

## **Town of Amherst Waste & Recycling Advisory Board Meeting Minutes 11/19/2025**

**In attendance:** Jacqui Berger, Mike Szukala, Jean Neff, John Szalasny, Eileen Torre, Kim Ferullo, Mary Fisher

**Absent:** Ryan C. Licata, Steven Floss, Don Kuhn, Kimberly Luangpakdy Pietrzak, Josh Wilcox Megan Reddish, Diane Manus, John Hannon, Eustace Mendez

John stated that the terms of three (3) board members will expire on December 31, 2025. John Szalasny, Megan Reddish & John Hannon. John noted that he will not only be retiring from the board but will be moving to Miami Fl. John noted that Megan will not be renewing her full participation but has offered her graphic design skills when needed. John Hannon's status is unknown.

John noted that he had no reports from Ryan.

Jean, regarding her Famers Market report, noted that folks dropping off compost were consistent over the entire summer. Eileen noted that someone even dropped compost off during the pumpkin drop event location in the Village. Jean noted that she gave out 151 bins in 2025 and the total number to date is 1,556 over three (3) years of the program. The amount of compostable organic material dropped off at the Market filled 60 municipal totes between May & November 2025. The municipal bins in the Village, as at the Highway Dept., will be available all year long.

The municipal totes have previously been weighed by Sashti Balasundaram, an early advisor to the project, at around 250-300 pounds per tote. John stated that Ryan's weights seem lower than Sashti's weights. Here is a link to Sashti's company:

<https://www.halcyonhouse.org/halcyon-incubator/fellows/sashti-balasundaram/>

The pumpkin and gourd collection resulted in 347 items at the Highway Dept. and 385 items at the Village drop location. Eileen Torre noted that a resident has contacted her about separating the small "pie pumpkins" from the others that were being dropped off and that they would be used to make pies at a local church. Kim & Mary noted that they had picked up an additional 50 pumpkins/gourds just driving the Smallwood to Burroughs streets after the public event. These numbers are in addition to those noted above.

John spoke about a letter he received from Shawn Lavin, sent to all Committee Heads, asking for feedback on their advisory boards. Mike suggested that John should include a suggestions/request for this advisory board to be given money for a budget in his response. John also noted the concept of a "Recycling Park" as is done in Germany. He suggested that the Amherst Museum property might be a good location for such a thing. It was also noted that Germany has a 'pay-to-throw' system, a scheme in which households pay a fee for landfill waste they generate. Jacqui Berger noted that was an interesting concept.

Kim F. asked how the Board can help to promote advocacy for the compost project in conjunction with the Town over the winter when the Farmers Market is no longer in session. Suggestions were articles in the Bee, posters created and posted on public bulletin boards, or presentation to the public.

Jacqui Berger inquired about how the project to pick up compostable materials at 100 homes was going. She was informed by John that keeping staff on the project had been problematic and that the Advisory Board voiced concerns about rodents because the household collection bins are not rodent proof. The project has been suspended temporarily.

John is still holding the large quantity of used batteries collected at several public events held over the summer. He is currently waiting to hear back from Gary Carrel, Solid Waste Recycling Specialist with Erie County Dept of Environment & Planning. Gary may have an outlet to recycle the batteries after the original plan with Inter-State Batteries fell through due the large quantity of batteries collected.

A back up option (so John doesn't have to take the batteries to Florida with him): HazMan does have a coupon for Erie County residents but several of us would need to help. Kim and I are willing to do this. Here is a link to the voucher:

<https://www.hazmanusa.com/calendar/2025/01/07/erie-county-voucher-program>

John spoke briefly about the Packaging Reduction Bill and steps to help it pass at the State level. For more details about the Bill, follow this link:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/S1464>

Moving Forward:

- \*Mike Szukala will remain the Town liaison to the committee

- \*Jean will attend the 12/6 Holiday Market after all, to represent the Composting program

- \*Eileen will ask Jen & Brian who volunteered with the pumpkin collection if they would like to join the advisory board

- \*Mary asked about Climate Smart Communities (CSC), specifically what types of activities garner "points" towards a "bronze or silver" rating. Jacqui has been managing the data collection for the CSC grant. She stated that the Town cannot do the "priority action" items because of the size of the Town. To read more details about this Grant, follow this link:

<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>

- \* John & Eileen mentioned two (2) current Sierra Club Members as possible new committee members Janet Lenichek, Chair Sara Schultz, Treasurer

**Next Committee Meeting 12/17**