

Brunswick Recycle & Sustainability Committee Meeting
February 23, 2021.
Meeting via Zoom: 5:00-7:00pm

Members present: Jamie Ecker (chair), Jenn Hicks (vice-chair), Harry Hopcroft, Steve Weems, Stephen Woods, Kay Mann, Chrissy Adamowicz, Dieuwke Zolas.

Staff Present: Jay Astle (Public Works Director), Steve Walker (District 2 Town Council), John Eldridge (Town Manager)

Guests: Michael Heath (resident), Bill Good (resident)

Call to order: by the chair at 5.00pm

Introduction made by all members of the R&S committee.

Introduction and review of the agenda by the chair

Motion: to approve the minutes from January 26, 2021 by Jenn Hicks

Discussion: Corrections to be made and approval to be tabled with corrections to the March, 2021 R&S committee meeting.

Staff Update: Jay Astle

- Town in contact with EcoMaine
- Landfill and fee schedule to be discussed at Public hearing March 1st, 2021
- Town at the beginning of the budget process and request placed for recycling intern for 12 weeks.

Presently at closing of landfill, asphalt shingles no longer will be processed.

Jay went to a meeting about biofuels. The DOT used biofuels over the summer with no problems, no increased maintenance cost. No trial in winter time yet, concerns about very cold temperatures. Jay not sure yet how to take advantage of biofuels? Most municipal buildings are using natural gas.

K. Mann requesting to know if biofuel can be used for the school buses and municipal vehicles? Jay not sure. Defer to School Board.

Presently trying a couple of school buses that use propane.

Reviewed new trash bag inserts, it took 6 months for the new information to be printed, great improvement.

Action: Jay and Harry to continue to update the Brunswick website.

Solid Waste Options: Steve Weems (chair)

The sub-committee is currently in holding pattern and awaiting review by and approval by the Town Council.

No sub-committee meeting this month. Waiting until Town does it work on the provided information.

J. Astle: town is working on it. Casella may need another truck to provide transportation for solid waste and recycle from Brunswick to Ecomaine in Portland.

J. Eldridge: proposal from EcoMaine received yesterday. Casella provided cost estimate and timing to have solid waste taken from Brunswick to EcoMaine. Information to be reviewed and meeting to make decision will be July 1st,2021. Town Council aware EcoMaine provides education and school grants.

Action: Town Council to review the R&S committee's recommendations later in March or early April.

Organics Recycling: Chrissy Adamowicz

Continue to use 3 prong approach to divert organics from the solid waste.

Looking for funding and possible grant application, deadline need and the grant application needs approval by the Town Council.

Funding is needed for:

- providing home composting equipment
- more drop-off places in town, preferable 2 or 3 more.
- funds for residents for organic pick-up at curb-site.
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Jay Astle: Agro-cycle charges a monthly fee per container, not weight. Currently drop-off has leveled.

Action: continue to work on grant option for funding.

Public Education: Harry Hopcroft (chair)

Stephen Woods has been in contact with Ralph Tucker to encourage the state of Maine through legislative action to foster additional businesses along Kevin Roche's model for waste processing. Reduce import of trash from out of state to the Juniper landfill.

Some Facebook posting on Support Brunswick have been positive. Poppy Arford (House district 49 representative) has posted copies on her FB page of The Recycle Bin column, written by Harry Hopcroft every Tuesday.

- Brunswick Senior College students interested in starting an informal association to exchange ideas to get the word and education out to residents. How to recycle more?
- The need for a Bowdoin student to join the R&S committee, especially for the Organics sub-committee and the Public Education Subcommittee to work closely with Bowdoin college goals to reduce organic waste from entering the solid waste.
- The intern to be paid from grant money or from saved recycling money?

K. Mann: Has been in touch with Hazel Onsrud who is the adult programming librarian at the Curtis library. She is very willing to work with the education sub-committee to help educate about recycling and sustainability. The earliest this can be done is the fall of 2021.

Action: The Town of Brunswick has a website. John Eldridge explained the website is used for only town matters and concerns about opening it to other causes. Harry Hopcroft to follow-up with the Town about possibly using the website for further recycling and sustainability education and or information.

Continue to post on FB, Support Brunswick, Poppy Arford and The Recycle Bin in the Times Record.

Solar Energy: Steve Weems (chair)

Steve met with the Brunswick school superintendent and key people. School system is interested in solar energy. The solar sub-committee is willing to do real work to help with providing solar energy to the school system.

Action: Meeting Febr. 24th, 2021 between Steve Weems, Kay Mann, Sally Costello and John Eldridge

Street lighting committee: Dieuwke Zolas (liaison)

At the meeting 2/18/21 the Town of Brunswick Street lighting policy was reviewed and discussed. Some changes to be made to the policy to be reviewed and approved at the next meet March 18th, 2021.

Concerns about glare and sky glow from the new LED lights was discussed, especially with an older population in the town of Brunswick. It would be very expensive if the wrong LED lights are installed.

Action : Town staff to check with other towns before the next meeting that have implemented LED lights to see what works to minimize glare and sky glow.

Sustainability Planning for Brunswick: open discussion

J. Ecker provided websites to global, state and local climate initiatives. Jonathan Foley PhD provided a positive review on the global side and what can and needs to be done soon. Hannah Pingree's overview "Maine won't wait" and a power point overview of Portland and S. Portland: "One climate future".

Discussion: S. Wood noted the collaboration between Portland and S. Portland and should Brunswick join with some surrounding towns?

S. Walker stated, regionalization has been worked on in the past and looked at for many years, i.e. Bath, Brunswick, Harpswell.

The discussion was about the need for the town of Brunswick to have their own Sustainable Coordinator to help with all the planning and proposals? The R&S committee and sub-committees will be able to work closely with this person and it would all be organized in one office.

Concerns by J. Eldridge for the funding for this position. With COVID Brunswick's revenue is down, current big projects are the landfill closure, building of the fire station and the work on the downtown side scape.

The town staff is stretched at this point and may not always be available to help with the climate proposals.

The R&S committee is based on volunteers and S. Wood suggested to combine the job description sustainability coordinator and grant writer.

The position of a recycle intern at the Public Works is for 12 weeks if approved in the next budget, can this be extended?

Action: J. Hicks, J. Ecker, C. Adamowicz and S. Walker to meet with Alex Anesko, who was chair of the R&S committee in 2010 and did a GHG inventory for the Town of Brunswick at that time.

Action: J. Ecker to follow up on the draft of a written memo for committee review and comments prior to sending memo to the Town Council with the 2021 goals for the R&S committee. Does the town council agree with the plans?

Can we determine our savings to pay for the sustainability position? What funds are coming back with our planned actions?

J. Eldridge to try to get feedback from the town council about the most important sustainability needs for the town in 2021.

Guiding principles were provided to the Town Council April 2020:

1. Short-term Solid Waste Management transition plan (1-3 years)
2. Public education
3. Public policy
4. Organics management
5. Long-term Solid Waste Management Plan (beyond 3 years)

Other business announcements:

H. Hopcroft attended the SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) meeting. Lots of statistics were discussed and reviewed about municipal waste. Discussion about closing the loophole for out of state trash at the Juniper landfill. C. Adamowicz stated that her organization (NRCM) follows the legislation closely.

J. Ecker went to a meeting where CA, VT, MA and NJ discussed diverting organics from solid waste with MA having a 6% drop in organics in the solid waste from 26% to 20%.

C. Adamowicz shared, EcoMaine has an educational program to teach people to become Master Recyclers, to be able to teach other residents in town. The person does not have to live in a town that is affiliated with Ecomaine, it is open to anybody.

Public Comments: None

Meeting Adjourned: motion by D. Zolas, 2nd by K.Mann and meeting ended 6.59pm.

