

Minutes of SMART Task Force Meeting

Litchfield Firehouse

May 10, 2023

Meeting was called to order by Chairman, Jerry Geci, at 4:10 p.m.

In attendance were: Chez Liley, Lee Losee, Shawn Mullen, Helen Simko, Dave Wilson, Denise Raap (ex-officio), and Kyle Harris (LHS teacher)

Without corrections the minutes of the April 12, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously. Motion -Simko; second - Mullin.

SCHOOLS

K Harris reported that immediately after April vacation the AP Environmental students began instructing and overseeing the initial day of composting at Center School on April 17th and at Litchfield Intermediate School on April 18th. These schools now join the high school in having kitchen scraps and leftovers collected in buckets which are then picked up on Wednesdays and Saturdays by a town employee who transports the compostables to the town Recycling Center where they are mixed with leaves for composting. Center School averages about two buckets/day while LIS averages about 1-½ buckets/day. Because of a bear in the LIS area buckets are kept in the refrigerator until pick-up. The buckets are returned clean.

Next school-year Harris hopes to have Care Tables at each school where students who don't open packaged foods or unwrap fruit may leave these edibles on a table. These foods will be distributed to soup kitchens, etc.

Next year Harris would like to have the cafeteria at LHS have reuseable trays available as is happening at the LIS and Center School cafeterias.

Geci asked if some students might conduct a survey to determine if families are composting at home or at the recycling center. How many recycle? What do they recycle? Have they cut back on their trash lately?

The members of the task force praised Mr. Harris and his students for their efforts and successes in establishing the practice of composting at all the schools.

RECYCLING CENTER

The newly hired part-time worker, Rick Maturn, decided the job did not suit him. He wanted and needed time for other things. The town is again advertising for this part-time job.

From the Recycling Center, employees are dropping off about two big bags of single-use plastic bags at Stop & Shop every week.

EARTH DAY REFLECTIONS

It seemed to members that more people than last year showed up for the Clean-Up of roadsides - exactly how many and how many bags of trash were gathered will be reported by Naomi at the next meeting.

Again promotion for this event (and others) was discussed. Some suggestions: use the electronic LHS board at the corner of Rte. 202 & Constitution Way; send home a flyer with each student via the virtual backpack, and again use WZBG.

PROMOTING, NEWSLETTER & PUBLICITY

Geci promoted Earth Day activities in a 10-minute pro-mo spot on WZBG on the Monday a week before the Saturday celebration.

Liley composed another newsletter for all to review. This one summarizes CT's trash problem and encourages townspeople to join in cutting Litchfield's trash by 10% by taking a number of simple steps listed in her letter.

The members discussed the possibility of purchasing stickers that could be slapped onto a resident's toter in order to encourage recycling and composting. All wanted to avoid policing and instead wanted to take a positive approach to guide people to reduce their trash output.

Liley suggested setting up some kind of neighborhood challenge where the aim would be to reduce the amount of plastic people are using and accepting. To task force members she will email the link for a BBC film, WAR on PLASTIC. The reduction of plastic in town may be the task force's next big challenge.

OLD BUSINESS

Geci spoke to a manager at Stop & Shop about where the collected plastic bags go once they are taken to MA. He said that all of it goes to a plastic repurposing

plant. Also, he added that the cardboard they collect is transported to MA and then shipped to China!

Geci reported that the recycling coordinator in Torrington said she would speak to the head of their PW about a recycling program at CHH.

NEW BUSINESS

Geci presented a first draft of a letter to be sent to all non-residential entities concerning the new town mandate that will require said entities to pay-by-weight for trash they generate beginning July 1st. The members thought the letter should be sent to the fifty biggest establishments who probably generate the most trash.

On a motion from Wilson and a second from Mullen the members voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted (again with thanks to L Losee for notes),

Jerry Geci