**Solid Waste Committee**

**June 2, 2021 Minutes**

**Present:** Lisa Wesel, Cathy Curtis, Susan Drucker, Bryan Benson, Betsy Steen, Susan Brown, David Berry, Michael Smith,

**Amendments to the Agenda**: Lisa Wesel comments that her email asking that the Committee discuss who should participate in the final recommendation discussions does not need to be addressed at this meeting if there isn’t time. Cathy Curtis says that she will add it to the agenda and that she assumes we would be in agreement it would be the core Committee members who would make the final recommendation. Susan Drucker notes that Lisa Wesel’s request encompassed more than just making the final recommendation, but agreed that it would be fine to wait to discuss things until there is time.

**Approval of the May 19th Minutes**: Susan Brown motions to approve the minutes; Cathy Curtis seconds; all approve.

**Old Business**

**Information from the May 25, 2021 Select Board meeting as it Pertains to the Committee**: No Committee members attended the May 25th meeting.

**Bryan Benson’s Update to the Committee**: Bryan Benson reports that “things are going as planned”, that there is a lot of metal coming in, “pretty boring, nothing different.” Cathy Curtis asks if the cardboard baler is working well; Bryan Benson answers that it is and comments that it is “surprising because it’s probably fifty years old.” Lisa Wesel asks if we’re getting money for the cardboard since it’s being baled separately; Bryan Benson answers that we will, but that he has not taken a load yet.

Cathy Curtis asks Bryan Benson for clarity on what a Transfer Station designation means and how it might impact the Committee’s work. Bryan Benson explains that “What we are doing right now is everything we can do as a Recycling Center. If we want to go above and beyond what we have, we have to become a Transfer Station. In order to become a Transfer Station there’s a lot of regulations we have to meet.” Cathy Curtis asks whether storing cardboard is allowed; Bryan Benson says it is because cardboard falls under the Recycling Center guidelines. Cathy Curts asks what doesn’t fall under Recycling Center guidelines: Bryan Benson answers “hazardous waste, bulky waste, and a thrift area; if there was to be a thrift area, anything left at the end of the day would have to be disposed of.” Cathy Curtis sums up that “anything we can recycle, we can store, but if it’s not recyclable, we can’t store it.” Bryan Benson says “that is pretty much accurate.” Lisa Wesel comments that there’s a letter from the DEP on the town’s website and asks if that letter has been sent to the Committee; Bryan Benson says he only put it on the town website. Lisa Wesel goes on to say that she read the letter several times and the way she understands it is that “most of the hazardous waste that we were collecting at the barn would still be allowed because it’s part of those specific [sponsored] programs that the town participates in (e.g., PaintCare) and that the materials don’t sit for very long….” Bryan Benson confirms that that is true and that the collection of those materials currently is part of the program at the Public Works. (He notes that the PaintCare program only covers architectural paints and not marine paint, automotive paint, or polyurethanes — those are still considered hazardous waste.) Lisa Wesel says that her understanding about clothing reuse is that once the clothing reuse system was “racked and shelved” at the barn, that it would have been considered recycling, not trash; Bryan Benson says that that’s not the way he understood it, but that “when we get closer to that point, maybe he could get DEP to talk to that”; the way he understood the letter was that because we’re only open a few days a week, that basically “at the end of a shift, that material becomes solid waste.” Lisa Wesel asks if there’s any chance that the DEP would come to a meeting because “once we get to the point of talking about which aspects of…our program we’d like to keep, I know we’re not supposed to talk about a building, but whether or not it’s going to be considered a Recycling Center or a Transfer Station would matter.” She found the DEP letter full of “government speak” and unclear. Susan Brown agrees and she would like a DEP representative to “offer us some guidance.” Bryan Benson says that he will “send an email off [to the DEP] and see if that can happen.” Bryan Benson adds that as he understands it “the location of the barn in relation to property lines and structures (being neighbors houses and whatnot) it doesn’t meet set-back requirements” for a Transfer Station. Continued discussion of set-backs. Michael Smith comments that “you’re allowed to store for a certain period of time; it’s all in chapter 402 in the DEP regulations.” Susan Drucker asks for further clarification about what can be stored for longer than 30 days, using plastics as an example; Bryan Benson says that he doesn’t think plastics would be a problem, but he “needs to get deeper into these chapters; they’re very long, very detailed.” Cathy Curtis asks if the barn can function as a Recycling Center but not a Transfer Station based on Bryan Benson’s set-back understanding; Bryan Benson answers “probably.” He adds that he doesn’t believe there are set-back requirements for a Recycling Center, but that “if we are a Recycling Center, we can’t operate the way we did in the past at that location.” Susan Drucker re-clarifies that that means “no bulky waste, no hazardous waste, no thrift store” which Bryan Benson confirms. Michael Smith adds “My interpretation of the [DEP] letter is that the barn as it was is exempt from pretty much everything; it was basically grandfathered in 2015 when they changed the rules. …the barn was doing some things that they weren’t allowed to do — basiclally the length of time they were storing some things, specifically tires and I think universal waste as well. It can still do that because it’s exempt…It could still pretty much do kind of what they were doing but they can’t store it for as long as they were doing it, I believe (that’s one of the questions…I couldn’t understand), but that throws a couple of ringers into the situation…if the property is transferred to another person, all those exemptions go away and the DEP has to come and inspect it for it to be a transfer Station. And if it turns into a Transfer Station, then it won’t meet the set-back requirements.” Susan Drucker asks if the DEP would have to come and inspect it if it stayed a Recycling Center; Michael Smith says no because a Recycling Center is not under DEP regulations, but “if it’s a Recycling Center, all you’re going to have is what’s at the Public Works right now. You won’t be able to expand Public Works. …I think Bryan said you can do a Bulky Waste every six months, but you can’t keep the product on property for more than 48 hours. I think there is something similar with electronic waste. I think they can bring somebody out, and we can load up their van…on an electronic waste day,” (Bryan Benson confirms this) “but then the question is can you fill up the truck, is it worthwhile for the guy to come out…but other than that, what you have at Public Works is your Recycling Center; sure it can move to the barn if that’s the way people want to go, or if you want to go back to what was at the barn (probably not storing stuff as long) you can do that and it’s exempt….I believe that you can have a [thrift] store, if you operate as a Recycling Center; you don’t have to throw everything away that day, but there is a time limit on how much you’re allowed to keep, but we just don’t have the facility to be able to do a store at the Public Works office.”

**Review of Town Report Chapter Edits:**

Cathy Curtis thanks Susan Drucker and Lisa Wesel for their editing work, and states that she had not been able to “put time into this…due to my job”.

Discussion of Town by Town Comparison document: Susan Drucker comments that she is disappointed that nothing had been done by the sub-committees since the last meeting as had been discussed, but suggests that “we put it out to one or two people to just do it” in order to finish. Lisa Wesel says if it’s just a question of editing for wording, she would have time to do that; she wouldn’t have time to do more research. Cathy Curtis says that would be great; she adds that she would like to have a printed document “that we could meet in person” with, or each member could have their own copy to mark up; “that way everyone gets a chance to read what’s there and then we can…get all the edits done using everybody’s copy.…” She notes that she is open to ideas for this as well. Lisa Wesel says that she would be happy to do the editing but asks that someone pull together the most current version of each document and put them into one folder so that there is no confusion as to which documents are the ones she ought to be looking at. (She notes that she spent a good amount of time on a document that had an updated version that she was unaware of, and that the time she spent working on it was time “she didn’t really have.” Susan Drucker echoes a similar occurrence.) Cathy Curtis asks if people want a printed copy; Susan Drucker notes some of the problems with simply printing out documents at this point (i.e., some edits only exist in the “tracking changes” software and wouldn’t be part of a print out); she believes keeping them in one accessible place would be more efficient.

Lisa Wesel asks that we spend time as a Committee to create a folder with the exact documents she ought to be looking at. Cathy Curtis says that she will set up her computer and that it will take about ten minutes. She asks that members continue to talk about topics while she does that.

Susan Brown asks about what sort of protocols Committee members ought to follow at next week’s Town Meeting; she wonders if members should refrain from commenting. Lisa Wesel suggests that if there are questions addressed to the Committee, that Cathy Curtis, as chair, would be the the logical spokesperson. Discussion as to whether Cathy Curtis should also present a short synopsis of the Committee’s work. Agreement that she will. Lisa Wesel offers that “outside of voting, however we feel personally, we should probably not get into the discussion about the barn.” Susan Brown concurs, as does Cathy Curtis. Discussion that facility decisions are not in the Committee’s charge so offering feedback at town meeting would be out of line.

Time spent discussing and transferring documents into an updated final folder.

Question as to whether Bryan Benson has been able to review Michael Smith’s budget numbers for accuracy. Question as to how to re-format Michael Smith’s budget email into an editable document. Lisa Wesel suggests that she can format and edit it for wording, but in the meantime Bryan Benson could read it for accuracy. He asks if the document could be emailed to him; Cathy Curtis says she will do that; Susan Drucker wonders why he can’t just look at it on the drive; Bryan Benson comments that he is “losing his laptop again tomorrow” but that he can try and look at it tonight.

Questions to Bryan Benson about the Hazardous Waste spreadsheet document, beginning with Time Stored data for light bulbs. Bryan Benson answers that the box is shipped out as soon as the box is filled, so that there isn’t a specific answer because “if we get 200 bulbs in a day, the box gets filled, it goes away…It’s an active storage container, so I don’t think it would be a problem.” Cathy Curtis suggests we fill in the Time Stored column with “No Limit”. Lisa Wesel points out that the Timed Stored column may not be relevant as it doesn’t directly affect space requirements; Susan Brown answers that if there are questions about Transfer Station requirements compared to Recycling Center requirements for time stored, then it is relevant. Bryan Benson states that he doesn’t think “the Committee should be looking at whether the program is a Recycling Center or a Transfer Station; honestly, I think they just want you to come up with a program and we go from there.” Continued discussion about lightbulb intake and space required. Bryan Benson confirms that regardless of time stored, that filled boxes will never take up more than two pallets. Lisa Wesel recommends deleting the Time Stored column from the Hazardous Waste report and “when it comes down to whether or not these are services that we want to keep providing, maybe that’s the time to talk about how much time you’re allowed to store everything.” She notes that she doesn’t think we’re going to know the answers to some of these questions until we get someone from the DEP to come in. Susan Brown believes that it is pertinent information for a recommendation. Agreement to delete the Time Stored column from the document but to follow up on that information during the recommendation phase of the Committee’s work.

Questions about costs to the town for electronics disposal. Bryan Benson overviews that there are disposal fees for some items, noting that Ballast Resistors have a “hefty fee” that the town has to pay, but he doesn’t have that information with him. Question as to whether there is a fee charged to residents at drop-off to cover some of the costs; there is not.

Susan Drucker comments that “we need to get documents together that only Bryan can verify and he needs to do that; I feel like we’ve been chasing this for kind of a long time.” Lisa Wesel comments that she could try and highlight the areas in the documents where information is missing; she asks if others could do the same.

Discussion about the Materials Requirement document: Susan Drucker states that the document isn’t complete; Bryan Benson says that he has looked it over with Patrick McDonough. Susan Drucker asks if the information about cardboard (e.g., 40,000 lbs for a Minimum Load) is accurate since the town is baling and trucking loads ourselves; she also doesn’t know where the processing cost of $54 comes from and whether the Costs to Process column should include additional information like tipping fees and transportation costs and not just labor costs. Bryan Benson answers that if the town is baling a product, there is no tipping fee; he confirms that $54 is an accurate number for labor costs to bale a ton of cardboard. Discussion about the 40,000 lbs. Minimum Load for cardboard; Bryan Benson states that “that’s what we want to get to; it’s not what we’re doing today, but ideally we want to be able to load a tractor-trailer and send it directly to the mill; that’s where you’re going to make your money.” Lisa Wesel asks if they are waiting to get to that weight; Bryan Benson says “yes, you need between 54 and 56 bales to make a tractor-trailer load; anything less than 40,000 we’ve been penalized for.” Susan Drucker says she thought that Ecomaine and Casella bought single bales; Bryan Benson says that they do but because “they’re a middle-man, we’re not going to get paid what the mill would pay us.” He notes that both Ecomaine and Casella break down our bales and reprocess them with additional material to make much larger bales. Betsy Steen asks if we can ship it to mills; Bryan Benson answers that we could “if we had a 53 foot trailer and a truck” but adds that we don’t have that now and that he doesn’t see the town ever owning a semi and a trailer to haul to the mill. Susan Brown points out that if the town is never going to have a semi, that the 40,000 lbs in the Minimum Load column is “just confusing”. Lisa Wesel states that “all of this information…that we’re including in this document for the town [are] all of the things we’re going to be thinking about when we’re making our final recommendation; this is all the data we’re going to be considering…so I think the fact that you can’t make a conclusion from things is fine; you can’t make a conclusion about any of this stuff yet because we haven’t discussed it; it’s really just giving them the information we have so far. Isn’t that the purpose of the interim report, to say, ‘this is what we’re going to be talking about in the next month’?” Susan Brown and Cathy Curtis agree that it is. Cathy Curtis adds that “we’re probably need to be add onto this document at some point…what does it cost to take it to ecomaine, what does it costs to take it to Casella? Or for them to come and get it?” Lisa Wesel asks if she should write an introduction to the Materials Requirements; Cathy Curtis believe she should. Susan Drucker notes that Plastics information from 2005/6 could be added to the spreadsheet, and that the TBD for metals still needs to be updated, and that paint, batteries, and etc. could have time stored added if possible. Cathy Curtis states that Patrick McDonough “could fill in the document and then get it back to us.”

Discussion as to whether to include data from the Source Separation Pilot Program. Lisa Wesel suggests that it is relevant to the recommendation discussion, but that it doesn’t necessarily have to be shared with the town at this point. Susan Brown agrees. Question as to whether information about the Pilot Program is included on the town website; it is not.

Discussion of Recycling Services Modes document. Decision to change title to “Costs of Recycling Services Modes”.

**New Business**

Discussion as to whether Cathy Curtis should voluntarily offer an update on the Committee’s work at town meeting or whether she should wait to see if there are any questions. Cathy Curtis concludes that she should probably do it voluntarily. Question as to whether other Committees offer updates at town meeting — consensus is that they do not. Decision to leave the outcome up to Cathy Curtis depending on circumstances.

Meeting in Person: Cathy Curtis asks members if they are okay meeting in person at our next meeting on June 16th. Susan Brown answers that she is “Happy to mask up and sit six or eight feet away from others” but she would like to meet in person. Susan Drucker asks if we would be allowed to ask members and participants if they have been vaccinated and if not, if we could ask them to wear masks. Cathy Curtis doesn’t think we can ask people if they’ve been vaccinated, but that we could ask them to wear masks. Bryan Benson comments that “We can have a Zoom meeting until the Governor’s order expires at the end of the month, but effective July 1st, our meetings will have to be in person. Right now it’s an option for us to meet in person, but after July 1, if the Governor does not extend the Emergency Order, then we go back in person. We have to be in the Kendall Room at the town office so it can be recorded.” Susan Brown asks if we could still choose to continue with Zoom meetings or if a hybrid would still be an option after July 1st. Bryan Benson says that he will find out, but he thinks it has to be in person. Cathy Curtis asks about technical considerations for streaming; Bryan Benson answers that the Town Hall Stream camera will be the recording device. Cathy Curtis asks again if people would be comfortable meeting in person in masks in the Kendall Room on June 16th. Lisa Wesel says that she would be okay with that. Susan Drucker asks again if there could be a hybrid meeting. Bryan Benson says that this current meeting (June 2nd) was going to be the “test bed” for a hybrid meeting, but it was already too late to make a public announcement for it, but he thinks that we could try a hybrid scenario for our next meeting. Continued discussion about the technical issues that could come up in a hybrid forum, and subsequent questions about Committee members not being physically present (e.g., joining via zoom) might go against the Open Meeting law. Cathy Curtis notes that an Owl devise could offer viable audio; Lisa Wesel notes that a connected large screen could offer visuals. Cathy Curtis worries about the logistics of having to screen-share and run the meetings live at the same time. Susan Brown comments that if there are any members that are uncomfortable with meeting in person, we should default to Zoom. Lisa Wesel agrees; she adds that if the town wants us to meet in person, it needs to resolve the technical logistics, that that shouldn’t be up to us. Bryan Benson asks if the Committee would rather meet via Zoom on the 16th until we have more clarification. Members agree. Susan Drucker apologizes for “being that person.” She explains that due to an upcoming family event, she is currently not willing to risk meeting indoors. Lisa Wesel and Susan Brown support her concerns.

**Follow-up Items**: Lisa Wesel will be editing the remaining documents; Cathy Curtis says that she will text Lisa to meet up with her to support that process so “we can get this to the Committee before our next meeting.”

Cathy Curtis ends the meeting by saying that she had sent information to the Committee that had been sent to her as the chair of the committee. She notes that when she shares information she is not promoting or endorsing anything. She has gotten comments back that she shouldn’t be sharing things but notes that her role as chair is to be objective and neutral in sharing information. Susan Brown and Lisa Wesel agree that sharing information is important and that Cathy Curtis has always maintained neutrality and professionalism.

**Public Comments**: No public comments.

**Next Meeting**: Wednesday, June 16th at 5:30 via Zoom.

**Adjournment**: Meeting is adjourned at 7:15pm.