

**CITIZENS GREEN COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, November 10, 2011**

**7:00 PM – Douglas Library**

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*Carl Thompson*  
HEBRON TOWN CLERK

**Members Present:** Peter Moon, Eszter Samodai, Ruth Twomey, Laura Steiner, Gil Salk, and Chuch Redfern. Michael Harder arrived at 7:05 pm

**Staff Present:** Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Andy Tierney, Director of Public Works

Bonnie called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Public Communications** – No one was there to speak under Public Communications.

**Transfer Station Fees** – Mr. Tierney told Committee members that he and Mike Harder have been working together for years on refuse and recycling issues. He said that they looked at other Towns to see if Hebron was comparable with fees, items being collected, etc., and Hebron is pretty comparable to other communities. He went over present staffing levels at the Transfer Station. He did say that if the Town goes to Pay To Throw, he would need extra staff, as the bags would have to be policed. The staff would have to check incoming bags and also watch for the proper stickers, and if there is a fee for the stickers, then someone would have to make sure that this is being monitored. He felt that he would need 1 more full time person. R. Twomey asked if the amount of the salary for this person is in the handout that Donna Lanza gave to the Committee previously. A. Tierney said yes. She asked if he would also need part time help. A. Tierney said probably not, as he is trying to keep the staff lean.

L. Steiner said that if she understands the information correctly, if the Town charged \$25 per sticker, there is an estimate the Town could collect \$70,000 in revenues, but the cost of a staff person would be \$45,000. A. Tierney said that is correct and that a full time person would be able to also check the garbage and more recyclables would be found, thus bringing in more revenue. Currently the refuse bags are not policed and no one knows how many recyclables are being thrown out. Anything different we do to monitor the trash bags, would bring in more revenue and increase recycling. M. Harder said that it is so important to educate the public on this.

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R. Twomey asked if it would be worth doing single stream recycling. A. Tierney said no, not at the transfer station as the Town would have to purchase another compactor and there is no room to place this at the Public Works complex. He said that if the Committee recommends to the Board of Selectmen a fee for stickers and/or pay to throw, it is important that the Committee knows the hurdles they may face in implementing this.

M. Harder said that single stream recycling would help but it would be more helpful if curbside pickup does the same thing and we could receive the revenue. Again, educating the public is key.

E. Samodai feels that pay per throw would be a big incentive to raising the recycling numbers. R. Twomey felt that another way to raise the recycling rates is to place recycling bins in other areas of Town so people do not have to travel to the Transfer Station. A. Tierney said that Glastonbury does this but it is not policed and if the loads become contaminated with non-recyclable items, the entire load is rejected. The Town would have to purchase containers where nothing else but recyclables could be placed in the container.

M. Harder said he spoke with the gentleman in charge of refuse in Glastonbury and he told Mike that at first, lots of junk was placed in the container but the more they educated the public, the less it was happening. The police go after anyone who leaves items that are not recyclable. The gentleman from Glastonbury said that he can count on one hand how often CRRA rejects one of their loads. Glastonbury feels the program works well but he said do not put the container in an isolated area.

P. Moon said that at Boston College, their recycling containers were in the shape of the item it is supposed to take. M. Harder said that Glastonbury has two satellite locations and Mansfield has a great program and they make their own receptacles.

Bonnie asked if any of the Committee members wanted more information on the topic of refuse to help with their deliberations. C. Redfern said that he is still researching the topic on his own. M. Harder said that not many Towns do pay per throw in CT but nationwide it is a huge program and it is proven that recycling rates go up with pay per throw.

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C. Redfern asked what incentive the public can have to get them to recycle more. How can we get people to really understand the need to recycle? M. Harder said that people are stuck in their ways and they feel it takes too much work to recycle. The Committee could try to reach people through environmental concern, by saying that the number one way to reduce emissions in the air is increasing recycling rates.

R. Twomey asked if the Board of Selectmen had ever discussed pay to throw. Bonnie said she was not aware of this being discussed. C. Redfern felt Committee members should meet with other Towns that are successfully doing this and get some input from them. R. Twomey said this should be brought up at the Wethersfield meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

E. Samodai asked if there was a way to find out how much we could save if people were recycling at a rate of 50%. Bonnie said she would look into this.

Bonnie recommended the Committee hold a public forum on the topic of permit fees and pay as you throw before making any decisions on recommendations to the Board. Perhaps hold it on a Saturday and we could hand out flyers on the forum at the Transfer Station before the event. Someone from DEEP could be a speaker and at that meeting, the Committee could explain the importance of recycling and the costs involved to the Town.

R. Twomey was wondering if the group could put together a quick survey in time for the Energy Fair on Saturday. M. Harder suggested three questions to ask people.

Everyone looked at the items in the National Recycle Day box that could be handed out at the Fair on Saturday. M. Harder asked that flyers that the Green Committee is handing out at the Fair on Saturday, also be handed out at the Transfer Station. Bonnie will follow through on this.

E. Samodai asked if there is any composting going on in Town. Bonnie thought RHAM was doing this, but she will check with the Superintendent. M. Harder said that Mansfield does this with the Town buildings and perhaps we could add a topic such as this into the Board's curriculum. M. Harder thought that we could also have a regional compost area. Perhaps we could receive grant funds to purchase compost bins.

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L. Steiner felt the Committee should suggest to people what they should do to reduce refuse costs and not just educate them on why it is important to recycle, compost, etc. Make it easy for the public to implement programs on their own. Even though it saves the Town money, you have to explain to them how it affects their taxes. She used to go to the transfer station all of the time, but the bags hung around in the garage for a long length of time and now she is having trash picked up curbside, as it easier.

R. Twomey felt having recycling drop offs at the schools would make it easier for people to drop off recyclables. Parents could drop the items off as they dropped their children off at school. Someone would have to pick up the containers once or twice per week. C. Redfern said that volunteers worked at the Transfer Station in New Hampshire to assist the Town. Bonnie said you would have to be very careful doing this because the workers are union and this would have to be negotiated.

M. Harder suggested a survey on Saturday where people could check off what things they would be willing to do to help the environment.

E. Samodai put forward the following list for the check off surveys:

- 1) Pay To Throw for Refuse
- 2) Are you already recycling and if so, how much?
- 3) Which of the following do you recycle (list items)
- 4) Are you willing to drop off your recyclables at the transfer station if you have curbside pickup?
- 5) If the Town has satellite recycling areas, would you be willing to drop off recyclables at those locations?
- 6) Pay a Sticker Fee to use the Transfer Station
- 7) Composting
- 8) Are you aware that the Town can save money by recycling?
- 9) Are you willing to serve as an Alternate on the Green Committee?

R. Twomey felt it was important to let people know how much the Town loses in Transfer Station fees and how it affects the Town budget.

M. Harder suggested having student representatives on the Committee.

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E. Samodai said that she would get the checklist/questionnaire done for Saturday, so she would need the feedback on the draft checklist by Friday.

**Minutes of October 21, 2011** – C. Redfern; seconded by Gil Salk approved the minutes of October 21<sup>st</sup>. The vote was unanimous.

**Minutes of October 27, 2011** – R. Twomey; seconded by E. Samodai approved the minutes of October 27<sup>th</sup>. The vote was unanimous.

A motion was made by G. Salk; seconded by M. Harder to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie L. Therrien