Transfer Station Committee Hybrid

July 20, 2021

Present at Town Hall: Julie Seely, Nancy Strand, Barry Zitser, Chris Jensen

Public on zoom: Margaret Gale

**Just Be Greener Newsletter**

Nancy remarked that the newsletter sub-committee went through four different revisions of the next issue and then it was sent to Katherine Darges for the final edition. Nancy praised Katherine’s last edits as not just grammatical but with great ideas on making the wording more user friendly. The final version was sent out this morning to all committee members. The bulk of the content was submitted by Barry. There was some discussion on why onions were not recommended for compost piles. Apparently, there were deemed too acidic. But there was agreement that many of us do compost onion scraps. The newsletter is meant to get people to try composting and not such much micro-managing the process. Barry motioned to accept the last draft as the final version and approve it for publication. Nancy seconded. All in favor.

Barry suggested next issue to focus on textile / fiber recycling. TSC has been very proactive on this issue and the Select Board has been very receptive. Barry stated 85% of old clothes goes into landfills. Textile recycling gives people an opportunity to start practicing recycle / reuse / repurpose. All agreed to this topic for the next issue.

**Public Input**

Margaret Gale suggested we talk about the 5 R’s in the next newsletter: Refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle. It was felt that these are a general theme for all newsletter issues. She also suggested we ask the public for their tips and tricks, and it was noted that we did ask for this in the 1st three issues with no response.

Margaret wanted to note the incredible public response in opposition to the Dalton landfill hearing. Julie did attend that meeting. She stated it was even more important that we encourage reducing now since we don’t know what will be in place come 2026. There were over 100 people protesting in front. There were 55-60 people who spoke, most opposed. The major issue seems to be taking in out of state waste. Apparently most, if not all, Massachusetts landfills are full which is why so much waste is going to NH from Mass.

She also noted that NH DES has had major staff changes in the past month.

A special thank you to Bethlehem residents for passing the warrant article that puts more funding into the waste management capital fund.

**Landfill SWAP Shop**

Julie had reached out to Kevin Roy and others who work at the landfill to see what the plans were for the SWAP shop, which has been closed since COVID started, with no definitive answer. She does not believe it was part of the host community agreement so they may not have any obligation to reopen. However, they included it as part of their public benefit statement. There was discussion about the importance of having this resource, perhaps at our future transfer station, manned by volunteers. It would be good to seek clarification from Casella about their reopening plans. Barry volunteered to send an email to Mr. Roy to learn more.

**Update on pending administrative and judicial appeals concerning the landfill expansion**

Barry checked the NH portal this afternoon. There was nothing on the appeal of the NCES landfill expansion beyond the June 15th decision to deny relief. In Merrimack, Barry saw a court order dated July 13th, but he could not determine if that was in reference to the June 30th motion for reconsideration. He will continue to check on what the court order is.

The major proceeding that seems to be going on is the Waste Management Council appeal that was brought by the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF). There was a motion to dismiss it on the basis of standing – meaning that the organization and individual members don’t have enough of an interest or possibility of harm to be allowed to appeal. The motion to dismiss was denied and a hearing is scheduled for Sept 16th.

A June 30th deadline was set for any critical motions. On June 30th a new motion to dismiss was filed by NCES to the Waste Management Council saying that as a matter of law this appeal must be dismissed even if the facts that are being alleged are true. One of the grounds of the motion is that CLF raised and lost certain issues during its previous appeal of the Turnkey landfill expansion and is estopped from re-litigating these issues. A second ground is the claim that CLF has misinterpreted the meaning of certain statutes. Barry will continue to follow the progress on these issues.

**Transfer Station Sub-Committee Report**

Barry reported that he and Stephen continue to discuss various issues but recognize that we have a good deal of time before having an active Transfer Station and further realize how much can be out of date if researched in detail now. However, they continue to look at fairly rough costs estimates for equipment and labor. They are looking at 3 options:

1. A full-scale transfer station at the Rte. 116 site. Recyclables, waste, electronics, etc
2. A garbage collection station but recyclables addressed at other places
3. Something in between 1 and 2 with selected recyclables, some garbage etc.

Barry and Stephen plan on visiting other regional stations for equipment assessments in the future. A report is not expected very soon on these issues.

Chris Jensen raised the point that the town should also be looking to pursue grants that may be available to help us with future funding. Nancy mentioned that a phased approach is likely – opening as Phase I, with plans for Phase II and Phase III or more. Barry stated loans may also be available, along with the possibility of private funding.

**Textile Bins Update**
The Select Board voted in their last meeting to approve the Apparel Unlimited bin at the 142 Maple parking lot location where the walkway goes to the fire station; it will be next to the new food pantry (which is waiting for delivery of the actual building before adding electricity and finishing touches). Nancy related that Joe @ Apparel Unlimited responded to her email update saying that the bins are on order, expected by the end of this month. This means we should expect delivery in the first couple of weeks of August.

**Previous Minutes Approval**
Thanks to Andrea for doing the minutes. Only suggestions for revisions were to make sure Stephen’s name was spelled correctly throughout and changing “worse” to “worst”. With those edits, Barry moved we accept those minutes. Julie seconded. All in favor. Chris abstained. Nancy volunteered to make those minor changes and submit minutes to Nicole.

**New Business**
Nancy visited the Passumpsic Transfer Station recently. Very small, town is only about 300 people. Very bare-bones and yet it works! 40 x 40 covered building with a small corner office. Residents walk in and go through a loop around the building, with huge cardboard boxes for various recyclables. VT has returnables, which the TS attendant said provides “hundreds of dollars” that go into a town fund to help those in need. They also have a “free” area – small amount of stuff but placed under the eaves of the building, outdoors. Impressive because of how simple everything was.

Nancy found a guy from Littleton on FB who would buy any vehicle batteries for $5/each. He takes pickup truck loads to Massachusetts for disposal. He was very amenable to taking a supply of batteries from our future transfer station and understands we’re talking possibly 2026. Nancy stated these are the kinds of things that a future Transfer Station Manager would be researching and just wanted to make the committee aware of it. His name is Connor Pillsbury.

Barry stated it will probably be next week before he makes copies of Just Be Greener Issue 4. He takes them to the Bethlehem Library for distribution.

Barry mentioned that House Bill 413 passed both the House and Senate but isn’t sure if it’s been signed. Julie believes it has been signed. The bill mentions specific organizations that have appointment ability for a 28-person working group, one of which is NRRA. Barry believes that it would be beneficial if one of the members of the Bethlehem Conservation Commission could be appointed to this working group. He believes that much of what New Hampshire needs for environmentally positive waste management will have to enacted through legislation, and that the members of the Bethlehem Conservation Commission have the requisite knowledge and commitment. Barry noted that Connecticut just passed a law that doubled the bottle deposit from 5 to 10 cents, expanded the containers subject to this deposit, and also adopted a 5-cent surcharge on liquor nip bottles.

Nancy mentioned that Maine just passed a bill (Extended Producer Responsibility Law for Packaging) that puts the responsibility of recycling on the companies that produce the packaging.

**Next Meeting**
Barry suggested we don’t need to meet every month – either every other month or every 6 weeks. Committee agreed. Next meeting slated for Tuesday September 14th.

Nancy motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. Barry seconded. All in favor.