

The Norwich Solid Waste Committee held its regular monthly meeting at Tracy Hall and via Zoom/telephone links at 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 8.

Attending in person were members Jack Cushman and Andrew Scherer. Member Alex Thorngren attended via Zoom. Linda Cook and Linda Grey attended by Zoom connections as members of the public.

Because the committee requires all three members to form a quorum and take any action, any decisions and actions are by consensus without roll call votes.

We approved the minutes of the last meeting and the published draft agenda for this meeting.

The committee reviewed its continuing work to establish baseline cost, revenue and related data to improve our understanding of Transfer Station operations.

We also discussed our plans for educational and instructional approaches to improve the town's performance in handling solid waste, which we understand to be relatively good with some room for improvement.

Andrew and Alex briefed on their conversations with the landfill on-site manager earlier in the month, during the landfill open hours. Consultations such as this will inform our recommendations for any improvements.

We think there are several ways in which better educated users of the landfill could cut its net cost to Norwich, reducing taxes and/or user fees.

An example would be better adherence by users to the restrictions on what kind of glass may and may not be put in the dumpsters for used food and beverage glassware. We have been told that contamination of the glass with improper items (one example: mirrors) significantly reduces the value of the load and therefore greatly reduces town revenues for this particular stream of waste. The committee discussed how to improve signage,

educational materials, and general familiarity with recycling rules. We explored several approaches, including a bulletin board, flyers, listserv messages, etc. -- probably to be organized on monthly themes. Scherer has drafted a schedule for monthly thematic presentations.

The other main topic of discussion was whether to inaugurate a textile/clothing recycling process. This is done by Thetford and perhaps other towns. Scherer explored the option of working with the same contractor who establishes a contract to handle this form of waste at each town. The waste is hauled away at no cost to the town or to transfer station users.

At least one member of the public has supported this approach. In an email to Cushman, which he read to the meeting, Carolyn Frye wrote:

“It is great to see that you have a lead on a textile recycling option. I looked at the website of Helpsy Textile recycling. I am wondering if you are going to inquire about the possibility of a one-day scheduled pickup for textiles. It seems like the container they supply will be quickly overflowing. If you are interested in partnering with a larger population than Norwich for a one-day pickup you could reach out to GUVSWMD or Hanover. Since I am on the Sustainable Hanover Recycling Subcommittee I can help coordinate with Hanover.

I read through the Helpsy website and I see their mission is to keep textiles out of landfills. However, I do not see any details about what they do with the textiles they collect. “

Scherer presented information about the Helpsy program and after discussion the committee agreed to work up a recommendation to the Select Board fleshing out proposed details for establishing a new “channel” for textile waste such as used clothing and other fabrics. A little more investigation is needed. Would this disrupt existing local channels in any unwanted fashion? (Cushman and Scherer later discussed whether an approach like this fits with the current contractor’s service agreement which was recently renewed for a year and which provides exclusivity for waste

collected at the transfer station.) Overall the consensus is to pursue a method of increasing recycling of used cloth and textile.

Adjourned at 8 pm