

Recycling & Renewable Energy Committee
Meeting Minutes
16 July 2013 at 10am
Caucus Room, Provincetown Town Hall

Attending: Lydia Hamnquist, Laura Ludwig, Elise Cozzi, Jen Rumpza.

Carla Anderson out sick.

Posted agenda --

- Plastic Bags – encourage town to develop a policy that mirrors the Commonwealth’s mandates/by-laws
- Conversation about how to deal w/ bulk trash (chairs, TVs, mattresses)
- Compost townwide

Meeting was called to order at 10:05am by chairperson, Lydia Hamnquist.

Because it has been several months since RREC member Kaolin Davis has attended a meeting (4/17/13), Lydia recommended that Jen Rumpza be made a regular member and move Kaolin to be an alternate member.

Laura made a motion to move Jen to regular status and move Kaolin to alternate status. Lydia seconded; all were in favor.

All agreed that it was preferable to keep Kaolin on as alternate because her input is valuable, and we want her to feel welcome to attend the meetings as an alternate.

Elise moved that we approve minutes from the last meeting (June 18). Jen seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Lydia filled us in on notes she took during the June 18 RREC meeting. She and David Gardner discussed trash can liners vs. recycling bin liners, vis a vis the DPW hauling the trash and their sorting methods. Since bags for both bins are often the same, there is a question that some bags may from recycling bin but treated as trash at the transfer station (or vice versa). Lydia will meet with Rich to discuss the plastic bag liner situation.

DPW is in their new building (the VMCC, which is the old elementary school) and Lydia went to their first open day (July 15). They are still settling in.

Lydia spoke to David and the harbormaster Rex McKenzie regarding lack of recycling bins on MacMillan Pier. There is currently only one recycling bin at the foot of the pier, and 18 trash cans placed along the pier. At some point in the past the bins were too light (made of cardboard!) and they blew off the pier. The new units our budget paid for will be in by August and should be deployed by early August; at least 5 will be installed on the pier. Lydia will check with David to see whether bins can be delivered directly to the pier near the Harbormaster’s office to reduce the amount of labor involved in deploying them.

Elise asked about “dual trash cans” – trash and recycling in one unit. None have been ordered but we want to pursue that, Rich was excited by the prospect during our last conversation about them.

We discussed how we could raise money for our cause. Need funds to buy more bins, such as the dual trash-recycling bins, or to conduct outreach. We need to proceed with our outreach to businesses. It’s our job to stay on it, remind people whenever possible.

Need to find out if it’s OK that the RREC conduct a fundraiser.

Some fundraising ideas:

- Set up a drop box at S&S where people could donate money earned from redeemables.
- Get businesses to donate prizes for a raffle; sell tickets at the Firehouse.
- A business could sponsor a fundraiser (like Global Gifts).
- Focus on Earth Day and hold an event to encourage participation and involvement by businesses.

Question about commercial haulers recycling – some concern that they don't all take paper in their recycling (business contracts). Lydia will talk with commercial haulers to see what their different policies are.

Regarding businesses, Laura encouraged us to use this season to fact-find and research the procedures that need examination so that we can improve our education and outreach next fall and winter. Take pictures of trash bags filled with recyclable plastic cups, etc. Businesses need to be made aware of the amount of trash that goes out their door. Nearly 80% of all trash is generated by businesses during the high season, according to info Lydia got from Rich. Lydia will try to get more figures from Rich regarding the cost benefit of recycling vs. trash so that we can provide businesses with info and numbers they can relate to.

Jen wonders whether the town has a by-law where water was only to be served in restaurants when it's requested. May have been a water-saving initiative. Good teaching moment when diners wonder why they have to ask for water – save water, save a cup.

Composting – curbside composting would present problems by drawing animals and making messes. Not likely DPW would be able to pick up curbside compost, or have the facility to handle it.

This committee could conduct a Facebook poll regarding who would be interested in having a backyard composter. If there is interest, our budget could purchase them on behalf of the town.

- * Laura will post something on the Ptown Community Space FB page to inform about the % of food waste in the trash, and to gauge interest in the town offering free or reduced-cost composting bins.

Lydia suggested offering neighborhood collection points, such as she does w/ her neighbors – those with space could house the composter and can receive it from neighbors.

Garden Renovations (Jen Crooks) may be interested in obtaining compost for her landscaping work; Jen Rumpza is a friend of hers and will have a conversation about it with her.

Plastic Bag Ban or Tax – if we mirror the Commonwealth's plan, only three businesses in town would come under the regulations. We need to have something in place that impacts all of the businesses, not just the big ones. Lydia says that everyone she mentions a town-wide ban to is supportive of it.

Education is key, just like the recycling outreach. Many towns in the Commonwealth have municipal bag bans or taxes; Brookline's by-laws are on-line and we could use them for a template. We collectively know many business owners, and could do some research on what their costs for bags are. Some use heavy bags that aren't as prone to blow away, and often are re-usable.

One fear of banning bags is that people will use the "biodegradable" bags which have their own issues. Another is that it would cause a lack of "poop" bags.

- * Laura will request biodegradability specs on plastic bags from a 'scientist' (chemical engineer) to present to the RREC.

LED Streetlights – Lydia wanted to update us on developments since the BOS meeting recommendation. She now has the pole maps with colored dots indicating light vs. utility poles, though those may not be accurate. Elise is going to take the map of her neighborhood to take a look at whether any could be eliminated.

Elise wondered if the West End parking lot and at the Landing are part of the town's lights. Lydia says they are. In the case where the town opts to remove a light as part of the CLC installation, the town will have to inform neighboring houses/businesses to give them a chance to weigh in. Lydia will be working w/ David to draft language for the letter.

Jen Rumpza left at 11:20.

BULK TRASH -- chairs, couches, mattresses . . . [From 6/18 minutes: DPW / RREC could sponsor two or three annual drop-off days when everyone brings their bulk items to the transfer station. We would charge for the service. It costs money for us to handle the items, so that cost needs to be transferred to the user. Need to prevent stuff from being thrown on the beach or in the woods. Don't have a space at the Transfer Station, but we do at the Highway Garage. DPW reluctantly does go and retrieve large items, if it's in the way. Will put this topic on the agenda for a future meeting.]

Discussed bulk waste a bit, but will continue the conversation at the next meeting. Lydia will talk to Rich about picking some dates for the collection. We would encourage "free to a good home" offers.

Set the next meeting times/dates/agendas:

July 30, 10am

Agenda will include:

BULK TRASH

LED LIGHT FOLLOW-UP – recommended placement. David needs our feedback by mid-August.

OUTREACH TO BUSINESS – and possible fundraiser/s for bins and outreach

Laura motioned to adjourn; Lydia seconded and all were in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:35am.