



Town of West Boylston
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) Meeting Minutes

August 9, 2018 – 1 PM Town Hall Meeting Room

Members Present: Julianne deRivera, Norma Chanis, Duane Henry, Elise Wellington, Vernon Jackson
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Members Not Present: Barur Rajeshkumar

Chairman deRivera opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Approval of previous minutes: Chanis moved approval of SWAT's June 14, 2018 meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Wellington and approved by all members.

DEP Trash/Recycling Grant Application: Jackson applied for this annual DEP grant money and expects a similar amount as last year (approximately \$7,000) as there was no change in our town's status.

Transfer of town's old tires and computers to Wachusett Recycling Center: Chanis noted the expense for disposal of a car tires was approximately \$5 per car tire and for a truck tire was approximately \$10 per truck tire. Jackson feels it might be more appropriate to use the DPW funds rather than the grant money for these disposals.

Effect of the Non-compliance letter to Republic (Town's trash/recycling collector): Jackson stated no further issues in trash pick-up in WB's neighborhoods. Jackson is impressed with the responsiveness of new trash driver, Nick.

FY 2018 Trash/Recycling Spreadsheet Results: Jackson brought in the spreadsheet for FY '18 for review. It appeared that the results were similar to the previous year, but FY'17 results were not included on the spreadsheet. Jackson will update the FY'18 spreadsheet with a few new figures that have come in, as well as the FY '17 figures.

Spring Clean-up news article: Henry decided to combine the draft of his original article about spring clean-up with news about the upcoming town-wide clean-up day on October 13th and submit it in September. He has agreed to chair the Angell Brook and Hillside Village litter pick-up efforts on the October 13th clean-up day.

General discussion on how SWAT should prioritize its time and money on the many options to reduce/re-use/recycle: Options discussed included: 1. The single use plastic bag ban or fee (several communities have already instituted one, but are finding difficulty/money to enforce it. *Boston Globe* 'Would you use this plastic bag 125 times?' 7-22-18, and *T&G* 'Politics' 7-29-18 were discussed. Chanis noted that the store Savers now charges 5 cents for a plastic bag. 2. Ways to divert compost from the landfills (See 'Waste Not' *Boston Globe* 7-22-18 delineating 3 options for recycling organics in Massachusetts: 10 municipalities have weekly curbside pickup of organics, 27

municipalities have a drop-off system for organics, where households get a counter-top bucket, compostable bag liners, and a transporting container to bring to the local recycling center or transfer station, and 156 municipalities distribute compost bins at reduced prices to residents. 3. Education to minimize the contamination of our recyclables which decreases their value and increases the cost to recycle (See 'Recycling Faces New Challenges' *T&G* 7-26-18, which discussed the reduced prices being paid for recycled materials to the point it is now often cheaper to burn recyclables than to recycle them. There are 2 mitigating points: first, there is a state mandate to recycle and second, the cheaper cost of burning or landfilling recyclables may only be for the short term and does not include the long-term cost to the environment. In addressing the education aspect, deRivera summarized the 7-7-18 *T&G* article, saying 'The recycling game is rigged against consumers...and the environment' stating that new plastic material is a mixture of different types of plastics which are impossible to separate, so they are not recycled but rather are 'down-cycled' eventually ending up in the landfills anyway. There are too many and it is too confusing as there are no 'universal' recycling rules as to which of these different plastics are acceptable to recycle. Wellington also noted that as of January 2019, there will only be 3 landfills left in Massachusetts. Chanis commented that Wheelabrator's incinerator is already over-taxed.

Chanis opted for education as the main priority, saying the DEP grant money could pay for mailers, town videos, and pamphlets. Chanis added that there is a Recycling IQ kit available online from the MassDEP on how to 'recycle right' and reduce contamination. According to Wellington, its video showed municipal quality control officers issuing rejection stickers on contaminants placed in recycling and trash containers, but hiring such officers would probably cost the town money. Henry suggested a second town-wide service where every month there would be an extra curbside pickup for textiles, Styrofoam and/or plastic bags. Chanis noted that Styrofoam is again being accepted at the Wachusett Recycle Center and that Dunkin Donuts is discontinuing Styrofoam cups.

Wellington commented that during the **October 13th town-wide clean-up day** no water bottles should be given out because water bottles are, in fact, one of the biggest sources of litter and take forever to decompose. Rather, water should be dispensed from a large water jug into individual paper cups, which are biodegradable. She showed members the **June 2018 issue of *National Geographic***, which is almost totally devoted to **'the plastic apocalypse'** and the exponential growth of plastic waste since 1960. She gave members copies of its graph (p. 50) showing that "plastic packaging now accounts for nearly half of all plastic waste generated globally, most of which never gets recycled ..." She also gave members copies of Page 92, "Six Things You Can Do (and Feel No Pain)." One of these 6 things you can do is to "Pass Up Plastic Bottles"! Chanis commented that many people 'say they recycle' but then won't spend the extra money to **buy goods that are produced from recycled materials** (which often do cost more). Unless people demand products made from recycled materials, the market for recyclables will suffer. It was also noted that WB businesses do not fall under the town's recycling jurisdiction and that WB's schools have separate funding from the town for recycling issues.

Next meeting scheduled for October 11, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Adjournment: 2:15p.m. - deRivera made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Wellington. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by,
Julianne deRivera, Chair
SWAT

