

The Zoom meeting began at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Mike Cunningham (by phone), Marisa DeJesus, Phyllis Hanlon, Cathy Jolicoeur, Deborah Marquis, Kathleen Walker

The minutes from the December 10, 2020 meeting were read and accepted unanimously.

Deb announced that Roland and Nancy Jackson will no longer be part of the Recycling Committee.

Deb noted that she recently spoke with Neil Rhein from Keep Massachusetts Beautiful, who reported that Charlton's response to the clean-up initiative was stronger than that of any other town that responded in the Commonwealth; more than 60 kits were distributed to Charlton citizens. Deb reported that this response might be partially responsible for the reduction in litter she has noticed recently.

Earlier today, Deb spoke with Neil and discussed what actions his group could take to involve schools. She sent Erin Anderson, a fifth-grade teacher at the Charlton Middle School, the link to the Zoom presentation, "Talking Trash and Recycling." Neil said he is willing to come into the schools to show the presentation followed by a question-and-answer period. He noted that this would most likely not take place until March. Deb said she would get back to Neil to finalize plans.

The committee discussed ways to solicit financial support and raise awareness for its clean-up efforts. Deb indicated that local businesses or franchises might be willing to help. She has already approached McDonald's and left a recycling poster with the manager. She noted that last year Ted Mroczkowski and his son had attended a Recycling Committee meeting. At that time they expressed interest in helping in some way. Deb anticipates that they are still willing to help.

Since the Town Hall is open only by appointment, sales of the Recycling Committee products have come to a halt. Phyllis offered to post information on the Recycling Committee's Facebook page informing the public of the process for purchasing items during the closure of the building. She will get permission from Kara Hmielowski to include her contact information in the post. Kara has been instrumental in selling the products in the past.

Jason Bleau, a reporter for the Charlton Villager, had contacted Deb in the fall for an interview about the Recycling Committee. She noted that a press release had been published at that time and that he should contact her again in March for an update on clean-up efforts. Kathleen suggested extending an invitation to Jason to attend the next Recycling Committee meeting.

### **New Business**

Deb reported that the committee used \$244 of its \$1,000 grant to purchase more white and stainless steel scrap buckets with bags and coloring books from Go Green Solutions.

Deb asked the committee for their thoughts on plans for the spring. Kathleen noted that the Earth Fest Committee would be meeting the following week; the two committees might engage in joint activities.

Marisa voiced her desire to work with Erin Anderson for any Earth Day activities. She is on the Junior/Senior National Honor Society and is required to do 20 hours of community service every semester. She would like to work with students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade National Honor Society. Kathleen offered to send the link to the Zoom Earth Day Committee meeting to Marisa.

In light of the increase in online shopping, Cathy raised the issue of soliciting ideas for recycling cardboard. Kathleen indicated that the drop off location in Oxford will accept cardboard on Saturday mornings if no other disposal methods are available.

A discussion of local trash haulers followed. Kathleen said that the Board of Health has a list of all area haulers and she will send the list to Cathy.

Cathy also raised the issue of resurrecting a town wide yard sale, which has not taken place in recent years. Kathleen will send Cathy contact information for Lisa Westwell, who had coordinated the yard sale in previous years. The event had been a success in the past and it is worth exploring again. Kathleen suggested holding the yard sale in August, if pandemic-related restrictions are relaxed, and inviting the library and senior center to participate.

Kathleen provided an update on the COVID-19 virus vaccination efforts. She said the first responders had received the vaccine as well as half of the police force. Although not confirmed, a vaccination site will be set up through Harrington Hospital for Charlton and Southbridge, according to Kathleen. She added that 30 to 40 new cases are being confirmed every two weeks. Most of the virus-related deaths have occurred at Overlook and/or Charlton Manor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.