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**Regional Recycling Task Force
Thursday, October 11, 2007. 10:30 a.m.
Brookfield Town Hall**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. and new members Teri Yonsky and Bob Germinaro from the Bethel Public Schools, Lisa Morelli from the Brookfield Public Schools, Chris Goodrich from the Boy Scouts and Habitat for Humanity, Dave Seeger from The Sherman School, and Dorina Leslie and Dawn DaCosta, Brookfield school parents, were welcomed. Also attending were Tom McSherry, New Milford BOE, Arlene Miles, Town of Newtown, Pam Brown, Town of Brookfield, Ruth Byrnes, Town of Sherman, Virginia Roebuck, Town of Ridgefield, Suzanne Von Holt, Town of New Milford, Ted Cutsumpas, City of Danbury, and Cheryl Reedy, HRRRA.

Motion by T. McSherry, second by S. Von Holt, to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2007 meeting as presented. **Vote:** All in favor.

Sept. 6 NERC Recycling Workshop

Members were in general agreement that the NERC workshop in Sherman was very good, worth their while to attend, and that future workshops would be helpful. Brookfield attendees made a presentation on school recycling at the Principals' meeting based on all they learned in Sherman. There was concern expressed from several school representatives about the custodial staff being the weak link in the recycling chain. B. Germinaro suggested that custodial staff be made part of the recycling team and praised for their efforts. Discussion followed about training for custodial staff and how encourage participation in recycling, e.g. providing custodians with an Ask Me About Recycling pin, so they are seen as information resources for students and staff on recycling.

School Recycling Competition

The general consensus of the Task Force was that recycling was too new and too fragile in some of the schools in the region to get into an inter-district competition at this point. There were concerns about giving prizes to kids for something that should be internalized, habitual behavior. P. Brown suggested that each school set its own recycling goal and measure its own progress rather than compete with other schools.

There was agreement that the Task Force should sponsor a recycling poster contest for all grade levels in all regional schools for Earth Day 2008. A winner for each grade level could be chosen and the winners' posters printed on a calendar for distribution to all municipalities and schools in the HRRRA service area. Prizes could be provided by HRRRA and the Mayors and First Selectmen could award the prizes in a public ceremony at the schools. C. Reedy will do a one-page draft of the contest outline for consideration and revision by Task Force members at the next meeting.

Future Meeting Plans

- Nov. meeting – Task Force members were not entirely smitten with the idea of collecting food waste from school cafeterias for composting. There were concerns about odors, rodents, cost, personnel, and the “ick” factor. Members suggested learning more about food waste composting during the next year rather than jumping right in to such a new project. The first step would be to invite Myron Hirschman from New Milford Farms to speak to the group about how food waste collection and composting works and how their concerns would be addressed in any potential program.
- Dec. meeting – In order to achieve the Task Force’s primary purpose, C. Reedy asked each municipality and school system to bring to the Dec. meeting three concrete, measurable recycling improvements from the Municipal Recycling Checklist or from their own experience that each will make their 2008 goals.

Report to HRRRA in January 2008

The HRRRA members would like to hear a report from the Task Force at their January 18, 2008 meeting. The report would include the items that the Task Force has undertaken to date along with the goals set by each municipality and school district for 2008. C. Reedy asked for two volunteers from the group to make the presentation to HRRRA.

Issues from Members

- C. Goodrich introduced the program he is trying to get started in all HRRRA communities in which the Boy Scouts will collect deposit bottles and cans and use the funds for building a Habitat for Humanity house in the region. He can provide cardboard recycling bins to any schools or local transfer stations that would like to participate.
- V. Roebuck noted that Ridgefield community and business leaders are meeting for a one day retreat on November 2nd on sustainability. The retreat will be facilitated by Brendan Hanrahan, Director of CT Earth Network.
- V. Roebuck provided information on an Environmentally Preferable Products Vendor Fair and Conference to be held in Worcester, MA on Tuesday, October 30, 2007.
- C. Reedy noted that many school and municipal waste disposal contracts are written so that the disposal cost savings from recycling flows to the hauler, not the municipality. She suggested it might be useful to devote a future meeting to discussion of contracts with town finance directors, purchasing agents and school business managers so that towns and schools got the benefit of the savings from recycling and/or waste reduction.
- C. Reedy passed out information on a grant available for three types of recycling bins from the National Recycling Coalition and Coca Cola. The three bin types are general utility, outdoor venue (for athletic fields, parks, beaches, special events), and prestige (for municipal building lobbies). HRRRA will submit a grant application for any HRRRA municipality that sends the number of each bin type requested to C. Reedy by Oct. 19th.

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.