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ROCHESTER  
ROLLINSFORD  
SOMERSWORTH  
STRAFFORD  
WAKEFIELD

## **Strafford Regional Planning Commission Q3 Meeting**

Strafford Regional Planning Commission

150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Rochester, NH 03867

February 27, 2020

### Minutes

**SRPC Members Present:** Chair Victoria Parmele (Northwood); Vice Chair Peter Nelson (Newmarket); Secretary/Treasurer Tom Crosby (Madbury); Evan McDougal (Wakefield); Rick Michaud (Somersworth); Barb Holstein (Rochester); Mark Richardson (Somersworth); Herb Ueda (Rollinsford); Joe Boudreau (Rochester); Gary Anderson (Nottingham); Donald Hamann (Rochester); Leslie Schwartz (Durham); Wes Merritt (Durham); Michael Bobinsky (Somersworth); Steve Diamond (Barrington); Lindsey Williams (Dover)

**SRPC Staff Present:** Jen Czysz (executive director), Shayna Sylvia (communications and outreach planner), Stefanie Casella (regional planner); James Burdin (senior regional planner)

**Members of the Public:** Deb Clough, Michael Harrington, Nell Neil, Ed Levasseur; Representative Mike Harrington

**Presenters:** Ed Walsh (Rollinsford), George Guilmette (Rollinsford), Ray Dube (NH The Beautiful); Senator David Watters (Dover), Caroline Kendall (Rollinsford)

#### **1. Welcome/Introductions**

Chair Victoria Parmele welcomed everyone to the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

#### **2. Action Item(s)**

##### **a. Approval of Draft Minutes of December 5, 2019 Commission Meeting**

Tom Crosby **MOVED** to approve the minutes of December 5, 2019. Mike Bobinsky **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**. Not sure which was first or second, double check.

### **3. Presentation: Talking Trash: How Recycling Impacts NH Communities**

J. Czysz introduced the presenters: Senator Watters, State Senator representing Barrington, Dover, Rollinsford, and Somersworth; Caroline Kendall, Ed Walsh, and George Guilmette from the Town of Rollinsford; and Ray Dube, Board of Directors members of NH The Beautiful.

Senator David Watters began his presentation with a basic overview, findings and needs for/from the Committee to Study Recycling Streams and Solid Waste Management in New Hampshire. He spoke about his experience on the study committee focused on recycling, adding that there was much testimony for this report.

D. Watters explained that being involved on this study committee allowed him to learn the extent of the issues with recycling including the ramification of the solid waste crisis on municipalities and the environment. D. Watters advocated for immediate attention to this issue in the state. He stated that NH has fallen behind neighboring states, which have set very strong goals for recycling, mentioning MA and CT as providing a good model.

D. Watters cited potential causes of this dating back to the 1980s, attributable to a lack of resources at the NHDES.

D. Watters addressed recycling issues including what's happening with diversion through recycling at MERFs (materials recycling facilities). He explained that MERFs sort a community's single stream, and that difficulties arise when people are recycling things that they shouldn't be, contaminating products. Given higher levels of contamination, China enacted more stringent allowable contamination rates, reducing the available buyers for recyclables. Money used to be made from recycling and now municipalities may have to pay to dispose of recyclables; tipping fee rates are increasing.

D. Watters elaborated that there is still a market for certain plastics. He addressed landfill capacity, food composting, and the overall economy of recycling.

D. Watters reviewed the recommendations from the report including encouraging the state to commit to long range goals for recycling. He shared that SB591 proposes establishing a statewide solid waste disposal reduction goal, while SB620 proposed establishing the solid waste reduction management fund and establishing a solid waste disposal surcharge. D. Watters added that SB680 will try to establish a way for NHDOT to use recycled glass aggregate for roads/paving.

D. Watters closed his presentation by sharing the importance of a common goal among states for requirement of recycled plastics. He opined that there should be incentives for plastic producers to develop their own recycling programs, and that this could be done regionally. He addressed a few more bills including one concerning composting and food waste, and one about single use plastics. He shared concerns with targeting single use; all surrounding states are charging for bags, or have gotten rid of them.

S. Diamond commended the report. A discussion ensued about the kinds of glass that can't be recycled but can be combined to form the substrate that the NHDOT could use. W. Merrit asked how much need there is for this substrate, and if it could also be used around culverts and to fill pipe trenches. Gary Anderson asked about recycling contamination. It was discussed that any type of food product can contaminate recyclables.

Caroline Kendall, the next speaker, introduced herself. She shared that she has worked for the town for six years and that Rollinsford has tried various strategies for dealing with waste and recycling during this time. She opined that the Town has an advantage in being small.

C. Kendall shared the importance of being nimble and adapting with the market. She stated that in 2015 the town had citizens break out their recyclables, but then the price of the commodities dropped. Rollinsford became aware that others were going to single stream.

C. Kendall added that the town wasn't able to analyze the data in as much detail as they would like, but that they did notice changes in costs. The town reacted by switching to single stream, and gambled on human behavior. Municipal solid waste was reduced because of single stream. Then when things changed and the town had to pay a per ton tipping fee, the town reacted again.

C. Kendall transitioned the presentation to her colleague, Ed Walsh.

E. Walsh explained that in 2018, the town pivoted and returned to a separated model. He added that adaptation is key, even though the town sees value in a state and regional solution. Also in 2018, with new employees, the town took a look at how to react better. This included using the Northeast Resource Recovery Association as a resource.

Considering what they learned, the town invested in a bailer. They started to collect recycling in separated bins, and citizens were cooperative, separating out on their own; glass in one, 1-7 plastics in another, and aluminum/tin separate as well. The Town learned by trial and error, and had enough plastic to ship after a year.

E. Walsh added that the town saved money through combining shipping loads, and that Rollinsford is beginning to make some revenue, and also now has a better understanding of

where their recyclables are going. He explained that the Town has a great partner in recycling tin with an entity in Berwick, and is making money that way. This helps to avoid the big cost of shipping by weight, and it has benefitted the town to breaking this separate material out.

The town is starting to make some money selling plastic, but more money is to be made with aluminum.

E. Walsh explained that Rollinsford partners with the NRRA to recycle freon. He added that appliances can be used for scrap metal, so that there is more income coming in there.

E. Walsh shared that mixed paper is the biggest problem right now as it is \$45 a ton to get rid of. He explained that it is more expensive to recycle than to throw away these materials.

E. Walsh said that the town recycled 180 tons in 2019. V. Parmele asked about composting, and the response was that the town takes yard waste.

M. Harrington asked about breaking up plastic types. E. Walsh responded that the town has lack of space for this. A regional approach was suggested for efficiency.

Mark Richardson shared that the packaging industry has been successful in cutting down how they make things, but that consumers are throwing away more of it. He offered his appreciation to the NRRA.

Ray Dube, the third speaker on the panel, introduced himself. He is the sustainability coordinator for Coca-Cola Northeast. He gave a background of his role at Coca-Cola, sharing that a large part of his role is teaching about sustainability, and that he has been involved in Coca-Cola's internal recycling for 17 years. He has been on the board for NH The Beautiful (NHTB) for nine years.

R. Dube explained that NHTB is a non-profit, and that its funding comes from the retail and grocery industry. NHTB also does a lot of fundraising, and have granted millions in the last 40 years. Many have used these grants and funds for bailers.

R. Dube shared that NHTB created the first glass crusher in the state of NH and funded beach cleaners for the state's beaches.

He reviewed other resources provided by NHTB including solutions and tools for recycling like storage containers, scales, and recycling bins. He added that NHTB's resources are often underutilized, and advocated for municipalities to partners with NHTB to save money on these types of solutions.

NHTB also partners with the NRRRA for education, going into schools to teach kid about recycling with a program called Trash on the Lawn.

R. Dube shared information about the closed loop fund, funded by larger entities, and the recycling partnership. These sources fund larger scale projects, so municipalities could benefit from working together regionally.

R. Dube added that Keep America Beautiful, is another resource that does grants for recycling bins. R. Dube explained that there is no other program like NHTB in the northeast, and that is began as a request from a past governor.

Peter Nelson asked if NHTB would fund reusable water bottles. They currently do not.

S. Diamond asked about housing for recycling, as it needs to be out of sun and dry. This could be an opportunity for a regional solution.

E. McDougal asked about market rates, this is covered on a recent NRRRA webinar available online.

M. Richardson mentioned SWEEP, a potential program that could be used a resource. Coca Cola was engaged with this three years ago at Pease.

A discussed ensued about paper mills beginning to open in the U.S. There is one slated to open in Maine soon.

Nell Neil shared that Durham is planning to take paper out of its recycling stream as the cost is so great. She added that requiring people to change their habits can be tough. Stefanie Casella asked if Durham could partner with UNH to save costs. A discussion ensued.

V. Parmele asked if a regional discussion could take place at a later date. R. Dube opined that NRRRA should be used to the fullest as a resource. M. Richardson commended Rollinsford on their efforts.

M. Bobinsky commented on the complex issues surrounding curbside pick-up and single stream recycling. He shared what the City of Somersworth is doing.

C. Kendall also suggested having a regional conversation, adding that a subcommittee could be useful.

S. Diamond noted concerns about contamination. Lindsey Williams said the dialogue is important as there is a huge human behavior component to all of this.

Joe Boudreau said that we need to think about the next generation, and that education is an important component.

SRPC can help facilitate a conversation and matchmake resources.

#### 4. Commissioner Roundtable

This item was tabled.

#### 5. Other Business

##### a. Strategic Plan Update

J. Czysz gave an update on the Strategic Plan explaining that the E.C. was given the final draft to review at its last meeting. They will be making a recommendation for its adoption to the full Commission at their March meeting, and the plan will be on the agenda for adoption at the Annual Meeting in June. We have been using it internally.

J. Czysz reviewed a handout summarizing the major findings in the strategic plan.

#### 6. Citizen's Forum

There were no comments.

#### 7. Adjournment

D. Hamman **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. T. Crosby **SECONDED** the motion. Of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

The meeting ended at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shayna Sylvia  
Communications and Outreach Planner

Minutes approved on:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Victoria Parmele, SRPC Chair