

New London Waste Reduction Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 7, 2023

Call to order: Chairman Jerry Coogan called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Liz Meller, Jerry Coogan, Gerry Gold, Maureen Prohl, Chris McKee.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joy Kubit

OTHERS PRESENT: Bill Helm, Selectman; Nancy Barthol, DPW Administrative Assistant; Bob Harrington, DPW Director; John Ellis, resident; Dryden Eliason, student Colby Sawyer College; Janet Moore, Andover, NH, Alternative Energy Committee.

MEETING MINUTES: Minutes for meeting of October 26, 2023, unanimously approved.

MEETING GUESTS: John Ellis, a New London resident working as a volunteer with Nick Baer, a professor of environmental sciences at Colby-Sawyer College introduced Dryden Eliason, a junior at CSC. Dryden is developing a project to teach younger students about sustainability, using composting as a method of involving young adults to take positive actions to help preserve our planet as a healthy environment. Dryden has studied the CSC dining hall waste sorting process and found that students currently lack discipline when disposing of food and paper waste with the result being contamination of recyclable food scraps and paper. The Committee encouraged Dryden to learn more about the CHICKS Working Group (Climate and Health Initiative for Caregivers & Kids) started this year at CSC's WindyHill early childhood laboratory pre-school. SEE: <https://colby-sawyer.edu/windyhill>

Janet Moore of Andover noted that recycling collection of glass, aluminum and other metals continues successfully in many towns but that recycling of plastics is mostly "lost."

PROJECTS:

Food waste composting project: Liz Meller reported that 146 buckets for food scraps have been distributed of the total 160 authorized. Maureen reported that as of 11/14/23 a total of 12.9 tons of food scraps have been collected. At the Transfer Station 3 of the 4 food waste bins provided by Renewal Compost are being used.

Bill Helm reported the Select Boards working with a consultant to assess future use of the "stump dump" and its 7.5 acres. Residents already bring lawn and yard trimmings there for composting. The site is being assessed for hazardous wastes probably buried there years long ago and probably better left undisturbed. The site is also being assessed as a location for solar energy for the Town. As at the Transfer Station, future use of the stump dum must factor related costs for staffing, equipment and best uses.

Jerry Coogan reported that the CET project has made progress interviewing area restaurants about their management of food wastes. SEE: Center for EcoTechnology: <https://wastedfood.cetonline.org/states/new-hampshire/>.

Polystyrene Collection: Jerry Coogan said there are many requests for follow-up on the successful Oct 28th foam collection event. Joy Kubit had suggested the week of Earth Day in April 2024. The budget for future foam collections will be included in the DPW budget.

Paper recycling: Jerry Coogan viewed the changes in pricing and transportation that have made paper recycling uneconomic for the Town.

Regional Waste Diversion Projects: Maureen suggested that the Committee look into regional collection of food wastes, noting that Sutton collects food scraps at their transfer station and composts on site. She thought cooperation among area towns could broaden its appeal and reduce costs by keeping compost and processing locally and making composted soils available to local residents. She suggested talking with NH Dept of Environmental Services (DES) for funding a project for regional food waste and other waste reduction. Maureen also suggested the cost of balers for paper and other waste could be shared by neighboring towns to make it economical. Working with NRRA might explore funding for multi-town projects. Maureen will talk with NH DES Waste Management office. Nancy Barthol observed that the benefit of working with NRRA is their ability to develop regional marketing relationships and find best pricing. Town participation is optional. Bob Harrington noted that New London has often found best prices and be negotiated closer to Town where transportation costs for waste paper and other products are less than the NRRA prices. But paper pricing has fallen so much that landfill is now the preferred cost choice.

New Business:

Gerry Gold reported that both Sandy Schmid, new chair of the New London Garden Club, and Bob Friedlander, director the CHICKS Project at Colby-Sawyer College, are willing to meet with WRC early in 2024 to talk about their successes and methods of working with schools and young people regarding environmental and recycling topics. Sandy suggested the WRC involve the KRES Parent Teach Organization (PTO). Nancy Barthol, who also serves as treasurer for KRSD said she would ask about the status of the New London KRES PTO.

Jerry Coogan suggested that a future survey of Town residents could help to educate residents about WRC projects and also bring new topics and possible volunteers to our attention. Liz seed that any survey ask for opinions about multi-town regional projects.

A motion to adjourn was approved unanimously at 11:12AM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Next Waste Reduction Committee meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2024 (1/25/24) Thursday at 10:00AM at Town Offices Syd Crook meeting room.

Respectfully submitted by Gerard Gold, for Town of New London