

Draft SWC Meeting Minutes from Thursday 11/14/2024

Attendance: Committee members Andy Scherer, Bram Litvinoff, and Jordan Mueller. Public: Carolyn Frye

Meeting began at 5:40 pm

The meeting minutes from 10/10/24 were approved without changes

Scherer and Mueller reported on the Select Board meeting from the previous evening. The SB asked the SWC (among other committees) to speak about its proposed budget, charge and offered a chance for questions to be asked in both directions. The following day the TM and Finance director emailed to discuss the possibility of housing the licensing fee for the Betterbin app under the SWC line item in the budget. For the last 2 years, the money came from the DPW's recycling expenditure line item. The SWC members spoke about it and didn't see a downside to having the expense under the SWC line item. Scherer will resubmit the SWC budget for next fiscal year to include the cost of the licensing fee in addition to the other expenses they had proposed.

Scherer reported on his effort to promote the Betterbin app on the listserv in conjunction with National Recycling Day (Nov. 15th.) He hoped there will be an uptick in new users of the app as a result of promoting it on the listserv for all of the previous week. Members also discussed how to show improvement in the town's recycling habits as a result of using the app. The committee hopes to use data from the town to track expenses over time – with the idea that penalties would decrease over time. As a member of Sustainable Hanover, Carolyn Frye would connect the SWC with SH to use their template of a poster for a Betterbin promotion.

Scherer introduced the topic of the closed leaf/yard waste/brush collection area at the transfer station. He explained that the DPW director had closed the collection area after invasive species, professional landscapers, trees and large limbs had been dumped there illegally. The state only asks that leaves, yard waste and brush less than 1" in diameter be collected (go to https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/Leaf.Yard_CleanWoodGuide.Sept2024.pdf for more info) Furthermore, there are not enough staff at the TS to monitor this area since the employees are already quite busy. Lastly, the DPW director cited not having a proper place to dispose of organic matter on town land as another reason the town should postpone its collection of these materials. Towns who accept trash are required to accept yard waste as well. However, due to the aforementioned reasons, Norwich has applied for a variance with the state DEC/ANR until it can sort out how to properly dispose of collected material and ensure that only allowable items can be deposited there.

Scherer brought up the fact that due to the brush closure area, Christmas trees will not be collected at the TS again for this year. The idea of renting a chipper where residents could bring their trees and chip them instead of throwing them out some place was introduced. SWC would ask for a small donation from those who brought their tree as a way to offset the rental fee of a chipper (a couple hundred dollars for a day from Home Depot). People could take wood chips home. The committee felt like Huntley meadow parking lot might be a good location for such an event – will need to check with Rec Dep and DPW). Alternatively, the SWC could partner with either the Cemetery or Conservation Commissions if they could use the chips.

Article in the Norwich Times. Although an interesting idea, the committee did not feel like it would be a good use of their limited funds at this point in time. Perhaps if there was a hot topic to write about in the future, the SWC could allocate money for that purpose.

Winter Styrofoam collection in January with Hanover. This was a big success last year and it diverted a lot of Styrofoam from the landfill. Again, as a member of Sustainable Hanover, Carolyn Frye had the proposed dates they were looking at for the collection. Jan 25th and Feb 1st (as an alternate weather date) from 10-12 at the Richmond Middle School. The SWC didn't see any conflicts and agreed this would be a good time and location. Scherer will be in touch with SH organizers in regards to volunteer staffing and advertising for the event.

Adjourn at 6:48 pm