

Haddam Sustainability Committee

June 23, 2021

Attendance: Kristin Battistoni, Kristy Benson, Christopher Corsa, Mark Lundgren, Joanne Nesti, Sandra Olsen, Teresa Resnick, Linda Talbott

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Kristin Battistoni. Motion to approve the Agenda was made by Joanne Nesti and seconded by Mark Lundgren. Motion to approve May minutes was made by Joanne Nesti and seconded by Kristy Benson. The order of the agenda was modified by Kristin Battistoni.

Linda Talbott outlined the research she had done regarding a possible food scrap/ food waste diversion project. Food waste accounts for about 20% of the waste stream in CT and we are paying to have it hauled away to landfills. **Blue Earth Compost** based in Hartford collects food waste from several Connecticut towns and brings it to Quantum Biopower in Southington where it is converted into Biogas/and/or compost.

Per Kim O'Rourke, the Recycling Co-ordinator, **Middletown** is using **Blue Earth Compost** for them to remove weekly food waste from their Sanitation District which includes any residential or business along their Main Street. They provide, clean and maintain the bins used. They also have food waste bins drop off at their transfer station, collect it at their Farmers Market and are doing another satellite drop off in the south end of the city.

Essex has initiated a **Blue Earth Compost** project in their town with bins placed at their transfer station. Sue Abbot is the chair of Sustainable Essex and Mike Long is Co-Chair. They started with 4 bins and about 400lbs of food waste. Two weeks ago they were up to 3,000lbs! First Selectman Norm Needleman was supportive of the project and the Town is paying the Blue Earth fees. Essex did apply for a grant from Office of Environmental Protection, but did not receive it. This is phase 1 of their project. In Phase 2, they will contact Essex Elementary school to see what they do with their food waste, to get them on board. Residents would need a countertop compost pail and maybe a larger container in which to put their weekly food waste and then bring it to the transfer station. Essex has a 2 gallon countertop pail with 1 roll of 25 compostable bags to sell to residents for about \$25, and also a larger 6 gallon home storage and transportable bin also with a roll of the compostable bags. They sell rolls of compostable bags for \$2 a roll at the transfer station.

Norm Needleman is also a state senator and is co-chair of the Energy and Technology Committee. According to an article published in the CT Examiner, he expects more anaerobic digesters like Quantum in Southington to come to CT. Material Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) the trash to energy plant based in Hartford is supposed to close June of 2022. This means more garbage will be hauled out of state to other states which will increase costs to area towns who use MIRA.

Abraham Hilding-Salorio is with **Sustainable CT** which is a non-profit housed out of Eastern CT State University's Institute for Sustainable Energy. They provide funding for sustainability related projects like food scrap diversion. Any eligible project can receive up to \$7500 matching grant from them, but the community would have to fund raise the other half. They partner with a crowdfunding platform called Partonicity which provides fundraising coaching and support. DEEP needs to be notified and a permit may be necessary to put bins in the transfer station .

Linda also spoke to Sam King , one of the partners in **Blue Earth Compost(BEC)**

1. We need to establish what our goal would be: example: 100 households to participate. Sam said average household produces about 10lbs food waste a week. 100 households would generate 1000lbs/week and fill 7 bins and cost \$75 a week which would be about \$3900 a year. Essex started with 4 bins, but more and more people started to participate so more bins were added. Blue Earth picks up in Essex every Wednesday and we could be on their route.
2. Blue Earth promotes the program through social media, print material, neighborhood groups to disseminate material. Most towns make the transfer station food bin program free to those residents who are allowed to use the food bins
3. Blue Earth sends the town a monthly report on how the program is going, including the tonnage diverted.

BEC services: Branford, Middletown, Essex, Guilford, Hartford, West Hartford, Canton, Farmington, Manchester, New Britain, Newington, Simsbury, Wethersfield, Windsor, and South Windsor. Middlefield is supposed to start soon. They also service the Adams supermarket chain, Elm City Market, Trinity and Wesleyan, Stanley, Black and Decker, Hartford Marriott and Xfinity Theatre.

Blue Earth can compost items that you cannot do in your backyard. These include meat and bones, dairy, fish and shellfish, breads and cereals besides the usual plant, vegetable and fruit scraps.

Linda passed around the flyer Essex uses to promote this program as well as the items Blue Earth say to compost and those to not.

Linda reported that a recent newspaper article on **Old Saybrook** said they take their food waste to certified and licensed pig farm **Millaras** in Waterford, where the scraps are steam cooked and then fed to their pigs. The article also said First Selectman Carl Fortuna is in talks with Blue Earth to bring that service there also. He estimated the organic trash savings based on their 2019 tonnage would save the town \$42,000 a year in hauling costs.

Chris Corsa, the Assistant Director of Haddam Public Works spoke in support of the Blue Earth compost project. He recently attended a Sustainable CT webinar and received all the same information Linda Talbott reported on. He felt that the town could fund raise and should consider a Sustainable CT grant for this project. Linda reported the 32 gallon bins dimensions : 25.5 in wide, 36 in tall, 19 in long. BEC also has 65 gallon bins. DEEP has a map of our transfer station and if we go ahead with this project that will need to be updated. He will need to relook at the transfer station space to see where bins could be located. He agreed that we could maybe offer the home self contained food scrap pails. He said eventually this program would have to be added to his budget. He agreed that food waste should be taken out of the MSW (municipal solid waste) stream. He estimated about 2600 people in town have transfer station passes. He agreed when MIRA closes our costs will skyrocket as the waste will be trucked to Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, etc.

IN 2020, the transfer station shipped out 1348 ton of MSW. It was suggested we consider if you throw out anything over 3 bags of garbage a week, you pay \$3.00 a bag. Pay as You Go System. Linda and Joanne suggested raising the annual fees to use the transfer station.

He reported last year 2000lbs textiles were recycled and the town earns \$100 a ton on textiles, but the textiles need to be in a paper bag. The single stream recycling fee is embedded in the town MSW fee.

Teresa Resnick reported she was upset that she had to bring her food waste to the transfer station garbage as she had been composting it outside and due to rise in bear population, she didn't wish to do that anymore. She felt having bins at the transfer Station would be great.

Joanne Nesti asked if the waste oil section which was closed when she was there recently was coming back. Chris reported that haulers require the oil be tested (\$200/per) every time a load is taken out. Chris takes a sample and takes it to Manchester for testing to see if any PCB's and other contaminants are in it. So it closes until he gets the report back.

The Essex handout said no transfer station pass was needed there . Chris reported that already there are several people in town who advertise they will come to your house and bring your garbage to our transfer station. So they pay the \$75 fee and charge the resident a fee to do this. He has seen trucks loaded to the hilt coming in and out all day. Linda will look into how Essex handles who has access to their transfer station.

There was discussion regarding recycling. Joanne Nesti felt strongly that workers at the transfer station need to be more diligent in monitoring what people are throwing into the single stream recycling bins. People at the trash plant have to sort through and remove items not cleaned properly or not appropriate. Single stream makes it easier for people to participate in the recycling process but in the end it may not be the best way to be rid of those items, but it is the best solution we have at present. Enforcing the rules at the transfer station was agreed to be important, but Chris felt his workers might be at risk if an aggravated town person became physically abusive. He said Middletown weighs trucks that come in to their transfer station. Maybe we could say a full sized pick up loaded so the bed was level would be charged \$25 a load extra.

Mattresses are recycled by a state subsidized program. However, Chris is wondering why Haddam has seems to have thousands of mattresses go through our transfer station. Some of the mattresses are cleaned and recycled, some shredded, most have the metal springs removed. Bulky waste is hauled out to Essex. Roofing shingles get recycled and are made into road asphalt.

Most everything that is recyclable can go into the single stream except shredded paper and Styrofoam. Chris reported there are stand alone Styrofoam machines for that, but we do not have one.

The committee in general agreed more education on how to properly recycle may be needed. Teresa wants to go into the schools and talk about the textile recycling which does earn money for the town as does the scrap metal. The transfer station web site has handouts on it we can use for the various recycling projects we have going. Sandra Olsen reported that the Trex process for recycling soft plastic was harmful to the environment. Kristin reported we have sent Trex 3 tons of plastic in 3 years and that we now have three benches from Trex for the town. We are close to a fourth. Presently there is only a small shed behind the Town hall that people can bring bagged soft plastic to. Kristin weighs and marks it and volunteers bring it to Stop and Shop to their room where bottles and cans are recycled. They have white containers for soft plastic. She asked if they could resume the soft plastic recycling bin at the transfer station , but Chris reported that is not an option right now. If a volunteer brings the bags to Stop and shop, please email Kristin the weight so the town gets credit with Trex.

Kristin suggested Linda try to see if Blue Earth, Abe Salorio and someone from Essex sustainability come to the next meeting.

Mark Lundgren reported there is a commercial composting operation in Haddam but there was no time left in this meeting to discuss that.

New Business:

Kristy Benson, who is the Higganum Farmer's Market Co-ordinator and also a member of River COG (Council of Government) reported this weeks' Farmers Market is Eco Awareness day and she will help Teresa Resnick who will man the Sustainability Booth connect with other organizations there on Sustainability Projects. Linda Talbott and Kristin Battistoni will help Teresa with putting together handouts /posters for the booth after the meeting is adjourned.

It was suggested we survey some of the townspeople on if they would participate in the Blue Earth project. Teresa will have a survey sheet at the Farmer's Market . Kristy Benson said she could be in the center on Fridays with hand outs and surveys about the Blue Earth project and also about handouts on all the recycling we do here.

Kristin Battistoni reports she will be updating the Sustainability Town web site soon also.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Next meeting 7 pm July 28,2021.

Respectfully submitted
Linda Talbott, Secretary

Addendum: Per Ann Riebold in 2020 2274 transfer station passes were sold. Average is about 2300.