B. Agenda Planning for Next Meeting

VII. Adjournment

Dean moved, Jen 2nd. Roll Call vote 4-0. Adjourned 8:57.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dean Rubine

Email correspondence with Mike Nork, NH DES, May, 2021.

Dean Rubine

May 9, 2021, 11:34 AM (6 days ago)

Hi Mike. It's Dean Rubine from the Lee Sustainability Committee here. Perhaps you remember we had a great meeting last December when you walked us and some nearby groups through the issues surrounding municipal compost in NH. We promised to keep you informed about what we were up to; that's the purpose of this email.

Since the December meeting the local groups have formed the Regional Compost Working Group, RCWG. We have members from the Lee Sustainability Committee, the Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee, the Oyster River (School District) Sustainability Committee, and the UNH Sustainability Institute. We've been keeping detailed minutes [here](#); they're intermingled with the LSC minutes; this committee's minutes are marked "Regional Compost Working Group."

We've been meeting once or twice a month, trying to come up with a process that ends with a recommendation to our respective governing bodies. We're currently about to survey large sources of food waste in the area, mostly restaurants, to get an idea of how much food waste we could reasonably expect.

It occurred to us it would be much easier to get restaurants to participate in composting if there was a commercial food waste disposal ban like in Massachusetts since I think 2014. We were dubious about the possibility of that sort of thing in New Hampshire, but we'd thought we'd ask what you thought about that. We also want to express to you our support for such a ban, in case any legislators ever ask you.

Thank you so much for your help getting us off the ground, Mike. We'll be in touch from time to time, hopefully eventually with an application for a permit and a waiver to compost here in Oyster River. Please feel free to monitor our minutes, and if you have any comments please share them with me and I'll relay them to the group. Thanks again.

Very truly yours,

Dean Rubine
Regional Compost Working Group

Mon, May 10,
10:20 AM (5 days
ago)

Nork, Michael

Hi Dean, thank you for checking in. Glad you guys are continuing to move forward with your goals.

Lately, a lot of my time has been devoted to HB 413 (and anticipating its passage) – I don't think the bill had been introduced when I participated in the Lee Sustainability meeting last December, but HB 413 would establish a September 30th deadline for NHDES to adopt updated composting facility rules. This is a very aggressive deadline, but we will do our best to comply.

As for a disposal ban on food waste, I am not aware that NHDES has an official position. States like VT, MA, CT, RI, NY and NJ have adopted these sort of bans with the hope that banning disposal of food waste would spur development of alternative organics management infrastructure (e.g., composting facilities, anaerobic digesters, food rescue organizations, etc.). I believe that a ban can help incentivize infrastructure development. However, a ban combined with other incentive programs can be much more effective. For example, MA has put a lot of effort into providing grants and low-interest loan programs targeted at development of organics management infrastructure. As a result, MA has seen a big increase in management capacity within recent years. Combine all of that with a robust education/outreach program, and you increase the impact even further. So, my point is that a ban by itself is one thing, but a multi-pronged approach is often far more effective. Of course, doing so in NH would require investment of state resources that do not currently exist.

I hope this perspective is helpful. I certainly encourage you to explore the topic further with your state representatives/senator.

Best regards,

Mike

Michael Nork
Environmental Analyst
Solid Waste Management Bureau
NH Dept of Environmental Services
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From: Dean Rubine
Sent: Sunday, May 9, 2021 11:34 AM
To: Nork, Michael <Michael.A.Nork@des.nh.gov>
Cc: Maggie Morrison
Subject: Oyster River Regional Compost Update

Mon, May 10,
11:32 AM (5 days
ago)

Dean Rubine

Thank you for your thoughtful reply, Mike. I will certainly share it with the group.

I was unaware of HB 413 -- that's good to know. I looked it up and was bemused by this strikeout, which I presume is current law.

The general court declares that the goal of the state, by the year 2000, is to achieve a 40 percent minimum weight diversion of solid waste landfilled or incinerated on a per capita basis. Diversion shall be measured with respect to changes in waste generated and subsequently landfilled or incinerated in New Hampshire. The goal of weight diversion may be achieved through source reduction, recycling, reuse, and composting, or any combination of such methods

We should have gotten this done twenty years ago. I guess that's when the recycling happened in a big way; the compost part was ignored.

- Dea

Mon, May 10,
11:37 AM (5 days
ago)

Nork, Michael

There's a lot more to that story. Roughly 20 years ago state budget cuts also began chipping away at NHDES's solid waste programs.

The strikeout you are referring to is part of a proposed amendment to HB 413, which adds language about updating the solid waste reduction goal in RSA 149-M.

Did you see the full text of the bill?

http://gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billText.aspx?sy=2021&id=636&txtFormat=pdf&v=current See page 3, line 4 for part about composting rules