

Solid Waste and Recycling advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday November 9, 2022
In-Person Meeting 124 Orchard St., Watertown

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 5:33pm

Present: (In Person): Russ Arico, Eileen Ryan, Judy Fallows, Eileen Zubrowski, Alexandra Somers Lahr, Anya Pforzheimer, Leslie Evans, Guest via zoom: Tom Watkins, DPW Admin&Finance

Previous Minutes: Russ motioned to accept the minutes as written; Eileen R seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Review of the group norms - Alex

Summary of 5th grade compost presentations - Judy

Composting is starting in school cafeterias on a rolling basis, starting with elementary schools. 5th graders have had compost studies in their curriculum since 2016, so it makes sense that 5th graders are compost ambassadors of the school. 5th graders will learn to sort out compostable materials from their lunches then they will teach younger students

- Step 1 - all 5th grade classes had a presentation and discussion of how compost works, how to compost, what to compost, and how disposing of waste from lunches will be different in the cafeteria going forward. Black Earth bins are introduced.
- Step 2: Starting at Lowell West, our team (Anya, Judy and Elizabeth) showed up during 5th grade lunch week of 10/31 to help them get started
 - On our first visit, students were at different levels of being able to sort their trash correctly
 - Team members returned to 5th grade lunch to go over the sorting process the next day and twice after that, seeing much improvement with practice
- In the following weeks we plan to visit 5th grade lunches at Hosmer and then Cunniff, and will monitor going forward, working with teachers on reminders as well

There are two components to school composting programs: back of house (kitchen composting) and front of house (cafeteria composting)

- Anya is working on getting solid buy-in for kitchen and custodial staff participation. Sept 1 a state mandate took effect, WPS is actually ahead of many towns in getting school food waste composting underway, but as with the students, it's going to take practice, feedback and probably some adjustments to get it implemented smoothly and efficiently

DPW updates

- a. Bulk collection changes and how transition is going

Postcard went out last week, mattresses are going okay, working with Zoning about tenants and move outs, have to find property owners and fining them to pay for removal, fines are \$300 per day if landlords

let stuff sit there. Sometimes people leave things out hoping that someone will pick it up - curb alerts or "Front porch", page on recycling "Donate don't Dispose"

b. 10/15 Recycle event

- Collected 50 dehumidifiers saving residents the fee and they got \$30 back as well, so that was popular. Shout out to the guys at the Recycle Center who have been helpful - Gabe, Mike, and others.

Library Event on Composting - will be virtual on Tuesday 11/29 7:00pm

Program: Black Earth representatives will speak about why we compost, what is composting, what do facilities look like, how it works - lots of time for Q&A. Anya is also on the panel.

Delegation of roles for SWARC member participation in 11/29 event:

- Poster with QR, get this into parent newsletters, kids could add information to share with their parents - Judy will reach out on that.
- Put posters in shops - Eileen Z volunteered to help with this
- Write to city councilors with info on this event so they can share in their newsletters and with constituents
- Alex will follow up with a gentle nudge to folks to get folks to follow through on commitments

Discussion of committee letter to public about recycling programs

Collection of ideas for initiatives or actions.

- On Monday, Eileen Ryan is talking to Evan at the high school about plastics
 - Ties into curriculum
 - Perhaps ties into trying to strengthen the Environment Club (which fell apart during COVID and due to a faculty person leaving)
 - Looking for a date in the first quarter of the year for a screening of the movie about microplastics and Red Hook, NY, 5th graders
 - Setting it up so that there are activities to go along with the screening but folks can choose what they go to
 - Activities for all ages (families)

Adjourn: 6:28 pm

Next Meeting: December 14, 2022