

February 15, 2011

Salem Recycles committee meeting

Present: Katie Giddings, Tony Keck, Penny Neal, Jennifer Percy (secretary), Erin Huggard, Lynn Murray (chair), Liz Vago, Susan Yochelson, Marcia Lambert

Guests: Brad Backer, Norm LaPointe, Andrea Fox, Nancy Gilberg

1. Spring Event Planning

Clean Salem Green Salem: Andrea Fox reports of grant received to phase out plastic water bottles at city events; the city got water canteens. Andrea has an idea to spread the word why it is important to use the canteens rather than bottled water: Creating a “river” of plastic water bottles on the Common to illustrate the problem. The number of bottles used will relate to how many bottles the canteens will save. She wonders how much space is available? Newark Group/Northside Carting to provide the bottles. This “river” will be broken down and recycled at the end of the event; may be used at Peabody Essex Museum exhibit on water in April. Deconstructing the installation will be part of the event as well. Andrea has liaisons with the Peabody Essex Museum and with Terry Bastian. There are many variables still to be pinned down about the construction of this display. As well, many volunteers are needed, perhaps as many as 100.

Brad is interested in helping.

Julie: we have some time to plan. What other things do we want to do at that event? Last year we didn't have enough volunteers to do what we had planned.

We will discuss this further at a later meeting.

Science Fair: Thurs March 10, 6-8 pm, volunteers are needed. As of this meeting date, we don't know which school yet.

NIAAC (Neighborhood Improvement Association Action Committee): It would be good for us to present about recycling; volunteers and ideas are needed. The date is April 7.

CleanSalem Green Salem is May 7th. Last year: Big brother Big Sister had a truck there and they were happy with the amount they collected. We also had an E-waste dumpster, educational tabling and a game to sort trash/recycling. This is only 2 months away.

Should we try a book collection with Bookstead?

Discussion of this organization and what we know about it. Consensus: It may not be appropriate because we don't have a collection container.

Liz: how effective was the clean sweeps trash/recycling sorting?

Discussion: First year was better, compared to last year. Do we need to present again some tools to team leaders; tips for accurate sorting, etc? Julie: there's a lot going on that day. We probably need someone to spearhead the effort to teach the volunteers, coordinate with Ellen, etc.

Training would need to happen beforehand. There is no one place to find the volunteers; there is no clear way to get them organized and teach them what we want. It would be a difficult task.

Julie: who would like to work with the beautification committee to give them educational material? To specify what goes in blue (recycling) bags, what goes in trash. We don't need the visual of the trash bags on the common. Marcia offers to get info to beautification committee— Julie will get her the Dos and Don'ts flyer, Liz will write a short instructional note for her. Paper goes in the trash because it will be dirty and barely paper. Mixed recyclables will be in blue bags to distinguish them from the black trash bags.

Lynn: we need to get the word out about e-waste collection, what is acceptable, what is not.

Julie: we need someone to write perhaps a Gazette column to inform. Tony will do this.

Liz: plastic bag recycling was a hit last year. The Newark Group will pick up. Do they want to post their banner about free paper shredding? Julie will contact them about both the pickup of bags, and about the banner. Discussion about the paper shredding program.

Julie: Big Brothers Big Sisters—should we have them again? Susan: would Salem Mission be interested? Nancy also knows of another organization in Lynn but can't think of the name just now. Julie will work with whomever, if someone will coordinate. Susan will contact the Mission to see what their interest level is. Summary: folks will reach out as they feel able to other organizations. Hours for the truck would be 10 to 1:00. We will email each other and finalize it later.

An idea was floated for a Styrofoam collection but it is decided we will not pursue this as it will cost us to recycle it and we will be diluting our message of not to include any Styrofoam in the curbside bins.

Book swap: March 5<sup>th</sup> at St. Anne's. We need volunteers. Julie has the signup list here, passes it around. She will contact each of us by email beforehand. She has a ream of flyers here—please pass them out everywhere you can.

Discussion of places that have posted flyers whether on paper or electronically. Salem Patch—daily email newspaper. Julie will get it to them. Nancy will do Shaws and Market Basket. YMCA may need restocking.

Marcia is making bookmarks for the book swap. They are variously made of fabric, cardboard and paper.

Green Fair: May 21 in conjunction with plant sale, and information about the new city water meter program will be provided at this event as well. (Meters will be changed out over the next 1 ½ years because they are 20 years old and start to lose effectiveness after 10. City will have a table at event to begin to educate residents that this will happen.)

Plant sale location will be outside old town hall this year, so it will be close by the Green Fair. Julie will seek to have a corner spot again—consensus is it worked very well last year.

Brad has recently made paper and offers it as an activity at one of our events. Discussion about which event. Book swap is too soon. Outside at common maybe? Science fair? It involves water and electricity and is about a half-hour process.

Discussion of community wide yard sale and plastic bag pilot program will be postponed to a later meeting due to time.

2. Schools curriculum: Discussion headed by Liz--the Powerpoint-type montage she developed will need to reflect whether Salem will remain dual stream or convert to single stream for the recyclables pickup. Julie will check with Jason about this but a change would nullify the current trash contract which has 2 ½ years to go. Spring is perhaps a good time to begin showing the montage to schools. Will it be for science classes or for general classes or-- ? Erin—can we show this at the green fair? Project it on the wall if we have the corner space? Consensus—good idea. Maybe strip the sound out because it will be repeating over and over. Maybe do a slightly different version.  
Saltonstall School's Earth Day event has had bad timing for us to participate, but maybe we could present the montage and a quick explanation of what SalemRecycles does and how to recycle in Salem.

3. Green Business Update: Liz recaps the Green Business Challenge meeting—invited were those who won awards as well as others. We received good feedback on how to improve the survey for next year. (Last year was a pilot program, 52-53 participated. Much was learned about businesses. Others outside of the Business Challenge group were surprised that we had so much participation) The survey has been edited.

Julie: it's not quite done yet; we need distinguish between those who rent v. own space and corporate vs individually owned businesses. People want more resources, more info/feedback on how they're doing along the way. (For example, "How can I influence my landlord?") Scheduled for April 12 is a roundtable discussion: transportation w/ Andrea Laurie (although Bill Wooley will present); energy presentation; and they want a 10-minute recycling presentation. Can we come up with some fun presentation? Alter the NIAAC one? Will be in the early morning, 7:30 to 9 at Salem 5 meeting room downtown. Julie is looking for ideas from the committee for this and for NIAAC. Susan: those are two really different audiences—residential v business—with different needs. What about having the first session with businesses consist of us listening to what they need? For residents, a system of recycling is in place, but this is not the case with businesses. She suspects there are a lot of questions and ideas and concerns.

Norm mentions how it is so important that we communicate better with tenants. Reverse 911 (Code Red) must be registered for cell phones but folks don't know that they can do this. The same is true for email notifications. However, the Health Dept who must offer "certificate of fitness" for apartments and thus is the department who must go in to each unit; they could give the recycling flyer. He is tired of seeing things sit and sit for weeks on the street, not picked up, with the residents not told why items aren't picked up. So our message of needing to educate residents really resonates with him. Folks don't read Salem News or Gazette, so we need a better way. People aren't being notified of what is important.

Liz: good point, how do we reach them? Folks who don't care to sign up for cellphone reverse 911, or emails, nor to look at salem.com. Discussion of this.

Julie—good point about the Health Dept.

More discussion of landlord communication with tenants re various topics. Liz suggests a possible Gazette article about landlord communication with tenants about recycling.

It may be time to disseminate the Dear Neighbor letter again. Should we offer it through NIAAC? This could help clean up the trash lying and blowing around, if folks know how to recycle properly. NIAAC members could give out a prepared letter.

4. Other business

Bottle bill: Julie/Susan: Updated bill is before legislature to add a deposit to other types of bottles. This would help clean up trash. Can we as a committee help influence this? Surprisingly to Julie, recycling businesses are against this because it eats hugely into how they make their money. Can our committee get political? By report, Jason says this is not our job; we can react as individuals but not have an opinion as the position of the committee. Susan wonders if it is okay that she sends info around to the committee for political purposes like influencing the bottle bill? We think the purpose of that is informative, not directional or deliberative, so it is okay if the email is for informing individuals even though we are all on a city committee together.

Lynn, Julie and Erin took a North Andover field trip to a recycling facility of Newark Group: the found it very informative as well as surprising. Blizzard that day; 90% was outdoors and

there was not much protective equipment employed. Many collected items slip through the cracks; for example, bottle caps. Things end up in trash probably due to desultory sorting. No one (workers) had personal protective equipment aside from work gloves and they were hand sorting outside. (No eye/ear protection)

Upcoming massRecycles conference—let Julie know if you want to attend.