

CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND, MAINE
SOUTH PORTLAND ENERGY & RECYCLING COMMITTEE

South Portland Energy and Recycling Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2015

So. Portland Community Center

Large Conference Room

Call to order - 6:30 pm.

Committee

- Bob Foster - At Large (Beecher) Chair - **Present**
- Jessica Williams - At Large (Blake) Secretary - **Present**
- Rita Thompson - District 1 - **Present**
- Todd Erickson - District 2 - **Absent**
- Stanley Cox - District 3 - **Absent**
- Heather Valley - District 4 - **Absent**
- Michael Shutts - District 5 - **Present**
- Clyde Barr - At Large (Beecher) - **Present**
- Vacant - Associate - At Large (Blake)
- Melinda Timpf - Associate - District 1 - **Present**
- Mike Howe - Associate - District 2 - **Present**
- William Fritzmeier - Associate - District 3 - **Present**
- Eric Knutsen - Associate - District 4 Vice Chair - **Absent**
- Adrian Dowling - Associate - District 5 - **Present**
- Julie Rosenbach - City Liaison - **Present**
- Vacant - School Department Liaison - **Absent**

Old Business:

Acceptance of March's minutes: Motion to accept: Mike Howe; Seconded: Mike Shutts. In favor: Unanimous

Guest Speaker from Holy Cross School - Bill Ridge

- Mr. Ridge started the recycling program 5 years ago. The school used to be single stream trash pick up and it all went to an incinerator. The idea to start the program came from the children at the school. All staff and teachers are

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supportive of the program and the school sees the program as an overall success - it is an excellent educational program and it saves the school a bit of money. They used to have one 10 yard dumpster for everything which was emptied once/week at a cost of \$150. With the new program the school now rents two 4 yard dumpsters one for trash one for recycling. These new dumpsters are emptied once every two weeks at a cost of \$109 for trash and \$67 for recycling. This saves the school roughly \$80 every two weeks. The school also spent about \$100 on recycling bins for each room in the building.

- When the program first started the school held a rally to educate students and staff about what can and can't be recycled. Ongoing education and outreach for the program occurs every other year at the beginning of the school year. Once/week, the 6th graders are responsible for collecting recycling from all the rooms and putting it in the dumpsters. Waste Management provided the school with posters that show what can and cannot be recycled.
- The cafeteria still presents some challenges, specifically with milk cartons (emptying and rinsing the cartons is labor intensive and messy) and recycling lunch trays, but only if they are clean of food. All of the kids are responsible for disposing of trash and recycling appropriately.
- In addition to the school-wide recycling program, they run ink jet cartridge recycling program, 6th graders do a home recycling project and report back on increases in recycling at home and the 2nd grade sometimes does an individual composting program related to the garden program.

City Minute' with Julie Rosenbach:

- Julie met with Leo Mahue from Ecomaine to discuss outreach opportunities. Julie's next goal is to target municipal buildings for improving recycling, specifically getting better bins and signage especially buildings such as the Community Center, with public spaces. She is also looking at tweaking the language in room rental agreements for the Community Center to highlight

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recycling responsibilities. She has also met with custodians to work on getting their buy in. They also had a conversation about schools.

Data gathering for schools

- Julie Pitt from 6th Grade Math and Science teacher at Mahoney Middle school, Megan Welter Principal from Memorial Middle School were present.
- Principal Welter talked broadly about recycling and composting programs at schools from the elementary to the high school level. Each school has a green team. Talked about the high school composting program and how food waste is what the schools are most concerned about at this point. Students did a quarterly weighing of trash before the organics program and then again after it was underway and saw dramatic drop in weight of trash. Every year students from Memorial go to a camp to learn about food waste. Memorial hasn't been able to do Garbage to Garden, they need to get custodians on board, but they have an outdoor garden and walking trail. Principal Welter said that the vision of the school department is to deal with food waste. Memorial has started using different sized bins to help with recycling and they've gotten rid of disposable trays. She said, If you don't do regular outreach, everyone gets lazy.
- Ms. Pitt: looking forward to being able to work with Garage to Garden if possible.
- Melinda met with co president of the PTA at Brown Elementary School. They reviewed the Garbage to Garden composting grant received from Ecomaine. Brown wants to be role model and they are very excited about the program. They have reduced amount of trash by about 2/3. In addition to composting they do recycling and Clynk. Each classroom has a recycling bin and there are big signs in classrooms and cafeteria. Initially, it was labor intensive to get kids on board and volunteering. Still have lots of small plastic items.
- **Julie R.** How do schools get together on this issue? **Megan Welter:** District wide recycling group that met a few times to try to coordinate. **Julie:** Happy to help. **Bill F.** Is their communication with parents about these issues? **Megan:** Yes,

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good communication and 3 years ago Memorial won the zero waste initiative. **Bill F.** The schools are a good place to grow from in terms of greater comm. involvement.

Consolidated media program:

- Mike Howe wrote the first article to be published in the Sentry as an on-going, every other week, series. Recycling statistics for neighboring towns will be published starting with the second article. The deadline for the first article is this coming Monday, April 20. If there are no other edits or objections by Friday, Mike will send it in to the Sentry.
- In order to keep up with the proposed publication schedule, we will need to have at least two articles ready to go all the time. Mike will do one on textiles, Heather is in the process of doing an article as well. **Bill F.:** Do we need more explanation about recycling? Bill will write something along these lines - Recycling 101 - and this will be article #2. **Clyde B:** Will write sometime about the economics of recycling and further explanation of what recycling rate means. **Jessica W:** Articles will go to the City newsletter for publication at roughly the same time as publication in the Sentry. Other ideas for articles and outreach/education discussed. **Mike S:** have student group write an article. **Melinda T:** idea for article - did you know what you can and can't recycle, get into specifics. **Bill F:** Something from Leo on their new graphics. **Julie R:** write something about bins and signs in municipal buildings. **Jessica W:** Interview with Leo maybe. **Mike S.:** Multimedia art project energy or recycling movie. Educational film **Bob F:** SPTV will help with that. **Jessica W:** energy and recycling film festival.
- **Bob F:** recycling market is in terrible shape, recyclable commodities worth very little right now.

Single use bags/styrofoam: **Bob F:** GPCOG is convening a 9 city working group to begin sometime around the beginning of June to come up with ordinance language

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related to plastic bags and Styrofoam. **Julie R:** and Falmouth Sustainability Coordinator will be working on that. Not tied to a ban or fee just yet, all ideas will be on the table. **Bill F:** State legislature put out a bill with a ban on plastic bags, not a fee. Not sure where this stands. Victor Horton from Hannaford said that 13-14 percent of customers currently bring their own bags. Recycling of bags - there should be bins at all stores, most plastic bags that are recycled are shipped to China. **Bill F:** Schools and other institutions should send school kids to educate businesses about plastic bags specifically. Longfellow books, in Portland will give 10 cents off every purchase for bringing your own bag. **Clyde B:** Whole Foods gives 5 cents per bag. Portland ordinance went into affect today. Article today in Portland press herald re bag fee. **Mike H:** The new ordinance is strictly a disincentive to the consumer without giving anything back to the community. **Julie R:** It would be good to generate revenue that goes back into programs to educate about recycling. Julie would like to come up with a comprehensive plan about how the committee/the city will address achieving our recycling goal. Also: re new swap shop at transfer station, how can we make that work on a voluntary basis. Transfer station staff are not that psyched about it. Would like to put it on the agenda to discuss in the near future.

Green Minute:

Bob F: Record set at Marambio Base on March 23 of 63.3 degrees F. Base is on Marambio Island, Antarctic peninsula. 2nd record of 63.5 degrees F set on March 24th at Esperanza Base at Hope Bay, Antarctic peninsula.

Membership Report and Updates: None

New Business: Bring fresh ideas

- See above. Lamey Whelahan wants to know why something isn't being done about disposable plastic bags.
- Melinda reminded group about doing a tour at Ecomaine.

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Adjournment: Motion: Adrian D; Seconded by Mike H - Meeting adjourned at 8pm
Next meeting: Wed., May 20, 2015 - Community Center