

League of Women Voters Mid-Hudson Region
Materials Management Committee
Minutes of Meeting June 7, 2016

Call to Order: 6:10 p.m.

Present: Kathy OConnor, Jolanda Jansen, Margot Becker, Kathie Beinkafner, Kristen Faughnan, Cindy Lanzetta, Anne Needham, Merrill Sunderland, Dare Thompson, and Sarah Womer

Absent: Susan Holland and Noa Simons

MINUTES Motion made to approve the minutes of the 05-03-16 meeting (Jolanda, Cindy). All in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sarah will begin a new job as Director of Community Engagement at Riverkeeper on June 20th. Her team at Zero to Go will be taking over daily operations, though she will remain involved and be a part of all major decisions. She will continue to be active in our Committee and is excited to share the new knowledge she will gain.

Kristen is also beginning a new job: she will be moving to Boston to be a Research Associate at Brandeis University. Unfortunately, this was the last Committee meeting she will be able to attend before leaving.

OLD BUSINESS

TRASH FEST ULSTER

Margot emphasized that Trash Fest is not over: the opening event occurred, but four educational events are still upcoming. Her main concern now is getting people to come to these remaining events.

Jolanda suggested that people in this area are used to traveling a distance for interesting events, and that Margot not consider her audience limited

only to residents of Marbletown and the immediately surrounding areas. She also offered to “boost” (pay to distribute to target audiences) Facebook posts about the upcoming events, and advised Margot to get in touch with Merrill about having these posts made.

Sarah suggested that it would also be helpful for everyone to take a minute to invite their friends to “like” the TRASH FEST Ulster Facebook page. In addition, Kathy O is going to air her video of the Trash Fest opening event on the public access channel she is affiliated with.

The upcoming events are:

June 15th: Screening of the film *Bag It* (6:30pm, Stone Ridge Community Center)

June 16th: How to Reduce Your Personal Waste Stream (6:30pm, Stone Ridge Community Center)

June 18th: Composting Workshop by Cornell Cooperative Extension (SUNY Ulster Community Garden)

June 22nd: Public Hearing on Plastic Bags (6:30pm, Stone Ridge Community Center)

Margot is still thinking about how Trash Fest can be “useful” and have a lasting effect that continues even after June is over.

UC SWM IC

Kathie B reports that the Commission is currently editing the report, and that this so far has been a lengthy process. Jolanda added that the language used in the recommendations is being considered very carefully, and that the Commission is also clarifying for itself what its power is and how it can (and should) exercise it. Education is a big focus in the recommendations, because these recommendations are easier to carry out than those that require legislative action.

Jolanda said that another important issue is the question of what will go in the Ulster County Materials Management Plan that must go on record with the DEC. Though this plan has been submitted, the County will be getting

it back with comments, and will have the opportunity to make changes at that time. (It is not clear when this will happen, however, as the DEC has so far not adhered to any of its deadlines.)

Margot asked whether the recommendations seemed to be good ones. Jolanda replied that one of the main recommendations is going to be asking the director of UCCRA to research potential long-term solutions that might be taken after the contract with Seneca Meadows expires. This is an important issue without a simple solution, and the first step will need to be more research by real professionals in the area.

There were a few specific questions about the recommendations. Dare asked why the issue is not being looked at more regionally. Jolanda says it might be: neighboring counties may be invited to participate if doing so looks financially practical. Kathy O asked what attention is being given to recycling; Jolanda said that it is on the list of recommendations. Anne asked whether the Dutchess County burn plant might provide an alternative to Seneca Meadows; Jolanda explained that the tipping fee makes that option too expensive.

Kathie B said that there has also been a good deal of discussion about recycling, since the low price of oil means that the cost of collecting and processing recyclables exceeds the price at which the resulting materials can be sold. Jolanda added that the possibility of creating a local landfill was also discussed, but that this is a difficult conversation because of the strong community opposition often associated with such projects.

There was then a discussion of the methane collection systems in landfills, and of the amounts of carbon dioxide released by various waste processing systems.

Sarah said that the issue of what to do with Ulster County's waste is an important one that is becoming even more pressing – but that it is also one that very few people understand. She thinks it is very important that we all talk to people about it and help them to better understand the situation.

The Commission is currently meeting every week and trying to finish the report as soon as possible. The current deadline is August 1st. The presentation of the report to the Legislature would be a good time for this Committee to be visible in showing our support.

PAINT STEWARDSHIP

Kathy O reminded us that the Committee agreed to send a letter of support to Paint Care. A copy of this letter was read, approved by the Committee, and signed by Kathy O, Jolanda, and Dare. Kathy O was happy that sending this letter provided us with a means to raise our voice in support of this measure.

There was then a discussion of the status of paint stewardship legislation in the NYS Legislature. Dare reported that the bill we want to support is the one proposed by Assemblyman Al Stirpe. Cindy explained that the important difference between this bill and the other one under consideration is that Assemblyman Stirpe's bill provides for the collection of a fee to cover the cost of the program. The other bill (which is the one passed by the Senate) does not. This is a significant shortcoming, as the fee (charged to consumers when they buy paint) has been found to be crucial in creating an effective program.

Next, there was a discussion of the likelihood of Assemblyman Stirpe's bill being passed. Dare and Anne felt that nothing was likely to happen until 2017, when the new Legislature enters and bills must be reintroduced. Cindy reported that some legislative staff members and Lowe's are playing a big role in blocking the legislation.

Cindy believes that the letter is a good first step. She will investigate how else the League can help and report back at the next meeting. In the meantime, it was suggested that someone in Assemblymember Cahill's district might speak to him about moving the bill forward, as he is a co-sponsor. Cindy will speak to Assemblyman Frank Skartados about this as well.

Margot said that whenever she speaks to people about paint stewardship, she finds them to be very uninterested. She finds this odd and cannot quite figure out why it is the case.

Finally, there was a brief discussion of the bill proposed to ban plastic bag fees. It was suggested that people contact Assemblymember Heastie with their opposition.

NEW BUSINESS

- o Dutchess County will hold a Household Hazardous Waste event on June 25th. Registration is required and only open to Dutchess County residents. Sarah says that this is one of only two such events this year. The County used to hold 8, but has reduced the number due to lack of funding, so it is very important to promote and support this event.
- o We discussed the possibility of attending the presentation of the UC SWM IC report to the UC Legislature in lieu of our meeting that month.

MEETING ADJOURNED 7:03 p.m.

(Submitted by Kristen Faughnan)