**Solid Waste Committee Meeting**

**November 12, 2020 Minutes**

**Present:** Cathy Curtis. Lisa Wesel, Tessa Kingsley, Patrick McDonough, Michael Smith, Susan Drucker, Bryan Benson, Eli Rubin, David Berry, Betsy Steen, Paul Denis.

**Call to Order:** Cathy Curtis calls the meeting to order at 5:30; quorum established.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** Discussion about the Freedom of Access Act’s requirement that no more than two members should ever discuss any SWC issues outside of committee meetings, and how to square that with members responding to Facebook discussions/posts. Decision to limit any Facebook comments to one member only on any SWC-related posts, rather than designating a specific social media spokesperson. Cathy Curtis suggests we should also always remind people that our meetings are open to the public and include opportunities for public comment. Lisa Wesel points out that if it’s a simple question, that answering it on Facebook is more straight-forward than steering people towards our meetings, but if it the subject concerns policy or is opinion-oriented, then directing people to our meetings is good protocol.

**Approval of the Minutes from 10/28/20:** Question from Susan Drucker (secretary) that since it was made clear at the FOAA training that minutes aren’t required for advisory boards, whether it would be all right with members if she reduces the minutes into a more stream-lined document. Members consent to a shorter version, especially since recordings of the meetings are available to the public at the town office. Lisa Wesel motions to approve 10/28 minutes; Patrick McDonough seconds; all approve.

**Old Business:**

**Review information from Select Board Meeting as it pertains to committee:** Cathy Curtis informs the committee that the Select Board re-re-voted to temporarily move the recycling program to the new Public Works site. Bryan Benson notes that locating at the Public Works offers a no-cost space and only requires a DOT permit for the increased traffic flow and a site survey by the town. He will most likely be able to take in some recyclable materials such as light bulbs, mercury devises, paint, and other small items.

**Update on when temporary location will open:** Bryan Benson hopes that it will be December 1st, but the timeline is out of his hands.

**Draft survey:** Cathy Curtis notes that a resident reached out to her to request that citizens be sent no more than one survey.

Lisa Wesel asks Bryan Benson to confirm whether the survey is accurate as far as which services are funded by the town and which are paid for by user fees; Bryan Benson confirms that the list is accurate.

Bryan Benson asks that Brush be added to the list of possible services.

Bryan Benson explains that although the book exchange is popular, that hardcover books are very hard to recycle (bindings and covers have to be torn off) but because of their weight, they are also expensive to dispose of as trash. Betsy Steen suggests burning them. Eli Rubin points out that if the committee wants to know what residents truly want in a recycling program, editing out services beforehand (i.e., books, compost) might not reflect that goal. He suggests that at minimum “Other” should be included in the survey as a write-in, but ideally, that the survey should list all possible services.

Discussion as to whether information about user fee/no user fee should be included alongside each service or not, espcially when the markets seem to be changing so often and so quickly. Suggestion that a broader question about residents willingness to pay for services in general might provide more useable information.

Discussion about ranking systems: would it be best to use a 1-5 system, a most-to-least system, or a “how often used” system?

Question as to how information will be tallied and whether results will determine the committee’s recommendation or if there will be additional considerations; Cathy Curtis believes that the final recommendation will be a flexible interpretation of costs and data. Lisa Wesel notes that since the ultimate decision will be made at Town Meeting, the committee could present different options for services tiered by cost, allowing residents more control over a final outcome. Suggestion that the survey include an “I am not interested in a tax-payer funded recycling program” check-off in order to acknowledge that sentiment in the overall tally. Suggestion about adding questions about which days and hours residents would like the facility to be open. Question about what percentage of residents use the barn to just recycle, just to drop-off solid waste, or both; Bryan Benson answers that the program’s use is mostly recycling, but that all programs are important and heavily used. Suggestion that line items could be grouped together according to whether they are solid waste or recycling.

Cathy Curtis asks Lisa Wesel to create a new draft survey based on current feedback to be ready to review at our next meeting.

Discussion about when and how to distribute the survey: Bryan Benson says that the survey can be included as an insert in the January newsletter, which would get the survey to every family/mailbox in town; using the newsletter would require the survey be ready by the middle of December. Suggestion that we also provide an online version. Suggestion that a link be posted on every town social media page as well as on the town website. Suggestion to get information about the survey into the Times Record. Discussion about setting up survey drop boxes at several town locations (i.e., the hardware store, the pub, etc.) in addition to the town office drop box.

**Planning Work Schedule to meet the Select Board’s April 15th deadline: (**Update from Cathy Curtis that two-person subcommittees are within legal parameters based on FOAA information.) Survey would need to be done by the 12/9 meeting in order to meet 12/15 newsletter deadline. Residents should send survey back by the end of January. Completed surveys can be distributed amongst committee members for tallying throughout January. Review tallies at 2/3 meeting. Compile financial information and devise three possible plans based on costs beginning 2/17. Good draft plans by 3/31. Finalized plans by 4/21.

Question about how work would be divided; Cathy Curtis hopes that the survey results will help direct us in that planning. Suggestion that some financials could be looked at earlier in the process — that we don’t need survey results to begin selected information gathering.

**New Business**

**EcoMaine Update:** Bryan Benson received a proposal from EcoMaine regarding hauling costs from three different trucking companies for moving containers from Bowdoinham to Portland and bringing them back again. The rates were $255-$355 per container. Bryan Benson wants the committee to take the lead as to whether the town should pursue EcoMaine as an option. Tessa Kingsley asks that the proposal be shared with the committee; Bryan Benson said he would unless there were something contractual in the document (?).

Discussion about scheduling an informational meeting with EcoMaine for January 6th.

Tessa Kingsley adds that she could also arrange a tour of a Casella facility if the committee were interested.

**Determine what other information the committee needs and how to gather that information:** Cathy Curtis would like two-person teams to research what other town’s recycling programs look like, both as far as costs and servicesprovided. She will set up criteria standards for our next meeting and then members can choose which towns to research. Bryan Benson adds that he is going to go look at Winthrop’s facility sometime soon, which he has heard offers a reputable program to multiple towns.

Tessa Kingsley asks Bryan Benson to let her know when the final plans/timetables are set for the new temporary facility so she can get the information out to the town. Bryan Benson adds that he would like information to go out to residents about Christmas wrapping paper guidelines (e.g., nothing other than actual paper — no foil, plastic-coated paper, ribbons, etc.).

**Public Comments:** David Berry asks Bryan Benson if he can offer any insight as to what an upcoming meeting between the town manager, Calderwood Engineering, and Bryan Benson might be about. Bryan Benson says that he only heard about the meeting earlier in the day, and he doesn’t know what the meeting will be about. David Berry adds that it seems like a meeting that the SWC would want to know about; Cathy Curtis agrees.

**Action Items:** Cathy Curtis will update the work schedule timetable; Lisa Wesel will continue to work on the survey; Eli Rubin will join us again on 11/25 to continue to help guide the survey; members should think about what we might want to know about other town’s recycling/solid waste programs.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, November 25, 5:30.

**Cathy Curtis adjourns meeting at 6:50.**