

League of Women Voters Mid Hudson Region  
Materials Management Committee  
Minutes of Meeting **March 8, 2016**

**Call to Order:** 5:50 p.m.

**Present:** Kathy OConnor (Chair), Sarah Womer, Anne Needham, Kristen Faughnan, Dare Thompson, Margot Becker, Susan Holland, Noa Simons

**Absent:** Soyol Smalls (Secretary), Kathie Beinkafner, Cindy Lanzetta, Jolanda Jansen (President)

**MINUTES** Motion made to approve the minutes of the 02-09-16 meeting (Kristen, Anne). All in favor.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### MATERIALS MANAGEMENT BROCHURE

The brochure is completed and copies were handed out. It was suggested that an electronic copy be made available on the LWVMHR website and/or Facebook page.

### MEETING WITH TRACY BARTELS

Tracy Bartels is not often available at our usual meeting times. We will therefore hold our next meeting on a different day to allow her to attend. This meeting will replace our usual second-Tuesday meeting.

### STYROFOAM ALTERNATIVES FACT-FINDING

Ulster County Legislature Chairman Ken Ronk reports that he is being pressured to repeal the county's Styrofoam ban. Since much of the opposition appears to be related to the cost of Styrofoam alternatives, Kathy O suggested (based on an earlier discussion with Kathie B) that we provide informational resources on this issue.

Discussion established that the goal of this project would be to provide information about Styrofoam alternatives, their costs, and their environmental desirability. This information would be aimed at food service establishments. It could be publicized in a variety of ways, including on a dedicated website or Facebook page, with a newspaper press release, and/or by distributing a PDF copy directly to relevant parties.

Sarah and Kathy O agreed to form a task force on this issue.

Other points that arose during the discussion included the possibility of incorporating this initiative in Trash Fest, which was decided against. Margot remarked on the differences between Ulster opposition to Styrofoam bans and the opposition in New York City, which came in large part from the Styrofoam industry.

### PAINT STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES

Dare is looking into the current status of the Paint Stewardship legislation that passed the Senate last year. She is happy to sign our letters, but believes that learning more may help those letters be more relevant and more effectively targeted. She will continue to investigate this issue.

### UCSWM IC

Kathie B, though recovering from health trouble, is still planning to submit her section of the report.

Dare expressed concern that decision-makers often ignore outside experts' advice. She believes the League may need to make its presence felt during the next steps of this process in order to add weight to the Commission's recommendations.

There was also a general discussion of the issues, including the various contingencies that will be included in the Commission's report and the difficulties posed by falling prices for recycled materials.

### UCRRA

The discussion of lower materials prices continued here, focusing more specifically on the impact of this trend for UCCRA. Kathy O said that UCCRA stores its materials when the market is low so that it can sell them for a better price later; however, they have limited space, which may eventually force them to discard recyclables.

Kathy O then reported on various UCCRA activities. Merlyn Akhtar has redesigned the UCCRA website very nicely. In addition, UCCRA is holding a household hazardous waste event April 16th (advance registration required). Finally, the openings on the UCCRA board have been filled: Fred Wadnola is the new Chairman, while Jack Hayes and Brian Devine are also new members.

### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF ZERO TO GO

Sarah reported that Zero to Go continues to do well. They are now up to 31,000 pounds collected, and customers want composted material. Cornell Cooperative Extension has asked them to participate in a report they are compiling.

During this time, Sarah also introduced Noa Simons of Community Compost Company. Noa explained that her business operates in New Paltz, Hoboken, and Jersey City, and that they are in the process of talking to Kingston about establishing a municipal-sponsored composting program. Community Compost Company collects both business and residential compost, though their main customers in New Paltz are businesses. They are also aiming to contract with SUNY New Paltz.

### DUTCHESS COUNTY RECYCLING/COMPOSTING EVENTS

Kathy O reported that she, Jolanda, Kristen, and Soyal are working on creating a Materials Management activity station that we can use at various community events. It will include the brochure, a pop-up tent, informational materials, and children's activities. She hopes that as well as spreading information, this will make us more visible in the community.

Kathy O also mentioned the idea of making a throwing/sorting game using Sarah's colorful waste bins. Noa mentioned that she has a similar sorting game that children play with cut-outs on a table. She also said that Community Compost gets asked to attend many events, and that she would be happy to refer some to us if we liked.

### MARBLETOWN TRASH FEST

Margot reported that she received a small grant from Arts Mid-Hudson to create this event. It will take place in Marbletown during the month of June, and will include multiple events and artworks. The transfer station will be a main location for these events, which will both promote awareness of the station and be a way of including people who might not otherwise seek out an arts event. MaMA (Marbletown Multi-Arts) is also likely to participate and provide an indoor space.

Margot envisions Trash Fest as a platform: if people want to host events, or tie their existing events into it, they are welcome to do so. The size of Trash Fest will depend on how many people get involved in this way. If few people get involved, it will be primarily an art event; if more get involved, it can be larger and more event-focused.

Potential events discussed included an opening day, a waste reduction workshop, children's events, and a festival day. Margot also needs helpers and publicity.

Finally, Margot thanked the League for sponsoring the event, which made her grant possible. If we would like to participate in a more active way, we are welcome to do so.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- o Sarah is going to be on the radio on March 21<sup>st</sup> to talk about composting and Zero to Go. Anne will confirm this with the radio station.

MEETING ADJOURNED 7:15 p.m.

(Minutes prepared by Kristen Faughnan)