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Regional Recycling Task Force Meeting Thursday, July 5, 2007

Minutes

The Regional Recycling Task Force (RRTF) convened on Thursday, July 5, 2007, 10:35 a.m. at the Brookfield Town Hall. Task Force members in attendance were:

Pam Brown, Brookfield	Ron Oliveri, New Fairfield
Ruth Byrnes, Sherman	Ted Cutsumpas, Danbury
Wendy Lionetti, Ridgefield	Virginia Roebuck, Ridgefield
Tom McSherry, New Milford	Arlene Miles, Newtown
Tom Newsome, Redding	Phil Ross, New Fairfield
Cheryl Reedy, HRRRA	

Also attending was Lynn Waller, from the public. The Task Force welcomed Phil Ross, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds for the New Fairfield Board of Education as a new member.

Minutes

Motion by T. Cutsumpas, second by P. Brown to approve the minutes of the May 3 and June 6 meetings as presented. **Vote:** All in favor.

September Meeting

The September RRTF meeting will be held at Brookfield High School and will include a walk through waste audit of the school followed by a recycling workshop, all conducted by the Northeast Recycling Council ([NERC](http://www.nerc.org)). Attendees will receive a recycling toolkit from NERC. This program is being shared with the RRTF by the Town of Sherman which was awarded technical recycling assistance through NERC and DEP.

Municipal Recycling Checklist Progress

- Ridgefield – W. Lionetti reported that the BOE is not yet involved and the task is pretty daunting. Nevertheless, the town is doing a lot of the items on the checklist already. She is still pursuing a model for a municipal recycling policy for the employee handbook. CCM had nothing to share from other towns in CT, so Wendy is working on developing a policy. Park and Rec is already complying with most of the checklist items. The Town will be working with the Welcome Wagon to get recycling information out to new residents.
- Brookfield – P. Brown reported that Brookfield is in pretty good shape. She was able to get an article on recycling into the Pennysaver and Brookfield Journal under the First Selectman's byline. The schools and the PTO are doing a great job. She is working to put out more bins. Park and Rec is trying to find a way to do recycling at the town's playing fields, parks and beaches. The town already has a good environmentally preferable purchasing plan. The

First Selectman has asked Pam to develop a recycling website for the town. She also wants to sign up for the EPA [WasteWise](#) program.

- Danbury – T. Cutsumpas noted that unlike the other towns, Danbury has 1000 employees and it's a little sobering about how to bring recycling compliance into such a large organization. The employees, however, want to recycle. They just need a leader to show them how, and Ted is willing to show that leadership. He will be starting with the Senior Center and City Hall in July. One challenge is to work with the contracted cleaning company that does the janitorial work at City Hall and the public works department that picks up trash from City buildings.
- Redding – T. Newsome pointed out that Redding has been on the [DEP Municipal Recycling Honor Roll](#) for several years, the only community in the region to receive such an honor. Redding, he said, already does everything on the municipal checklist and more, although he has a few problems with the schools because they are independent. Tom has a budget of \$335,000 per year for the transfer/recycling station and brings in revenue of \$170,000 per year. He has nine employees, three full time and 6 part time. He is a department head as well as the Town's recycling coordinator so that gives him extra leverage with other department heads with whom he can speak as an equal. 40% of the tonnage collected at the transfer station is recycling. He brought several give aways such as mouse pads, banks made from recycled money, etc. to show ways in which the Town promotes recycling.
- New Milford – T. McSherry reported that the New Milford schools have a really good recycling program, better than the rest of the Town. Even so, he is looking to expand the school's program to include playing fields. Each school has its own program, and with over 600 employees it is a big operation. He thinks it would be a good idea and more effective to have a town employee coordinate recycling throughout town facilities.
- Newtown – A. Miles said that Newtown has been a little slow to comply with the items on the municipal checklist. She ordered new bins and containers for town offices but had to encourage the public works employees to keep recyclables separate when they collected the trash. She is working with the schools, doing presentations, and working with Park and Rec.
- New Fairfield – P. Ross reported that the New Fairfield schools had been at recycling for quite awhile, although interest has been up and down over the years. In September there was an up tick in interest and he spent about \$3,000 on professional looking recycling containers for cardboard, bottles & cans, etc. His view is that professional recycling containers get better results than cardboard boxes or other makeshift containers. The elementary schools do better than the High School. Phil is able to make the case for recycling at meetings of the school's Administrative Cabinet and the Superintendent supports the effort. The school is recycling its used electronics through the Town Drop Off Center and WeRecycle!. Phil noted that recycling costs money and it is a task that never ends but must be continually reinforced.
- Sherman – R. Byrnes happily reported that Sherman schools were doing so much more than she thought they were. The school's hauler is providing them with bins. She has been trying to get donations to purchase containers for recycling on the athletic fields. Even made a plea in a letter to the editor in the local paper, but had no response. Hudson Valley Preservation has offered to help. Otherwise, Ruth has no money and no volunteers. She went to visit New Milford Farms to see their composting operation. They offered to come speak to the Task Force or to give a tour.
- New Fairfield – R. Oliveri had to leave the meeting early due to a family emergency, but left a written report. He distributed the checklist to town departments and did a quick survey of what was being done and what was not. He found that the recycling message was not consistently disseminated to employees within the same department or across departments.

Human resources, for example, said that it disseminated the town's recycling policy to all employees, but employees in other departments indicated that was not the case. Ron suggests that the task force work on a clear message and procedure for delivering it to current and new employees, an education access TV three-minute promo and mailer to inform the community at large, and develop a procedure to monitor and measure performance.

Issues From Members

- C. Reedy encouraged members to check their town websites and insure that recycling was prominently featured on the website and that there was a link to HRRRA for additional information. The HRRRA website links to all municipal sites that have recycling information (all except New Fairfield).
- There was discussion about disseminating recycling information to the public at large by mailing with local tax bills. C. Reedy noted that the majority of tax bills in most communities go to banks and mortgage companies so that might not be the best use of resources. T. Newsome suggested mailing recycling information with Park and Recreation flyers that get sent to all residents in some towns.
- Several members asked what types of recycling containers work best at playing fields and parks. C. Reedy's opinion was that recycling containers in public, outdoor venues should be see through to take advantage of peer pressure to encourage more recycling and prevent contamination of the recyclables with garbage. She will forward information from the web on two products that have had good results at outdoor venues, [Clear Stream](#) and [Cannables](#). (See [more recycling containers](#).)
- R. Byrne asked if there was a simple piece on the recycling law that she could use with department heads that were reluctant to get with the recycling program. ([From DEP website](#).)
- T. Newsome suggested that each town should establish a goal for the percent of recycling it wants to achieve and then measure progress toward the goal.
- There was some discussion about measuring tonnage from all recycling done in a town to include in the annual DEP municipal reports. Tonnage that may not be captured on the reports now include grocery store cardboard, shredded documents, Post Office mixed paper recycling, etc.
- C. Reedy met with Dennis DiPinto, Brookfield Park and Rec Director, to learn about his plans to start recycling at Brookfield's playing fields, parks, beaches, etc. He asked if other towns would be interested in working on a joint bid for outdoor recycling containers and/or a joint RFP for a company to provide the containers and pick up trash and recyclables at all municipal outdoor recreation sites in the region. Task Force members were asked to discuss this with their local Park and Rec Director and come back to the next meeting with an expression of interest or lack thereof.
- V. Roebuck asked how to deal with haulers who mix recyclables with garbage and reported that numerous residents in Ridgefield have observed such behavior by Country Disposal. C. Reedy said customers should first call their hauling company and try to work it out directly. If that doesn't work, the hauler can be reported to HRRRA with name, date, time, location, etc. and HRRRA will take action against a hauler if the complaint warrants.
- The meeting was adjourned without dissent at 12:15 p.m.

The next meeting of the Regional Recycling Task Force will be held on Thursday, August 2, 2007, 10:30 a.m. in the second floor conference room at the Brookfield Town Hall.