

Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for February 25, 2020

Submitted by Susan Rittling

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the small conference room in the Public Health Building,

Members present: John Dempsey, Susan Rittling, Clint Richmond, Mary Litterst, Deane Coady, John Shreffler, Kathleen O'Connell, Marga Dieter.

Staff: Ed Gilbert, Tom Segear.

Public: Louise Bowditch, Caroline Cromwell, Claire Stampfer, Nicola Thompson.

Handouts: Agenda; Minutes from 1/7/20; text and explanation of proposed warrant article "Fluorinated Chemicals By-Law" including an article from "Scientific American"

Minutes from December 7, 2020, meeting were reviewed. Approved as written, all in favor.

• Public Hearing

A public hearing was held on whether to sponsor a warrant article on PFAS (Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl substances; fluorinated hydrocarbons) or single use plastics.

Mr. Richmond introduced a warrant article on PFASs that restricts the sale in Brookline of

- 1) Cosmetic and personal care items to which PFASs have been added
- 2) New paper products in bulk containing fluorinated hydrocarbons
- 3) Non-stick cookware that contains PFASs

Mr. Richmond asked SWAC to sponsor the warrant article. He pointed out that the bylaw does not affect food establishments. He added Teflon cookware, as the bylaw is focusing on non-essential items. A major reason for the warrant article is to raise public awareness of the issue.

There was discussion about the article and ways to build awareness about PFASs. There was general agreement that PFASs should be eliminated from the waste stream as much as possible. The issue of the town purchasing of PFAS-containing items was also discussed, and ways to prevent this. Effects on local businesses was discussed. It was noted that use of PFAS products in the schools has already been stopped, because PFAS-containing items are not compostable. It was suggested that a town wide task force be put in place to promote education on the issue of PFASs, and that this task force might be the best entity to support the warrant article. It was also suggested that SWAC could write a letter to the Select Board supporting a proposed statewide ban. Further, several members felt the article as written didn't seem like a solid waste issue. There was excellent support for the concept and especially for education about PFASs, but less enthusiasm for SWAC being the lead sponsor.

A motion was made by Mr. Dempsey: SWAC supports legislation to regulate and promote educational outreach about single use plastics and fluorinated chemicals and encourages the Select Board to create a task force to make recommendations on both the sale within the town and town purchases of products containing fluorinated chemicals. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shreffler and passed unanimously.

A second motion was made to determine whether SWAC should co-sponsor the warrant article introduced by Mr. Richmond. Vote was 3 in favor, 5 opposed.

A third motion was made that SWAC endorses the warrant article in its draft form. This motion also passed unanimously.

• **Regular Business**

• DPW report – Mr. Segear reviewed the solid waste and recycling numbers for January: ACR is not improving, and there is no improvement predicted. Where does our mixed paper go? Casella is trying to market it. In the meantime it is being stored.

It was noted that the recycling contract with Casella is up in July and a new contract is being negotiated, but a significant financial increase is likely. Discussion followed about the details of the new contract.

• DEP is considering shipping Massachusetts solid waste out of state. Apparently, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia have been taking MSW from other states.

• Mr. Gilbert discussed curbside composting. He has asked for bids from private companies to be the “preferred” service provider for curbside composting. The understanding is that individual subscription prices per household would go down when benchmarks are reached in terms of the number of households subscribing. Residents will deal directly with the composting company. A financial incentive was suggested, maybe a 5% decrease in the trash fee. Mr. Dempsey requested green bins for the aesthetic value. Locking bins will be required. There will be a public information campaign once this program is in place. Goal is to begin by April 2020.

• Update on school composting - Ms. Cromwell reported on the composting program at Winsor School. (240 students in upper school) A school club is working to reduce contamination. The club provides weekly updates to the students on contamination rates and reinforces use of compostable items. She described the layout of the open-topped bins. The club heads have been instrumental in communicating. Their composting company won't take contaminated loads. Students do not monitor the barrels. The school has not done a trash/compost audit.

Ms. O'Connell reported that Heath School is using reusable/washable plastic trays in the cafeteria.

BHS expects to have a new hauler in September 2020. If it is Black Earth Compost, the no-contamination standards will be higher than present. So, education is ongoing. Tray disposal remains a “space problem” at Old Lincoln School because the trays/air take up a lot of room in the carts. The OLS custodian is very committed to composting and collects food waste in other locations at the school. Overall, the system works well at OLS. Perhaps trays could be collected separately. Sasha Palmer, the Food Services Director, has inventoried dishwashers throughout the town with the goal of using reusable trays and cutlery.

• Volunteers are needed for waste separation at the Rotary breakfast on March 28th 8 a.m. to noon. There will also be a film on plastics at Pierce School science fair that day.

Adjournment: 8:23

Next meeting: April 7, 2020

