

Haddam Sustainability Committee Meeting

January 26, 2022

GoToMeeting

Attendance: Kristin Battistoni, Steve Bayley, Bobbi Guercia, Tom Kobylenski, Jeff Lord, Sarah Neal, Joanne Nesti, John Nork, Mary Nork, Gail Reynolds, Linda Talbott

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Kristin Battistoni. The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all. Joanne Nesti made a motion to approve the agenda, asked it to be amended with an e at the end of her first name and Jeff Lord seconded it. Other corrections: Jeff has no e at the end of his last name and Dan Ardila has one l in his last name.

Joanne made a motion to accept the December meeting minutes and Tom Kobylenski seconded it.

Discussion was held regarding adjusting the committee meeting time to help accommodate Gail Reynolds as the 7 pm time conflicts with another town committee she is Chairwoman of. It was decided to have Sustainability Committee meetings be 6:30pm to 8pm on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Joanne Nesti made the motion and Sarah Neal seconded it.

Old Business: Linda Talbott reported on the following:

Food scrap program

- Started with 3 Blue Earth Compost(BEC) bins Dec. 8,2021, now we are up to 5-6 bins
- Poundage removed from MSW first 3 weeks(Dec) : 725 lbs. We get a monthly report from BEC
- Rick and Jessica(Transfer Station workers) are monitoring the bins and are doing a great job
- Chris Corsa needs to order at least 1 extra BEC bin beyond what we fill to avoid overages into a TS bin
- To be on the safe side, Linda has purchased a box of 20 33 gallon compostable bags to line the extra TS bin they have, in case of overages.
- Linda will be away for several weeks and hopefully Bunny, Chris Corsa's assistant, will email her the number of bins filled each week in order to track the program.
- If we get to filling 12 bins, we go to a dumpster
- To review BEC costs: each week for them to come to Haddam: \$30; each bin is a \$5 service fee and \$1/bin to wash the bin. So far BEC costs are \$384
- We have sold 73 starter kits (\$25 ea) and about 39 extra rolls of compostable bags at \$5 ea.
- HRRRA sells us the bins and bags at cost. Each starter kit actually costs us \$14.03, so a \$25 donation nets us \$10.97. Each extra roll of 25 compostable bags actually costs us \$2.34/roll; so net on \$5 donation is \$2.66/roll
- As of 1/26/22: gross taken in :\$2,281.95 and net:\$1,164.55. We have \$260 in straight donations (no starter kit or bag roll involved)

- Kristin and Linda decided to order 50 more starter kits and Bob McGarry agreed to pay for them. Linda picked them up, but they hadn't received the 4 cases of Biobags yet. Thank you in advance to John and Mary Nork who volunteered to drive to Newtown to get them when they come in.
- If we sold all 150 starter kits and all rolls of bags gross: \$4420, overall net would be \$2001.94
- The Sustainable CT Patronicity fundraising platform has been working with Kristin and Linda. We are waiting to hear if they will allow us to upload all the donations we have received so far so they will count toward the fundraising goal of about \$2423 on Haddam's side. If they allow that, Patronicity gets 5% of what is uploaded that we have already raised. If people donate directly to the site, there is an 8% upcharge which they say 80% of people participating tend to pay for. For example: \$25 donation, 8% would add \$2.
- Linda has given the Higganum Market manager the retail costs of ordering cases of 3 gallon Biobags, but isn't sure if he is actually going to go ahead with it. She gave him also BEC contact info regarding if he wants to meet with restaurant owners to see if they can get a food scrap bin program going. (He initiated this idea)
- Garden Club cancelled their in person meeting Jan 12 due to Covid concerns. Linda has given them brochures and additional information on the program which they will email to members.
- Linda has emailed the Burr PTO to see if she can come talk to them but hasn't heard back.
- Committee members should try to pass the word to friends and neighbors. You can email Kristin and she can have someone at the Town office building print up brochures for you. Brochures explain the program. Kits are selling well at the Tax Collector's and First Selectmen's offices .
- Brochures are at the Nutmeg Pharmacy, Higganum Hardware, Red Barn Hardware, Higganum Village Market, River Valley Provisions, Brainerd Library and Town and Country Nurseries. Steve Bayley maintains them when they run out.

Sustainable CT Bronze certification Initiative:

- Kristin needs someone to manage this . In order to achieve bronze, we need to upload sustainable initiatives in 13 categories and get 200 points. In the past Haddam has accomplished some of these like Invasive species clean ups, Brownfields cleanup. You can go to sustainable CT and look at what this is all about. Linda Talbott offered to help out and she also has the name of a Haddam resident who said he did this in Wethersfield and would like to help here. Kristin may write an article to see if there are others in the community who would like to get involved in this. It was suggested maybe high school students could participate for their community service, however , it is questionable if teenagers would have a strong commitment to follow through on this particular project.

Green Book:

- Dan Ardile wasn't able to attend. This will be put on the next meeting's agenda

Solar Initiative:

- Jeff Lord (and Dan Ardile) would like to organize an informational session on Solar Power for Haddam residents and also invite other surrounding communities . Jeff reported that unfortunately there is a lot of inaccurate information out there regarding solar power. A lot has changed in the last few years regarding solar and it is time to update the public. He works at ConnEdison Clean Energy Business. Dan Ardile also works at a solar company and there should be a third reliable company which Jeff can source out . The committee agreed this is a great idea. Discussion was held as to whether it should be a large venue and opened up to residents or just have surrounding towns Sustainability or Energy committees attend. Kristin and Linda will email Jeff town contacts they have.

Community Garden:

- Linda reported on a conversation with Mary Solera regarding the Parmelee Farm Community Garden which started 12-14 years ago with 20 20'x20' plots. That model is where people buy plots and grow produce for their own consumption. They pay \$30/plot and have a contract to supply their own soil amendments, seeds, plants and weed it themselves. When Covid hit, more people decided to put gardens in their own yards and the garden now is reduced to 12 plots.
- The Parmelee Farm group was given some seed money from the Town to get started. Now it is an \$11,000 line item in the Town budget. Deer fencing was placed around the whole plot. If a gardener wanted more fencing in the interior it was up to them to purchase that and put it up. Parmelee group provided wheelbarrows and hoses and may have put in extra wells for water supply. Mowing around the plots is done by the Parmelee farm organization . They also put in an irrigation system using a vendor Gail Reynolds recommended.
- About 8 yrs ago, a group of 9 volunteers started **Shared Harvest Garden at Parmelee Farm**. This model has volunteers grow produce and maintain the garden in order to donate the produce to Food Banks or other needy individuals. The Killingworth Lions Club, Garden club are heavily involved in this. They have received grants also.
- Linda broached the idea of some type of Community Garden to Deb Karpf of the Haddam Garden Club. Deb indicated that she is doubtful the garden club could take on a Community garden or Giving Garden because they already have many gardens in town to maintain as it is.
- The Annex building where Haddam Social Services is, does not have a water source. Jessica Condil, the social worker, has a small garden there and she uses water runoff from the gutters to water that. St Peter Church has a sunny open space, a water supply near that, a shed also near and could possibly be a spot for a Giving Garden. However years ago, they approached Gail Reynolds for advice, but they were not opening the garden to townspeople so she was unable work with them. The land behind HES might be a possibility.
- Steve Bayley reported there is a garden at Burr Elementary School and he will see if he can find out more about that and who is in charge.
- Gail Reynolds is available to advise. A garden requires a lot of weeding, watering and needs a committed volunteer work force to succeed. Kate Wessling, MD was on the Board of the Common Good Garden in Old Saybrook in the past and has offered her services to help with a

Community Garden in Haddam. Kristin may write an article about this also to see if there is Community Support.

Recycling Education at Transfer station: Teresa Resnick was unable to sign on to GoToMeeting so this can be discussed at the next meeting.

Where Does Our Garbage Go? Joanne Nesti reported the following:

- She has contacted MIRA CEO Tom Gaffey and he is willing to come and do a Power Point presentation to our group which may also include the three selectmen and Chris Corsa regarding this topic. He can do a Wednesday but it has to be at 5 pm. Kristin stated we can do a Special meeting at 5 pm for him and the committee agreed to do this in April. Joanne will contact him to set the date and ask him how much time he will need.
- Jeff Lord suggested all committee members send Joanne an email with their questions/concerns regarding this topic and she can forward them to Tom so he is prepared: jnesti81@hotmail.com
- Sarah Neal and Joanne want to know that all the recycling we do doesn't end up in the ocean or in a poorly maintained landfill somewhere.

Social Media accounts:

- Kristin still needs someone to manage Instagram, Facebook and website

Recycle Corner at Town office Building:

- Kristi wants someone to paint a mural on the wall as you enter the Town Office Building to highlight recycling efforts. Someone suggested a tree with recyclables on the branches. Kristin likes the "feed the earth" logo on the food scrap brochures. She contacted the school but hasn't heard back from the art department.
- There is a new Book Library also as you enter the Town offices on the right. It is mostly kids books but adult books are Ok as long as you don't come in with big boxes of books.

TREX:

- As of end of December, we have collected 638lbs and we have enough for another bench from Trex!
- Kristin tries to weigh the bags of plastic that people bring to the shed behind the town offices and volunteers bring it to Stop and Shop. The Norks volunteered to help with this.

New Business:

- Shred Event will be held May 7 9-12. We will need to put flyers around town. Tom Kobylenski agreed to help that day.

Budget:

- Kristin has requested a line item budget of \$2000 for the Sustainability Committee. The Shred It Event costs \$750 a year. The Public works Budget will take over the Food Scrap costs in next year's budget.

Next Meeting:

- Discussion was held as to whether or not to have the February meeting be in person again. Jeff Lord asked if technology could be present at an in person meeting so those who aren't comfortable meeting in person could attend. Kristin will look into that, for now the meeting will be in person.
- Welcome to Bobbi Guercia who signed in to learn more about what the Sustainability Committee does!
- Mary Nork made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Gail Reynolds. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm
- **The next meeting will be Wednesday February 23, 2022 at 6:30 pm at the Old Town Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Talbott, Secretary