

SWAT zoom meeting minutes - January 12, 2023

Present: Julianne deRivera, Kevin Duffy (Director of Public Works), Ann Rammingner, Duane Henry, Kristina Pedone

Absent: Norma Chanis

The meeting began at 12:30 pm

Rammingner motions to approve minutes from SWAT's last meeting November 17, 2022. Henry seconds.

Pedone reviewed her updates to the town survey; a new logo (Reduce/Reuse/Recycle circle graphic) and a small introduction including #DPW and #WB). Pedone also noted that Faye Zukowski (municipal assistant) will put out a mailer with the survey to the town citizens who are the town listserv and put the survey on the town's Facebook page. Pedone will also arrange for there to be 10-20 hard copies at the library and the senior center. SWAT agreed to allow 3 weeks for completion of the survey. Henry wondered if it might be helpful to ask folks to volunteer their street addresses to better locate areas of high concern. In addition, if the survey were to be sent out annually then patterns of issues might emerge as well.

deRivera wondered if there were any further thoughts on a trash bag cost increase; Henry felt that during this time of high prices of commodities it was not a good time. SWAT agreed to table this discussion until a new trash contract was underway in about 2 years.

Pedone is volunteering to lead the next West Boylston Clean-Up day April 2023. SWAT agreed to hold this event on Earth Day which will be April 22, 2023 hoping that other nearby communities will do the same. This early decision for the date will allow Duffy to give ample notice to Republic for use of their dumpster. Rammingner endorsed the idea of giving the clean-up volunteers reusable water bottles (instead of T-shirts which add to the textile burden); however, Pedone noted that each water bottle cost might run as much as \$5 to \$10 per bottle. Pedone volunteered to put out her town clean-up sign up sheet soon after the launch of the survey. Pedone wondered whether the WHOC still sent their prisoners to WB for street clean up; Duffy said that program had been discontinued and that the prisoners only did their clean up on the state highways. In addition, Pedone is hoping to expand the scope of the day to include other items to get picked up like textiles or large bulky items either by using volunteers to go to folks' homes or with added bins by the usual Republic dumpster in front of the DPW building that day. Pedone will continue the online signup format for streets to be done, and will provide refreshments to the volunteers along with gloves/trash pickup sticks.

Duffy wondered about using local goats to eat the town's discarded Xmas trees instead of having them chipped. Pedone will find out if her previous contact is still an option. deRivera mentioned there was a goat farm on N Main St that was another option.

deRivera wondered if Pedone had contacted Helpsy (a textile recycler is also working with Newton, Arlington, and Brookline) yet. Duffy mentioned that Watertown had been using Helpsey on a quarterly basis for their textile collection service; and was now moving on to a curbside pick-up service. Duffy noted that their curbside textile pickup comes with some caveats: folks need to schedule a pickup in advance, and there may only be 50-100 pickups per town. Pedone agreed to find out more details from Helpsy.

As Chanis was absent today, we will table her discussion concerning her meeting with a CMRK representative (an organization that works with Big Brother/Big Sister) at the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center on December 5th to discuss their services for getting rid of hard to recycle items.

deRivera mentioned that she has been in email contact with 2 teachers at the middle/high school and 2 teachers at the elementary school who are interested in reducing/reusing/recycling but has been stymied in getting any concrete movement towards collaboration. Pedone volunteered to make contact with the superintendent and the principal of the high school. She also recommended creating after school programs on sustainability especially at the elementary school level as they have more time. Rammingier suggested that the town garden club could be a resource for helping with a school community garden.

Next Meeting: SWAT will be March 9, 2023 at 12:30pm

Meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.

Submitted by
Julianne deRivera, Chair SWAT