



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

Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT)

December 13, 2018 – 1:30 pm

Town Hall Meeting Room

Members present: Julianne deRivera, Norma Chanis, Duane Henry, Elise Wellington

Members absent: Barur Rajeshkumar, Vernon Jackson (DPW Director)

Chairman deRivera opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Approval of previous minutes: Wellington moved approval of SWAT's October 11, 2018, meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Henry and approved by all members.

Report on meeting with Worcester Coordinator of Trash/Recycling: Wellington reviewed the major points of her Worcester Garden Club meeting on Nov. 27th with Worcester's Coordinator of Trash and Recycling, Bob Fiore. The city's Pay-As-You-Throw program has been extremely successful and has saved the city \$50 million since it was started 25 years ago! The costs of recycling are increasing and Worcester now has to pay (\$30/ton) to get rid of its recyclables! If one includes all the associated expenses of collecting recyclables, such as personnel, trucks, etc., the city's cost for recyclables is \$293/ton. By comparison, the total cost for trash is \$193/ton. Costs for both recyclables and trash are expected to increase, with stricter contamination standards for recyclables hurting the market for recyclables and with landfills closing. Worcester is now considering using clear plastic bags for their recyclables to reduce litter caused by recyclables blowing out of their recycling bins and so that the collector can see when the recyclables are contaminated with non-recyclables. Since 'single stream' recycling increases contamination, some towns have recently switched back to 'dual stream' recycling. Chanis commented that all the area MRFs (Materials Recovery Facilities) that take the recyclables have been changed to take only 'single stream' recyclables, so converting back to 'dual stream' could be problematic.

Discussion on email sent to DPW by West Boylston resident questioning why town doesn't use toters: Wellington drafted a response (attached) sent out to SWAT members earlier, which was discussed. Holden has toters and on their web site, the cost to the single family is \$35/month for a 35 gallon toter regardless of how much trash is generated. If more trash is generated, the family would then have to purchase a \$2 overflow bag (no toter over-filled will be picked up). Also, each family needs a second toter for recyclables at the same cost. By contrast, a single family in West Boylston pays according to how much trash they generate and the rate could be as low as \$4/month for those who generate one large (33 gallon) bag per week. West Boylston will be re-negotiating its trash contract in 2 years. Wellington agreed to have Jackson review her draft and consider posting on DPW website, and Chanis, who felt the draft was filled with too many facts, will contact him.

Report on DEP's "Recycling Works" Fall Forum for businesses hosted by E.L. Harvey: Chanis attended 3 events recently. Chanis reviewed how a town would implement the Recycling IQ (Improving Quality) Kit;

essentially a trained temp worker and a trained town worker go to residences and go through their trash and recyclables to record the amount of contamination (e.g. Paper towels are not recyclable, nor is foiled or sparkly holiday wrapping paper) before and 8 weeks later after the educational process has been done. There will be an increased push to educate people because more contamination means more cost to recycle and thus higher cost to town. The town would also get DEP points for implementing this program. Unfortunately, most people are not comfortable with strangers going through their trash/recyclables, so this be a major stumbling block to initiation. DeRivera agreed to contact Casella to see if they would do an audit on our recyclables as promised 2 years ago. Chanis also discussed the possibility that towns may begin to bargain together for the same rate, as the haulers are already sharing their rates. Chanis also spoke to the use of social media, such as phone videos, Tweets, or Facebook for SWAT (the 7-town Recycling Center already has a Facebook page) to communicate information rather than flyers, as there is no fee. Lastly, Chanis reported on a new machine at E.L. Harvey that 'DePacks' food from the box or container it comes in as a way to efficiently compost supermarket expired foodstuffs and re-use the metal or glass containers.

Report on Proposed Composting at the West Boylston Schools: deRivera said she had personally met with Superintendent Elizabeth Schrapper, Vice Principals of both the high school and the elementary schools and finally the Chair of the School Committee, Jen Breen. In addition, the DEP video demonstrating the way to have cafeteria food and containers sorted was emailed to all of the above parties. As of now, there has not been any response. Chanis mentioned that the head of City Compost of Gardner, Adam, will come to our School Committee meeting to explain how composting can be achieved. Because his business is a 'full plate,' they collect all compost (including meat) stored in a fully enclosed container at the school, and transport it on to Orange. DeRivera agreed to reach out to Adam (978-378-3048 or www.citycompost.org or info@citycompost.com).

Future of a Plastic Bag Ban for West Boylston: deRivera brought the article of the plastic bag ban roll out in Worcester from the *Telegram & Gazette* (December 10, 2018). Members agreed that SWAT will follow the details as they roll it out and see how it works out before deciding whether West Boylston should move in that direction as well.

Wellington brought in an article from the *Wall Street Journal* (December 13, 2018) entitled 'Bottled Water Confronts Its Plastic' detailing how due to public pressure, the major bottled water companies are trying to recycle plastic water bottles into more bottles or downcycle them into clothes or carpets. However, they are having problems doing so because so many of these plastic water bottles do not get recycled, so their supply is limited. Chanis commented that the Recycle Center takes all plastic because TREX uses all kinds of plastic (dry cleaner plastic, bubble wrap etc.) to make wood like decking.

Next meeting scheduled for February 14, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Adjournment: 2:55 p.m. DeRivera made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Chanis. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by,

Julianne deRivera, Chair, SWAT

