

Draft minutes, Norwich Solid Waste Committee
Special Meeting, 9/1/22

The committee met from 7:30 to 8:00 pm on Zoom and in person.

Jack Cushman and Linda Cook were in person, Andy Scherer and Lily Terry by Zoom.

The only business was to draft the letter below, which was completed by consensus, with instructions to Jack to edit it and submit it to the board, which has been completed. No other matters were discussed and no votes were taken.

REPLY to Selectboard inquiry
From: Norwich Solid Waste Committee
9/2/22

Dear Roger and Selectboard members:

The committee received an email from the Selectboard chair asking for answers to these three questions by September 7. Our answers appear along with the questions.

1. What is the committee's charge as you understand it?

Our charge is spelled out on the town's Web site, here:

<http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Solid-Waste-cmtee-charge.pdf>

2. What are your committee's current initiatives (provide timelines if applicable)?

We have tested a SmartPhone app used in Lebanon to assist consumers in scanning products (with photos or bar codes) so that they may obtain locally valid instructions for recycling into the proper waste streams. It works very well, simplifies life, and can be modified with town-specific instructions for our citizens. We will ask the Selectboard to approve payment of a license fee of \$1500-\$2000 for use in our town.

The committee has begun to design and produce better signs for the transfer station and a new brochure explaining recycling rules in clear detail. Our work so

far has been gratis by members and volunteers, in consultation with transfer station staff. We will need small amounts of funding for printing and production, with costs under investigation (depending on quality of materials and choice of color or black and white printing, and choice of local or online printer). These costs will be minimal and we will be guided by the town manager, head of DPW and SB on availability of funds.

We continue to seek action on our request to institute textile recycling at no cost to the town.

3. What are your committee's goals and/or principal activities for the next three years?

Our top priority is a broad campaign of education to assist transfer station users in properly sorting waste into the best stream. We believe this is crucial to increasing revenues and reducing costs at the transfer station.

We plan on updating and expanding educational materials such as a pamphlet, recycling stickers for home use, Web-based information, listserv reminders and signs at the transfer station. We hope to have new products available beginning later in 2022. We want to keep costs of these materials to a minimum and to keep them updated.

The town-managed web pages include much faulty information on solid waste operations, and we will work to keep them and all our materials up to date and accurate, and to make the information consistent.

The goal is to increase revenues and reduce costs at the transfer station. This requires us to work more closely with DPW and Town Manager to track money flows and policies.

We understand that a fundamental way to recover expenses of handling solid waste at the Transfer Station is to “clean up” the waste streams, i.e. better sorting by customers so that we are not trying to dispose of contaminated streams. Along with educational materials we think the smart phone app in use regionally will help.

We also would like to add new waste streams, for example textile recycling, when this can be done at little or no expense.

We also want to examine the services offered via the book shed and the plowshares table where people put reusable materials for free pick-up by other people. There are probably better ways to make this effective.

As we continue to learn our way around this complex operation, we will expand our range of projects in keeping with our charge, such as finding ways to reduce consumption of non-recyclable items.

We discussed and agreed to this reply by consensus at a public meeting. Thank you for your support.

Jack Cushman, chair

Andy Scherer

Linda Cook

Bonnie Blake

Lily Terry