

Solid Waste Advisory Committee - Town of Granby - Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: June 9, 2014

Minutes taken by Joe Furnia, Committee Chair

First meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) was held on June 9, 2014. Meeting was called to order at 7:01PM. All members of the committee were in attendance except Elaine LeFleur, who had to work.

The Chair of SWAC, Joe Furnia, had each of the members introduce themselves and say a few words. The Chair asked Mary McDowell to go first, and talk to the expectations of the Select Board and Administrators with respect to the Mission Statement provided SWAC.

Mary McDowell introduced herself as a member of the Select Board and spoke about the why and what of SWAC. Why the committee was formed: the current contract runs for 3 years and enough people wanted alternatives to curbside waste disposal. What we are tasked with is to identify all possible options, and recommend the best options, providing an implementation strategy based upon detailed research.

Wilmot Lewis is a member of the Conservation Commission and currently studying at UMASS for his environmental science degree. Wilmot is a proponent of both curbside pick-up and a transfer station. It is important to manage the process efficiently. Wilmot provides the committee expertise in the areas of town land use area policy, and a general understanding of the topography of the town.

John McGreevy's motivation for joining the committee evolved out of his frustration with the information stream, and became sick and tired of getting confusing information. John has spoken Arlene Miller of the state DPW.

Marty Conway joined the committee because of his environmental focus and past experience, providing skills that might be of use to SWAC. Marty recommended the planning board link and provided a town map printout that was discussed later in the meeting. Marty taught at Granby Jr-Sr High in the mid-70's.

Jay Joyce's involvement at Select Board meetings led to his joining SWAC. After a meeting, Mark Bail suggested Jay join the committee. Jay retired from the military after 41 years of service, and has been a resident of Granby since 1988.

Joe Furnia joined the committee because of his belief in the need for a transfer station as the best long term cost containment strategy for waste disposal. Based upon the low population density relative to the number of miles of road in Granby, he does not believe that waste disposal costs will remain relatively low in the future. There are other needs driving his belief in the need for a transfer station, including the disposal of brush, citing the nature of residential property in Granby. Joe stated that as Chair of the committee, his strong advocacy for a transfer station does not mean it is a fait accompli. The decision of the committee will reign supreme.

Following the Chair's comments, Marty Conway took issue with the Chair's email of Thursday June 5, 2014, to all committee members in which he wrote the following: "Decisions the committee makes will be based upon a majority of members agreeing with the course of action to be taken. Each member will have an opportunity to present his or her specific views, however after we vote and reach a consensus on our course of action, no member of the committee should publicly disagree with the decision. It

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undermines the committee's standing in the community." Marty mentioned that several of the committee members discussed the admonition of the Chair, expressing their concern over this "gag rule". The Chair explained that each committee member would be able to make their case, and advocate vociferously for their course of action, but once the committee votes, the majority decision rules. Continuing to advocate for a different course of action will undermine the recommendations of the committee. Jay stated that he was not going to give up his right to free speech. Joe countered that he could not stop Jay from speaking his mind before a town forum, but that as a member of SWAC, his vocal opposition could undermine the work of the committee. After the Chair made a reference to the Supreme Court, Jay countered that in legal decisions by the US Supreme Court, there is always a dissenting option. The Chair left this issue open for discussion in the future, and the meeting moved on.

A discussion ensued, focused first on a web page. The Chair asked Mary if information regarding the new curbside pickup service had been published on a web page. Mary said she assumed so, but that she had not looked at the Town of Granby website recently, so she did not know.

The Chair mentioned his unscientific survey of how resident's of Taylor Street were putting out their trash on their first day of service. Joe said that roughly half used trash cans, and the others were a mix of trash bags and town trash bags. In several cases, residents were bagging all their trash in town bags, even though each resident is entitled to 1 bag of trash that is not in a town bag. A small percentage of residents on Taylor Street did not put out their trash.

This led to a discussion about doing a survey to ascertain the level of satisfaction with the service, identifying any issues that needed to be resolved. Options discussed include inserting a simple survey in the next tax bill, an online survey at the town website, and inserting a survey into the Granby Senior Center monthly newsletter. All members commented. Wilmot suggested that it was too soon to insert the survey in tax bills, because the next bill would go out at the end of the month, which is too soon for feedback, to which all members concurred. Pursuing an online survey makes sense, but concern about town citizens that answer the survey multiple times would distort the results was raised by John. Joe suggested that the web page restrict participation, which could be restricted technologically; but was not sure the town has the technical capability. Concern over older citizens disconnection to the web, and their lack of online participation, led Jay to recommend we survey the town's seniors through the monthly Senior Center Newsletter. All agreed this was a good idea. Mary posited that Allied might already have a survey in the works, and that her past dealings with Terry at Allied found him to be very responsive.

The discussion then refocused on transfer stations. Marty felt that our focus on the transfer station was ignoring our task as laid out in the charge given this committee by the Selectmen. A discussion about curbside waste collection service led John to comment about the current contract. The need to look at alternatives, and what those alternatives are, led Mary to recommend that we have Arlene Miller to speak to SWAC at the next meeting, and that she could give guidance to the committee in formulating our course of action. Mary also stated that a transfer station may not be the most economical route, citing the current low cost of refuse disposal; shipping waste by train to far off locations.

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Additional comments included the operation of a transfer station through an enterprise fund, the loss of a \$200,000 grant because the town had no grant writer (Mary), the possible availability of federal fund in September due to the closing of the Federal government fiscal year on September 30th (Jay), and that Waste Management had back-filled the old transfer station (Wilmot).

Marty then presented his research on possible sites for a transfer station. Marty used the town website to identify open area parcels and reviewed the 5 locations he had identified (google MASS GIS and enter OLIVER to locate the map of New Ludlow Road). Marty identified 4 potential sites near the old transfer station and a 5th site owned by Westover Metro Development Corporation. Someone commented about the possibility of Waste Management donating the old site to the Town of Granby, however both Mary and Wilmot advised SWAC that the site is probably contaminated. It was mentioned that a rumor about Monsanto toxic waste dumped at the Granby landfill while the site was under the management of Mr. Archambault led to the belief that the entire landfill is contaminated. This would eliminate site one, which is contiguous to the Granby landfill. Additional sites off New Ludlow Road include the land across from the Asphalt Company entrance, a location off Morgan Street, and the property across from Dickinson Farm. Wilmot mentioned that the site across from Dickinson Farm was not available, and the owner would not sell. The 5th site identified by Marty led to a presentation of the Westover Metro Development Corporation site by Jay.

Jay provided a detailed map of the Westover Metro site, explaining that the non-profit had purchased many homes, but not all homeowners had sold and vacated their property. A certified clean site, the 5th site also identified by Marty, was discussed. Jay mentioned that Westover Metropolitan Development Corporation may be willing to donate their land to the Town of Granby, citing their lack of a plan for land use; and that they have yet to submit a plan to the town, which was due 1-2 years ago.

John stated that we are not looking to create a new land fill, only a transfer station.

Other possible locations include land situated behind the town garage (Wilmot). A discussion ensued about the size of the lot behind the garage, and its' proximity to the septic system and residential property. It was suggested that one benefit of this location is that DPW could manage the site, but Mary said that the site would be run through an enterprise fund, with its' own employees. This led back a conversation about current transfer station design, and that transfer stations have built on sites as small as one-half acre of land. It was agreed that we should not reinvent the wheel, and investigate current transfer stations in other towns; deferring to Arlene Miller for recommendations of transfer stations that the committee should research.

The Chair suggested that given Partykas' new business model in waste disposal, and his new \$300,000 facility, that he might be willing to donate land in anticipation of a waste disposal agreement.

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The committee then refocused on our action plan. The following action's will be taken before the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for June 23rd at 6PM.

1. John will contact Arlene Miller and invite her speak at the next meeting.
2. Wilmot will contact Partyka.
3. Wilmot will contact Waste Management to determine if they will be letting existing customers out of their contract now that the town has contracted with Allied.
4. Joe will call John Libera, Chairman of the Board of Westover Metropolitan Development Corporation to introduce Jay Joyce and then email Jay with his phone number.
5. Joe will contact Cathy Leonard about putting a survey up on the website.
6. Jay will contact John Libera to gather more information about possible sites for a new transfer station.
7. Jay will contact Jessica at the Granby Senior Center concerning the inclusion of a Waste Survey in the Senior Center's Monthly mailing.

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. Wilmot made the motion, John seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:44PM by unanimous vote.

5 Potential Transfer-Station Sites

1. Behind the present transfer station
2. Across from the asphalt plant entrance
3. Off of Morgan St near Westover
4. Across from Dickenson Farms entrance
5. East Street just after Sherwood

