

The Zoom meeting began at 5:05 pm.

Present: Mike Cunningham (by phone), Catherine Jolicoeur, Phyllis Hanlon, Deborah Marquis, Kathleen Walker; Celeste and Joe Mahaney joined the meeting as guests.

Phyllis read the minutes from the March 11, 2021 meeting. Kathleen made a motion to accept the minutes; Cathy seconded. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Old Business

Deb showed those present the article published in the Charlton Villager, which spotlighted the high participation rate in the Keep Massachusetts Beautiful initiative. More than 60 families responded to the initiative.

Deb relayed information from Jim Philbrook, health director at the Board of Health, that Hazardous Waste Day did not receive a large turnout. He reported that 60 residents requested the vouchers, which waive the \$30 fee for a half carload of waste. However, only 24 individuals showed up. Deb reminded Jim that another Hazardous Waste Day will take place in June; perhaps those who did not already use their vouchers will do so in June. Prior to the March event, Deb had put up several flyers to advertise the event.

Kathleen reported that the Board of Health earmarked \$3,000 for environmental waste; \$720 of the \$3,000 was paid to Casella to cover the cost of the vouchers. If the vouchers remain unused by the end of the fiscal year, the Board of Health may request a lower amount in its FY23 budget.

Cathy asked if the budget is intended to only cover the vouchers. She suggested using the funds to rent trucks or ask town highway department trucks to pick up the hazardous waste. Kathleen noted that there might be liability issues involved. Deb offered to amend the flyer for the June event; she will suggest that family members might collect trash from older residents and/or those who cannot go to the Casella drop-off location.

Joe asked if the funds could be diverted to an anti-littering campaign or some other related activity.

Deb reported that every year the Recycling Committee has applied for and received a Small Scales Initiative Grant, valued at \$1,000. The Committee determines how to use the funds and must ensure that items purchased contain 30 percent recycled material. In 2020, the funds helped to pay for cleanup kits from Keep Massachusetts Beautiful. Some of the funds have also been used to purchase scrap buckets and bags, compostors, reusable grocery bags and environmental-themed coloring books.

The Committee engaged in a discussion about current the litter problem in Charlton. Mike has traveled extensively across the country and noted that the Midwest towns, for some unexplained

reason, don't have a litter problem. Committee members have spoken with the police department about the problem, but litter is not high on their priority list. However, the police are interested in finding people who are dumping large items. The town highway department does pick up many

Excessive amounts of nip bottles continue to be a serious problem. Deb reported that Ted and Tarek Mroczkowski, owners of Ted's Package Store, had attended a Recycling Committee meeting a year ago to discuss the issue of discarded nip bottles. They are willing to help out in some way but believe that legislation to ban nips does not seem a likely possibility. Joe offered to talk with Ted and the Charlton police chief to find a solution to the littering problem.

In the past, the Committee purchased anti-littering signs. The signs are located throughout the town, but do not mention a fine. The committee discussed using the proceeds from the sale of our recycled products to purchase additional signs that highlight a monetary penalty for littering. The Committee also considered indicating "hot spots" where the highway department should place the signs.

Brainstorming Suggestions:

- Celeste suggested that the Committee get young people involved. If the Committee puts time into a grassroots effort, it could pay off in years to come. We need to reach six, seven and eight-year old children. She noted that the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts are often looking for projects and might be willing to become involved in anti-littering efforts. Kathleen noted that Erin Anderson, a fifth-grade science teacher at Heritage School, taught her students about recycling ten years ago, who, in turn, brought the message home to their parents.
- Cathy proposed reaching out to driving schools to educate students about littering.
- Cathy recommended contacting local businesses that sponsor sports teams. She noted that one requirement attached to their sponsorship could be an emphasis on stewardship of the earth.
- Cathy suggested asking the local trash haulers to include a message about cleaning up roadside trash on the bills they send to customers.
- Joe offered to talk to the police chief about policy regarding fines for littering and how many tickets are given for littering. Kathleen suggested the Committee invite the new police chief to the next meeting.

New Business

Deb noted that Charlton residents are invited to dispose of their yard waste at the town highway department site on four separate Saturdays: April 17 and 24 and May 1 and 8.

The Committee discussed various ways to fundraise. In the past, the Committee had set up booths on Earth Day, at the Blueberry Festival in July and on the Common for Old Home Day.

The pandemic has forced these events to temporarily halt operations, although a scaled-down version of Old Home Day is planned for September 2021.

Deb suggested the Committee sell its products at Old Home Day and perhaps hold a raffle for one or two of the new age compostors.

Deb had raised the possibility of a paper shredding event at the March meeting and Mike reintroduced the subject. ProShred in Springfield charges \$250/hour. The committee considered either charging participants to use this service or asking for a donation. A possible date of a weekend in May on the Common was discussed. Mike pointed out that holding such an event would demonstrate to the community exactly what the Recycling Committee does.

The Committee tabled discussion of becoming a chapter of Keep Massachusetts Beautiful. The topic will be discussed at the May meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Joe and Celeste announced that they would join the Committee. Kathleen will ask the Board of Health to appoint them to the Recycling Committee during the next BOH meeting.

The next meeting will take place on May 13, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.