

## **Special Meeting Haddam Sustainability Meeting**

April 27, 2022 5 to 7 pm

Old Town Hall 21 Field Park Drive Haddam

**Member Attendance:** Kristin Battistoni, Tom Kobylenski, Jeff Lord, Sarah Neal, Joanne Nesti, Gail Reynolds, Linda Talbott

**Community Attendance:** Patty August, Chris Corsa, Pat Hartman, Helen Hastings

Meeting was called to order by Kristin Battistoni at 5 pm. Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

Motion made by Gail Reynolds and seconded by Joanne Nesti to approve the agenda and was passed.

Motion made by Jeff Lord and seconded by Joanne Nesti to approve the March minutes and was passed.

**Guest speaker Thomas Gaffey, Director of Recycling and Enforcement at MIRA (Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority) was introduced by Joanne Nesti.**

Mr. Gaffey explained the history of waste management in the state of CT beginning with landfills and then the closing of those and moving toward trash to energy plants, one of which is MIRA. The huge Hartford landfill has been capped and now has 4000 solar panels located there.

### **Key Points:**

- MIRA is the only Quasi State agency that does not receive any funding or bonding from the state. The company works with private sector companies and municipalities for trash and recycling management. It is self-sufficient and operates on the fees they charge.
- MIRA processes 3.6 million tons of trash in CT annually
- 1988 mandatory recycling bill was passed
- CT is one of the leaders in the country in dealing with trash energy recovery
- MIRA waste to energy plant creates refuse derived fuel that generates electricity
- It is able to separate out materials that the other trash to energy plants can't do like pulling out bulk materials and metals
- MIRA has cleaner air emissions compared to other plants. MIRA in Hartford and one plant in Canada are the cleanest in North America!
- Trash is reduced by 85% in volume; 15% is ash which is an inert substance that is transported to a landfill.
- The electricity generated by the turbines is sold directly to the grid
- MIRA is non-profit: no tipping fees are charged for recycling, only for trash.
- MIRA has partnered with Murphy Road Recycling, which has upgraded its facility to allow for better culling of contaminants
- All 5 Waste to Energy CT plants are near the end of their useful lives. They are old
- The state did not want to invest the 3 million dollars to upgrade MIRA so it is going to close August 1, 2022. Taxpayers will pay for trash to go to Pennsylvania and Ohio and other states
- Haddam's trash goes to Essex and Essex brings it to MIRA. When MIRA closes, that trash will go to the plant in Preston which has maybe 2 years of active life left.
- 1 million tons of MSW /year right is headed to western and southern states.
- Transporting MSW out of state is expensive: paying truck drivers, fuel costs, travel by rail costs.

- CT assumes this risk when shipping the trash out of state. DEEP has no back up plan other than asking towns to reduce their waste
- The Northeast is in a trash crisis and has been for several years
- Tipping fees for 2023 will probably go to \$111 to \$116/ton. We pay \$105 now.
- Murphy Road Recycling will be state of the art July 1
- MIRA handles 540 Ton/day of recycling
- There are primary sorters at the plant who remove things that shouldn't be there
- Wishful recycling: people put things in single stream that should not be there: he brought examples of things like bowling balls, golf balls, plastic bags, Christmas lights
- Dangerous items they have had to deal with: Hydrochloric acid, saw blades, lithium batteries
- Murphy Road Recycling has done a 20 million dollar upgrade
- He discussed the various recyclable materials such as #1.#2 plastic which are huge money makers
- Glass has been a problem as it gets broken and contaminated with wet paper and other items in the single stream. Housatonic Resources Recovery is piloting a program to separate out glass and it is working well. However, Murphy Road had new processing equipment which will clean up the glass, so it can still remain in single stream. Urban Mining in Shelton will buy it and process it for recycling
- China has bought several paper mills in North America so paper recycling will be done in the US now more so.
- MIRA gets revenue share from Murphy Road
- Saleable recyclables: aluminum, corrugated cardboard, HDPE colored and natural plastics, mixed paper, PET plastic (water bottles),mixed plastic, scrap metal FE and non FE, steel cans

**Conclusions:** CT and Northeast are in a huge solid waste disposal crisis. Aging Waste to Energy plants are closing. Out of state landfill capacity may be unreliable. It is not good for the environment to ship our waste out of state. Food Scrap composting is part of the solution but is only a small fraction of waste. The more people we get to separate out food waste, the greater the impact. Write to your state senators and representatives about this issue. State Senator Norm Needleman has a bill going through to create a task force to look at this issue.

Educating the community on how to recycle properly is key to improve the quality of recyclables. Sherrill Baldwin from DEEP is the only person doing it and may be retiring soon.

Haddam's tipping fees may go up to \$111 to \$116/Ton for trash. Recycling tipping fee will remain at 0. When Preston's plant has to shut down, Haddam will have to find another solution. Assistant Public Works Director Chris Corsa said he has heard numbers like \$145 to \$160 a ton if we are shipping out of state.

Some common items we recycle were brought to this meeting and Mr. Gaffey addressed those. Tom Kobylenski asked about the fund created to recycle the nips bottles we see littered everywhere. Sarah Neal commented that although plastics are highly lucrative for recycling, they are getting into our oceans, food and our bodies. Tom Gaffey agreed that at the federal level something needs to be done regarding packaging in the large companies that produce all the plastic containers we use.

A motion to adjourn by Jeff Lord and seconded by Sarah Neal and the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm. The next meeting is at 6:30 pm on May 25, 2022. Respectfully submitted: Linda Talbott