

Plainville

Recycling & Solid Waste Commission

Thursday Sept. 12, 2019

Room 200 7:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Rich Ireland.

I. Attendance: Present were: Richard Ireland Jr. Rebecca Ireland, Wayne Fish, and George Fensick III.

Absent were Kathy Cole and town liaison Deb Tompkins.

II. Guest Speakers were Representative William Petit and Mark Bobman, recycling executive director.

First to be discussed was the increase in recycling fees. Mr. Bobman said the future is bleak. Looking at the handouts, he said if you compare the 2019 fiscal year, residential solid waste cost and look at the recycling waste cost the negative number shows revenue of about \$14,700, and the change going into the fiscal year 2020, that number increases by about \$120,000. It becomes a big part of the town budget for recycling and solid waste. It is also likely to stay that way for a long time. Mr. Bobman said because of the limitation on exports from materials from North America to Southeast Asia, a lot the material that was traditionally recycled has little or no value or in some cases it may actually cost money to dispose of. Southeast Asia has started to ship material back to the country of origin, including Australia, Mexico and North America. The material that was going overseas, which literally was trash and some recyclables, entrepreneurs, unscrupulous brokers and small time operators, were doing something with it which was literally dumping on fields, burning it and dumping it into rivers and streams. Many of the nations are saying we are done with it, take it back. It has become a global problem. Wayne asked why we couldn't use our own recyclables, and Mr. Bobman said simply it is labor cost. As an example in China, if a small time operator started buying material to reuse, they might fill a room with and send in a bunch of people to buy the good stuff for a minimal amount of money, because of cheap labor. This is only a small part of the picture, but an important part plus, the absence of regulations. For a very long time there wasn't an environmental agency on the national basis to look at these things and start to enforcing fines. George asked Rep. Petit if anything is being done at the state level. Rep. Petit stated a bill was passed, called Public Act 18-18 by the DEEP Commission. Since it is only 1 year, there isn't any data on it. Mr. Bobman said there was an attempt to establish a program with glass, and they had it up and running and delivering to a company in South Windsor, but the quality of their standards were very high and they did an inspection and found a violation, which was very small, but that was the end of it. Rep. Petit said that Plainville has to do what it needs to do that, which is best for its the economical and environmental part and Ct. needs to take a view on the bigger end. Rep. Petit said he can submit something to the state, if Plainville could come up with some ideas, but it has to be done with in the next 3-4 months, because 2020 is a non-budget year. There will be only be committee bills in 2020. He said it is best to do it in incremental steps, and bring it to both sides, and hopefully get both sides to

agree then the chairman may be more likely to listen if is a bi-partisan submission. This would be his best recommendation at this time. And to keep educating the public about recycling. There have only been 3 bills of any merit in the last 3 years, which included the plastic bags, the recycling pilot program and microfiber. The DEEP is working on a program for synthetics. Mr. Bobman said if DEEP started pushing corporations by offering incentives it might result in more positive friendly and beneficial measures. The state budget is not going to offer a massive program to re-educate the public. The challenge at the legislative level is unbelievable. Mr. Bobman stated about 2/3 of out trash stays in Ct. at trash energy facilities. There is a state statute that requires an establishment which produces 2 tons of trash a week to have food waste separated from trash. The facility Quantum is at capacity and is looking to expand. Mr. Bobman recommended not putting too much effort into trying to change the state statute because of all the points Rep. Petit has made. He stated the more effective approach is community activism, networking with businesses or other non-profit organizations. He also stated the United States did not invest in the infrastructures to handle materials domestically. Rich stated that he has been asked by the Saint Jerome Home to go over there and speak about recycling.

III. Guest to Audience – The guest at the meeting was Robin Erbanksi, a friend of Wayne Fish. She is from Southington and made a suggestion to have more classes about recycling.

IV. Minutes – A motion was made by Wayne Fish to accept the minutes of the August 8, 2019 meeting and it was seconded by Rebecca Ireland. All in favor 40 to 0.

V. Bills and Communications –

A. Town Council Liaison - Deb Tompkins was absent due to a prior obligation.

B. CRC – Rich stated that they continued to discuss what has been happening during the last legislative year and are looking forward to the next year.

C. Other – A report from Scott stated we collected 1,037 lbs. for the month of August and we are getting paid \$20.00 a ton.

IV. Old Business – none

VII. New Business

A. Outreach – Rich stated he has filled out the application for the pumpkin festival. Also, he knows a member from CRC that does a program for kids to educate about recycling and he would like to get him to come to the library to do a program.

VIII. Adjournment – A motion was made by Wayne Fish at 8:PM to adjourn, it was seconded by George Fensick. All in favor – 4 to 0.

Respectfully submit to Richard Ireland for review by

Donna Hart, recording secretary