

Town of Amherst Recycling and Waste Committee Minutes

January 24, 2024 – Amherst Town Hall

Start time 07:00 pm End Time 08:25 pm

Committee Member Attendees: John Szalasny, Jean Neff, Don Kuhn, Megan Reddish

Guests: Eileen Torre

Excused Members: John Hannon

Committee Liaison/Resource Attendees: Mike Szukala, Ryan Licata

- 2024 officers (Chair John Szalasny & Vice Chair Don Kuhn) elected unanimously
- Meetings will continue to be on the third Wednesday of each month
- Annual 2023 solid waste tonnage down 150 tons as compared to 2022 totals
- Annual 2023 recycling tonnage down 340 tons compared to 2022 totals
- Ryan said new scoop study of recycling to be done by BRE
- Food Scrap collections – 4445# at the markets and Ryan estimated about the same total collected at the highway department
- Compost piles still waiting to be screened – company doing the screening is waiting for a part from overseas – Ryan said should be able to have compost available for the start of the farmers market in May – John asked if we could hold it a couple of weeks to hand out for the Village Earth Day on June 1st
- Ryan noted that compost pile monitoring done on site and verified by NOCO consultants show that the pile is now consistently hot enough to allow for collections to be accepted in approved compostable bags – the composting flyer has already been updated to show this change
- Ryan followed up and did modifications on CLEAN document – John & Eileen asked if either the colored glass collections sites could be identified or have the reference to take it somewhere else removed from document
- Plastic Utensils Upon Request Legislation waiting for final draft
- Town board will not fund website for the committee separate from the Town website
- Town board approved a resolution in support of the Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility legislation under consideration by the NYS Legislature – if passed, it would transfer costs for recycling or disposing of packaging from the municipality to the manufacturers

New Items

- DEC received a complaint from a Town resident about the compost piles attracting wildlife (coyotes) – Ryan responded already to the DEC noting new developments in

North Amherst displacing wildlife and that the compost facility is locked and is inaccessible for residents

- Amherst is part of Erie County Northwest Solid Waste Board (inc. Grand Island and Tonawanda) – talk about waste issues & share best practices – Amherst will be joining other communities that subsidized purchases in the Erie County Annual Rain Barrel and Compost Bin Sale which will bring the price for a home compost bin down to \$30
- Ryan will be a featured speaker at the 2024 NYS Organics Summit in Buffalo (April 16-18) to talk about the Town of Amherst Composting Initiative
- Ryan will be talking to Mill Middle about expanding the Composting Initiative – program has been started in other Williamsville middle schools – NOTE: this is for the individual families and not to compost school food waste
- Ryan is discussing plans for Buffalo Niagara Heritage Museum site asking that the town turn it into an Eco-Park to collect all non-curb side recyclables including items like textiles, expanded polystyrene, an additional food waste collections site, etc.
- Town will make its first purchases with state grant money for composting – Town will start with four additional non-monitored sites for food scrap collections (probably Williamsville (in Town/Village Hall Parking lot), Senior Center, Eggertsville, NW Amherst) – Steel bins from a company called MetroStore that can hold 35 or 65 gallon totes – residents will need to register from an app to use drop-off (QR codes will be on the bin) – the QR code will also have the list of acceptable items for drop-offs – bins are locked – app will unlock them for a minute – Megan offered to help with the customizable graphics
- Next purchase would be for a curbside composting test (not likely to start before Spring 2025) – Town has identified 12-gallon totes and would purchase 1000 to start – the test would be on a first-come, first-serve basis, with any extras on a waiting list – test will likely have pick-ups 2X a month and collections will need to be bagged in approved compostable bags – pick-ups would be done by town employees and would use the vehicle already approved for purchase to move the food scrap totes
- Any changes would be communicated through Mail Chimp account and list of emails from the food scrap buckets already given out

Meeting Schedule Dates:

January 24
February 21
March 20
April 17
May 15
June 19

July 17
August 21
September 18
October 16
November 20
December 18