

Haddam Sustainability Committee Meeting

September 28, 2022; 6:30 pm Old Town Hall; 21 Field Park Drive

Attendance: Kristin Battistoni, Pat Hartman, Sarah Neal, Joanne Nesti, John Nork, Mary Nork, Kim Price, Teresa Resnick, Gail Reynolds, Linda Talbott

Kristin Battistoni called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm. Pledge of alliance was said by all.

Motions to approve the agenda and the June meeting minutes were made by Joanne Nesti and seconded by Gail Reynolds and passed unanimously.

Guest speaker Kim O'Rourke, Middletown Recycling Coordinator, was introduced by Joanne Nesti.

Kim's presentation regarding recycling "Where Do We Go From Here?" was very informative. Some highlights:

- CT is in a trash crisis: 87% of CT waste goes to 1 of 5 trash incinerators, but 400,000T goes out of state to landfills
- CT State plan: 60% diversion of waste materials by 2024
- MIRA trash to Energy plant incinerated about 500,000 T /year. It closed in August 2022
- Tipping fees (trash hauling fee) are going up all over the state. Middletown used the Lisbon plant for waste, which the city bought years ago, but now a better economic deal was had to use Murphy Road Trash and Recycling. Haddam will be using the Preston trash to energy plant
- CT has had flat 25-30% recycling rate for decades
- Recycling efforts in towns and cities really need a full time Recycling Coordinator and a team of people to help that person is really required for best impact
- This could be aligned with COG (Council of Governments)
- Most important: make recycling the culture of the government
- Middletown events: paper shredding, composting workshops, Food waste collection(they use Blue Earth Compost), E-Waste collection
- Schools: recycling curriculum, success depends on staff: teachers, custodians, principals
- Repair Café: being held October 16 with support from Rockfall foundation and River COG: Volunteers come and repair or mend broken items so they don't go into the trash. Anyone can attend this, do not have to be a Middletown resident
- Food waste recycling being done at 30 restaurants on Main Street's Sanitation District using Blue Earth Compost; food waste bins are placed on Randolph Road open 24/7 for residents; they bring bins to the Farmer's Market for food waste drop off. Residents all have private trash haulers in Middletown.
- Kim goes to where people are to educate them on recycling: Ball parks, grocery stores, schools, churches, senior center, fairs. Volunteers do go into neighborhoods and check recycle bins left at curb by people. They worked with Wesleyan to make stickers to put on residents bins like "Oops, no plastic bags in single stream recycling". OK to recycle wax coated milk and soup cartons, but not ice cream containers

- Middletown has textile bins at all schools and senior center: 11 bins total
- New glass separation bins recently installed
- Food Waste for residents: Meriden doing a pilot program where every resident gets a large green compostable bag for food scraps; 2 orange bags for trash; Pay as You Throw program.
- Middletown starting a similar 1 year pilot program in the fall. People buy the bags which pays for the tipping fee for the trash and food to go to a sorting station in Wallingford.
- Recycling unit in City Hall bins made by Wesleyan: bags, film, CD's, DVD's. Green Disc can recycle CD's and DVD's. Recork can do corks, but is expensive.
- Fire extinguishers: recycle at Roybal. Extender Producer responsibility EPR
- Middletown resolutions: Plastic bag ban 2019; EPR for packaging 2021: if you want to do business in Middletown producer needs to take responsibility for packaging recycling costs. Legislature in state if passes will require producers to finance the recycling of their packaging if they want to do business in the state. 4 states have passed EPR legislation.
- Wesleyan made a food grade water refill station to use at Middletown events; cost to purchase one commercially made: \$5000
- Coffee Cup Passport Program: grant from Rockfall Foundation: 5 coffee shops: BYO coffee cup; stamp your passport and some places offer discounts
- Reboot Eco: a zero waste refill store located in Middletown and Chester
- CT Product Stewardship Council works with DEEP's CCSMM(Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management)

Business meeting:

Old Business:

- Linda Talbott reported that the food scrap program so far has removed 29,080lbs (14.54 Ton)
- There was a glitch around Labor Day weekend as the Blue Earth driver didn't show up, and then a new driver missed us on the route so the food scrap collection had to be shut down as all 9 bins were filled. We now have 11 bins and Blue Earth is back on track. Food scrap pick up at the Senior Center lunches is going well with Helen Hastings and Linda collecting. There are about 19 starter kits left and plenty of Biobags at the town office building
- Linda canvassed the restaurants, grocery stores, Saybrook at Haddam and Riverhouse to see if there was any interest in starting a food scrap program, but no one seemed interested. Some of the restaurants and grocery stores do donate food scraps to local farms. She plans to meet in November with the RSD 17 superintendent and other personnel relative to starting a food scrap recycling program in the elementary school. Emily Milcent, who teaches at HKHS Environmental Science and Horticulture, and the STEM Curriculum Coordinator, Heather Rigatti, are working with her on this project.
- Trex plastic recycling: Kristin reported we have 2 Trex benches coming to us, one of which will have a plaque honoring Ann Riebold, former Assistant Town Clerk for 30 years, who passed away. It was suggested maybe one bench could be placed at High Meadow and one at The Cove. We have recycled 661 lbs of plastic more recently

- Teresa Resnick reported she will be staying in Haddam and still wants to speak to the superintendent about placing textile bins in the schools and maybe seeing if some students could help her put on a skit to introduce this recycling concept to the schools.

New Business:

- Kristin Battistoni wishes to continue to be the liaison from the committee to the Town government, but wishes to step down as chair of the committee. Linda Talbott nominated Joanne Nesti and John Nork seconded it and she was elected chairperson of the Sustainability Committee.
- Joanne Nesti reported that efforts to improve recycling at the ballfields by placing appropriate signs on the trash and recycling buckets have failed. The signs were ripped off. Linda suggested she contact Emily Milcent to see if some of her students could volunteer time to be at the ball fields to educate people on proper recycling. Kim Price, who spearheaded the recycling at this year's Chester Fair, reported that volunteers had to stand at all the trash and recycle bins to insure compliance. Joanne will get the schedule of sporting events and maybe talk to the coaches so they can educate their athletes too.
- Sarah Neal prepared a DIY safe cleaning products report which was emailed to all prior to this meeting. She noted that the US and Canada do not have to list all the toxic chemicals in products. The environmental working group ewg.org is a great resource to research safe and unsafe products. It was suggested that Sarah write a three part series for HKNow and Haddam Killingworth News on this very important topic as a way to get it out to the general public.
- Kristin Battistoni will act as Treasurer. So far we have spent \$131.70 (to replace Biobags) out of the \$2000 budget we were given for this fiscal year. We have taken in \$4006.95 from the sale of starter kits (beginning December 2021) and Biobags, but most of that was used to pay off the vendors for startup costs for the food scrap program. Blue Earth Costs are absorbed into the Public works budget as if July 1, 2022.
- **It was decided to cancel the November and December meetings as they would have fallen too close to holidays. Instead a special meeting will be held December 7.**
- **The next meeting will be October 26 at 6:30 pm with Sherill Baldwin, DEEP recycling educator as speaker.**
- Teresa Resnick requested we consider moving the meetings off Wednesday nights so she could attend.
- Linda Talbott made a motion to adjourn and Mary Nork seconded it and the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Talbott, Secretary