



H·R·R·A
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Regional Recycling Task Force Meeting Thursday, May 3, 2007

Minutes

The first meeting of the Regional Recycling Task Force was called to order on Thursday, May 3, 2007, 10:30 a.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room at the Brookfield Town Hall. In attendance were:

Bill Gorman	Asst. Recycling Coordinator	Redding
Ken Larkin	Head Custodian Redding Schools	Redding
Pam Brown	Asst. to Operations/HR Director	Brookfield
P.J. Zguzenski	H.S. Science Teacher	Brookfield
Ron Oliveri	Selectman	New Fairfield
Ruth Byrnes	Asst. to the First Selectman	Sherman
Ted Cutsumpas	Community Services Coordinator	Danbury
Tom McSherry	Bd. of Ed Facilities Chair	New Milford
Virginia Roebuck	Ridgefield Action Comm. For the Environment	Ridgefield
Wendy Lionetti	Asst. to the First Selectman	Ridgefield
Cheryl Reedy	HRRRA Director	

HRRRA Recycling Education Program

After introductions, C. Reedy gave an overview of HRRRA's new recycling education program and showed samples of the curbside recycling brochure and the advertising campaign for newspapers, magazines/catalogs, cardboard and plastic bottles. She mentioned as well the Planet Protectors recycling program sponsored by HRRRA and the NewsTimes for Earth Day through the Newspaper in Education program. That program reached more than 2,500 students in classrooms across the region during the last week of April.

Task Force Purpose

C. Reedy explained that the Mayors and First Selectmen who make up the HRRRA set a goal to have each of their municipalities set the example and lead the way on recycling. The HRRRA members believe that government should practice what it preaches to residents. With a public recycling education campaign underway, all municipal properties and facilities, including schools, should meet or exceed the requirements of state and local recycling laws. The purpose of the Regional Recycling Task Force is to insure that each municipality meets or exceeds the minimum recycling requirements.

The regional goal for HRRRA is to have every one of its municipal members listed on the State DEP's Recycling Honor Roll. Currently, only the Town of Redding makes that Honor Roll.

Municipal Recycling Checklist Tool

A Municipal Recycling Checklist was developed for municipalities to use to determine current progress in meeting recycling requirements and to set goals for improving recycling in all town/city/school buildings and facilities. Task Force members were urged to ask local department heads to complete the sections of the checklist relevant for their departments. For the next meeting, Task Force members will try to have the checklist of current practices in their municipality filled out as a starting benchmark and to identify at least five goals from the checklist for their municipality to accomplish during the next year.

Municipal Updates

Each Task Force member spoke about the starting point of their municipality and the challenges they thought they would face in increasing recycling.

R. Byrnes said that **Sherman** had a long way to go, but that paper recycling has been started at Town Hall. She is also looking to start some type of recycling at community playing fields.

P.J. Zguzenski said that he is the advisor for the Roots and Shoots club at **Brookfield** High School. He started recycling in the High School but finds that custodians are a big impediment to successful recycling because they often mix separated recyclables with garbage as they collect from each room. Home Depot donated boxes to the school to use to collect the recyclables. Staff complains that the recyclables attract fruit flies. The biggest challenge will be to find the money necessary to improve recycling. The biggest resource will be the kids. P. Brown said that she started a recycling program in Brookfield three months ago. She can easily make changes in Town Hall. The biggest challenge will be the disillusionment of residents and the lack of cooperation from haulers. Many residents feel recycling is not worth the effort because the haulers just mix recyclables with garbage when they collect. First Selectman Murphy is behind the effort to improve recycling.

K. Larkin said that recycling in the **Redding** elementary and middle school is pretty good and that the custodial staff monitors and supports the program. B. Gorman noted that the Redding Recycling Center has been in operation for many years, has lots of community support, and is proud of its membership on the State Recycling Honor Roll. He offered to help other communities in any way he could and also offered to show Task Force members around the Redding Recycling Center.

T. McSherry said that the **New Milford** schools were in very good shape with recycling. He noted that many small businesses in town don't recycle because of the extra expense and agreed that a major challenge is finding money for recycling programs. People don't want to pay extra for recycling, and then they litter when recycling is not available.

T. Cutsumpas said that City Hall in **Danbury** does a good job recycling but could do better. He will have to check on what is going on in other City facilities. The Mayor is committed to leading by example. Recycling should be voluntary, not mandatory.

R. Oliveri said that space for recycling containers will be an issue in the **New Fairfield** Town Hall. He agreed that funding is a critical issue. He felt improved recycling in town facilities would require a town employee to coordinate the program and check on compliance. That employee should report on progress periodically to the Selectmen and the Board of Education. He

suggested that HRRRA prepare a recycling video for the region that could be shown on the local educational access cable TV station in each community.

W. Lionetti said she started a recycling program in the **Ridgefield** Town Hall six months ago. The program has great support from the First Selectman, who started the Ridgefield Action Committee for the Environment (RACE) with local volunteers to look at all sustainability issues. The volunteers have helped improved the recycling program enormously. Hudson Baler, who runs the town's recycling center, provided recycling containers for town facilities. The next step in Ridgefield is to provide for recycling at outdoor venues like concerts in the park. Clear containers in public venues help prevent contamination of the recyclables. Recycling is really a matter of education and attitude. When recycling is the expected norm and opportunities for recycling are provided, the public will voluntarily comply. It doesn't have to cost a lot of money. Chicken wire recycling bins, for example, can be put next to garbage cans on the streets. V. Roebuck, a volunteer with RACE, noted that Hudson Baylor is picking up recyclables from town buildings at no charge and has all Ridgefield schools starting on a recycling program. RACE has sponsored forums in town and the Girl Scouts are selling composting containers to help remove food waste and other organics from the waste stream.

Meeting Dates and Times

C. Reedy asked if there was a better day, time and location for future meetings, perhaps rotating meetings among the various town halls, meeting earlier in the morning or later in the day or at lunch time, etc. Those in attendance said that Thursday mornings at 10:30 a.m. at the Brookfield Town Hall was a fine time to meet once a month. C. Reedy will send e-mail addresses to all Task Force members so that they can network and share ideas between meetings. The group expressed an interest in touring the regional recycling intermediate processing center, Recycling Technologies, Inc., at 307 White Street in Danbury so they could observe first hand what residents recycle at curbside, what happens to the recyclables after delivery to RTI, and the types of contamination that RTI employees have to deal with. C. Reedy will try to set up a tour of RTI for the next Task Force meeting and will advise members by e-mail of the date and time.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.