

WEAC MEETING Minutes – January 2024

In person meeting, Thursday - 1/18/24 @ 7:30 PM

Members in attendance: Kate La Croix (chair), Maria Costantini, Julie Gervais, Steve Harte (vice chair), John Isberg, Sue McGown, and Beverly Rainforth

Others in attendance: none

Introduction of new member: Kate introduced John Isberg, who was recently appointed to WEAC by the Select Board. He recently retired from National Grid.

Routine business: Approval of the December meeting minutes. The minutes of the December 7, 2023 meeting, were unanimously approved after making some corrections.

Topics discussed w/next steps:

CCE Update

1. Maria reported that there has been a lot of progress in the efforts to expedite and streamline the DPU process to approve electric aggregation plans. After a bill was submitted in late 2023 to limit the power of the DPU to delay aggregation plans, the DPU offered to have a dialogue with the stakeholders and held some public meetings. The latest action was to ask the aggregation consultants (including Good Energy) and the municipal aggregation community “*to take the pen*” and draft a new version of the DPU guidelines. A first draft was discussed with the DPU at a technical session in December 2023. In early January 2024 the consultants and other stakeholders held a meeting to present the revised guidelines. They were looking for the communities to provide any level of support for this proposal before the public meeting on January 24. The deadline for comments was January 12 and there was not enough time to get approval from WEAC to support this proposal. Maria asked whether the committee would authorize her (and others) to support the DPU guidelines if the need arises.
2. **Action item**
A motion was passed to authorize Maria and John to provide support for the DPU guidelines that are being developed by Good Energy and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

Project updates:

1. Meeting with DPW. Kate reported that a meeting was scheduled for next Tuesday. The major topics to discuss include: 1) recycling contamination-how can WEAC help DPW? 2) technical assistance grant to improve recycling, 3) collection of furniture at the curb during bulk collection days (see #3 below), 4) their thoughts on the idea of making composting a town-wide operation, and 5) how WEAC can help DPW improve textile recycling. Maria suggested asking DPW whether the brochure for the recycling day can be modified to clarify that plastic and metals are collected.
2. WEAC collaboration with New Life Furniture Bank (NLFB). Steve reported that NLFB’s volunteers pick up furniture two days per week. They would be working with us and help us

Approved on February 15, 2024

collect the furniture that would be otherwise discarded on Bulk Collection days. Steve is developing an on-line form that Westwood residents would fill out to describe the items they have and provide the address. In order to proceed it would be helpful to get permission from DPW.

Action item: Kate will add this topic to the agenda of the DPW meeting.

3. String light recycling. Kate reported that she worked with the WHS environmental group (YCAC) to set up the holiday string light collection. The students created a flyer to advertise the collection that was posted on social media. There are collection boxes at the high school and the main library. WEAC will work with either Junk Teens and/or Missy Hollenbeck to get the collected lights brought to a place where they can be stripped down and the copper recycled. She viewed this as a pilot collection with the idea to run the program in December/early January of next year.

Action items. Kate will find out if extension cords could be added.

4. Pesticide bills at the state level. Kate reported that she submitted the letter in support of two pesticide bills to our state representatives (Note: the letter was approved at the December meeting).

WHS YCAC (Youth Climate Action Committee) request for speaker grant

1. Kate reported that she was approached by the teacher who works with YCAC about whether WEAC would support a speaker (at a cost of \$250). They are specifically interested in having a meteorologist. Kate asked that they submit a short proposal to WEAC.
2. **Action Item**
A motion was passed to approve donating \$250.00 to the QWHC YCAC to support the speaker.

Discussion of recycling info video from DPW and potential WEAC involvement in the production of future info videos

Kate reported that Westwood's recycling stream is contaminated and the town may have to pay more for recycling. DPW produced a video in collaboration with the Westwood Media Center to alert the residents about the issues and provide clear guidelines for what can and can't be recycled. Kate suggested that WEAC produce a similar video. Beverly suggested reaching out to the students regarding the production of the video. Sue mentioned that the town has a "reverse 911" that could be used to inform the residents about the recycling issues. No action was taken.

Discussion of the TREX plastic film/bag recycling program.

1. Kate explained that this organization recently launched a community recycling challenge to collect plastic bags, which are used to make wood- alternative decking and railing. Communities that collect at least 1,000 pounds of recycled plastic film during a 12-month period would receive a composite bench. There are a number of drop off locations in Massachusetts, such as Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Wegmans, and Whole Foods.
2. **Action items**
Bev will get more information about the drop off locations and how to sign up for the program before deciding to propose it to Westwood residents.

Other recycling idea

Received April 2, 2024@8:30AM
By: Westwood Town Clerk

1. Steve suggested researching Terracycle, a company that has the mission of keeping trash out of landfills and incinerators, with programs ranging from recycling to reuse of specific products. Kate mentioned the Repair Café, which is about repairing things.
2. **Action items**
Steve will research Terracycle to evaluate whether we could have a program in Westwood. Kate will research whether there is a Repair Café nearby or how to set up one in Westwood.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05. The next meeting will be on February 15, 2024.

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