

**ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY
ZERO WASTE COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 25, 2024**

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency held a Zero Waste Committee Meeting on April 25, 2024.

The proceedings were convened at 5:03 PM. The Zero Waste Committee Meeting was held at the Agency's Main Office located 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY.

Committee Members present: Chair Donna Egan, Committee Members Regis Obijiski, James Gordon (arrived at 5:58 PM), Andrew Ghiorse, and David Gilmour (arrived at 5:04 PM).

Staff present: Counsel/Secretary Kenneth Gilligan (arrived at 5:52 PM); Executive Director Marc Rider, Director of Finance and Administration Tim DeGraff, Director of Sustainability Angelina Brandt and Office Manager Melinda France.

From the public: Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislator; Tyson Robb, Solid Waste Coordinator of Delaware County; Kerry Russell, Deputy Commissioner of Division of Solid Waste for Dutchess County; Mark Witkowski, Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Public Works for Sullivan County; William Kemble, reporter of the Daily Freeman; Katherine Beinkafner; and Peter Humphries.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regis Obijiski made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 28, 2024, Zero Waste Committee Meeting, as written, and it was seconded by Andrew Ghiorse. 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 absent (GORDON/GILMOUR).

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next ZWCM will be held on May 23, 2024, at 5:00 PM.

OLD BUSINESS

Donna Egan asked each guest to present with respect to how their county handles organics. Tyson Robb, Solid Waste Coordinator of Delaware County; Mark Witkowski, Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Public Works for Sullivan County and Kerry Russell, Deputy Commissioner of Division of Solid Waste for Dutchess County spoke about their facilities.

The complete discussion can be heard (recording 1:40-42:16)

- Tyson Robb, Solid Waste Coordinator of Delaware County (Recording 2:34-20:00)
 - Small county in population (approx.. 50,000)
 - 8 transfer stations-owed and operated by the town
 - The MRF processes single stream
 - C&D cell which bulky debris is brought to and it is used for a cover on the active landfill
 - Active landfill only receives residuals from the MRF and compost facility
 - All MSW go in the front of the compost building

- 3 acre building
 - Been around since approximately 1960s-1970s
 - Only one in NYS state that composts MSW
 - The process of composting-
 - MSW comes in the front and runs through a large rotating drum (approx.. 160 feet long & 14 feet around)
 - Slowly turns-fermentation process happens
 - Bags open up which contains MSW
 - Organics breakdown
 - Size separation-larger items removed that don't breakdown (shoes, wood, plastics)
 - 3 days in drum
 - Smaller material will be mixed with biosolids from the County
 - Moved through an agitation process and then moved to the bays for 60 days
 - Refined, cured and then sent to market
 - ½ cubic yard per year goes to the landfill which is mainly packaging
 - Bales of residuals have been sent out for testing to a chemical recycler
 - The landfill is about 2 and ½ acres
 - Facility is about 90 acres overall
 - 1,700 tons of organics are going in and about ½ of it goes out
 - No bagging of product
 - No restrictions on the use of the compost
 - Didn't recommend it for fruit or vegetables plants
 - Diversion is driven by the markets
 - Collects ag plastics
 - 40% recycling rate
 - Only accept from in County
 - Allowed 100 tons/day
 - Furniture and mattresses are shipped out
 - Funded by 1% of the sales tax
- Mark Witkowski, Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Public Works for Sullivan County (Recording 20:05-32:40)
 - He is in charge of landfill, road department and vehicle department
 - Just hired a new Recycling Coordinator-Kassie Thelman
 - Finished a grant from 2018 to do composting and build a compost facility
 - Preparing a Pilot Project to mirror UCRRA
 - 6 Transfer Stations that are county owed and collect organics
 - Come to UCRRA weekly per permits and registration with organics
 - Makes sure all operators come to UCRRA to see the options
 - Had a pushback from staff to do composting
 - Kassie Thelman is showing how it is successful
 - The plan has been put in the capital plan
 - Legislation has changed and trying to resell the idea
 - Working with PaintCare
 - Stopped charging for electronics
 - Working with E-Lot
 - Worked with staff to make sure everything is handled properly

- Hasn't had a Solid Waste Management Plan since approximately 1992
 - Not sure about the landfill
 - Landfill is permitted until 2026
 - Extending their contract with the landfill until 2025
 - 400 participants signed up for organics-350 active
 - No funding for the composting site yet
 - Brings in 100 ton/week of organics to UCRRA
 - Only residential right now (organics)
 - Took approximately 2 ½ years to provide the totes to all the transfer stations due to COVID and DEC
 - Sullivan doesn't compost on-site at this time
- Kerry Russell, Deputy Commissioner of Division of Solid Waste for Dutchess County and Executive Director of Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency (recording 32:50-39:38)
 - Since 2017, have been selling at cost, the Earth Machines to residents
 - This year the County announced their first compost grant
 - 50% reimbursement for the cost and installation of in-vessel anaerobic compost machines
 - Open to local municipalities and public K-12 schools in Dutchess
 - Applications are open until June 7th
 - Received a lot of questions
 - Municipalities and schools will have to operator it
 - \$50,000 cap to each award
 - End product (compost) must be available to residents
 - Open for partnerships among the county
 - County funded
 - Per the NYS State Food Scrap Law, the stores that are required to compost organics bring it to UCRRA or Organix hauls for them
 - Donna provided pictures and a brief explanation of Westchester County's demo site for composting. They have an aerated static pile system with approximately 8 bays. She stated it is a very neat and impressive site.

Angelina Brandt, Director of Sustainability discussed 2022 FSR Grant (recording 42:24-56:30)

- PowerPoint slides were provided previously to the committee and viewed on screen at the meeting.

Angelina points made regarding the FSR Grant and that was pointed out on the slides:

- Food scrap drop off programs are:
 - Where people deliver food scraps to a centralized location
 - Consisting of an attended area with tote bins and signage
 - Collected material is consolidated
 - Brought offsite for processing

- Beneficial to the community for residents who can not compost at home due to:
 - Not an enough yard space
 - Not enough browns
 - Nuisances like bears, and rodents
 - Not enough time
- NYSAR3 Organics Council has created an interacted map of food scrap drop off sites across the state. The map was provided for the committee and public to view.
 - There are 22 food scrap drop off sites in Ulster County
 - Half of the sites are located in the City of Kingston.
 - Various different models-how to sign-up, cost, etc.
- In May of 2022 the NYS DEC announced a funding opportunity that would provide \$2,000,000 (max award \$200,000) to projects in NYS that increase residential food scraps recycling programs.
 - 75% award and 25% match
 - Developed a proposal that would provide towns with free tools and equipment to launch and facilitate a residential food scraps collection program at Municipal Recycling Drop Off Centers
 - The concept modeled a program in Tompkins County, NY
- Tompkins County Model
 - Tompkins County oversees over a dozen food scrap drop locations
 - After collection, the material is delivered to Cayuga Compost in Trumansburg for processing.
 - The finished compost is sold in bulk loads and bags
 - In 2019, Cayuga Compost collected 2,181.8 tons of food scraps, with approximately 466 tons collected from the 12 sites
 - Had one 10' x 6' enclosed trailer, and one 16' x 8' box truck. The enclosed trailer was purchased in 2016 for roughly \$4,000.00.
 - The trailer was used at three different drop spots.
 - The trailer attaches to any pickup truck with a ball hitch
 - Provided the residents with a container who signed up
- Under the Agency proposal UCRRA would be responsible for:
 - Securing funding to purchase equipment and educational supplies, at no cost to the Towns
 - Provide all the necessary materials to collect and transport the food scraps to UCRRA (including enclosed cargo trailer, 35 gallon tote bins, residential kitchen caddys, pop-up tent, tables, cones, and other tools for the collection station) and would develop educational materials for residents (brochures, magnets, etc.).
 - Recycling Outreach Team would conduct site visits and help train the Town employees
 - Would provide metrics about the Town's greenhouse gas reduction and how many tons
 - Town would be responsible for:
 - Staff and monitor the collection
 - Designate two designated people to work with Recycling Outreach Team
 - Tow the trailer with food scraps to UCRRA

- Angelina went over the budget cost, savings, and diversion rates. (Shown on the slide).
- The project was reviewed at the UCRRA Zero Waste Committee Meeting, which was held on June of 2022.
- In July 2022, all 22 municipalities were invited via direct mailing and email notification to attend a workshop about the project. Several reminders were sent out
 - Eleven participants represented 8 different municipalities took part in the webinar
 - Interested partners were asked to complete a worksheet and submit a letter of support
 - Following the webinar, a follow-up email with the presentation slides, the draft support letter, and a project checklist were sent to all Towns, Villages, and Cities regardless if they attended the webinar.
 - Over the next few weeks, several of the webinar attendees corresponded about the project. A range of questions and concerns were presented which included:
 - low staffing levels at the transfer station; a perception that they needed additional staff in order to monitor the bins
 - inability to properly monitor the bins for contaminants;
 - concerns that food would attract bears;
 - uncertainty about hauling logistics; a perception they needed a special vehicle or additional staffing
 - requested more information about potential hygiene issues
 - the timeline was too restrictive
- Responded to towns concerns and questions:
 - Promoted the collection as one day per week to minimize impact on staffing
 - Reassured that the Recycling Outreach Team would help train and provide educational media about contamination
 - Addressed concerns about bears by reiterating the enclosed bins could be kept inside of the locked trailer or ideally removed offsite at the end of the collection day
 - Suggested Town vehicles that could readily attach to a ball mount hitch
 - Provided some with a spreadsheet detailing the exact mileage, hours, and staff cost required to transfer the food to UCRRA.
 - Extended the deadline for 3 months
- Ultimately, there was only one Town (Hurley) that wrote a letter of support and demonstrated commitment to implement the program if the Agency were awarded a grant.
- Due to competitive nature of the grant opportunity, staff determined one out of twenty one towns was not an appealing project proposal, that more letters of support were needed to justify the purchases, and the grant was not submitted.

Committee members and staff discussed backyard composting and how that would be the best method for residents. The Committee members thanked the counties who came out and spoke.

ADJOURN

Andrew Ghiorse motioned to adjourn the April 25, 2024, Zero Waste Committee Meeting at 6:00 PM and it was seconded by David Gilmour. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

May 23, 2024

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of the April 25, 2024, Zero Waste Committee Meeting was made by _____ and seconded by _____. ___ in favor, ___ opposed, ___ absent.

The minutes were approved by the Board.

Transcribed by: Melinda France, Office Manager.

Signatures:

Donna Egan, Chair

Ken Gilligan, Secretary

DRAFT