

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

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

The proceedings were convened at 5:00 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 (absent), Andrew Ghiorse and David Gilmour (participating via videoconference).

Staff present: Executive Director Marc Rider, Agency Counsel Karen Sheard, Coordinator of Organizational Performance and Development Tim Weidemann, and Director of Sustainability Angelina Brandt were present. Counsel/Secretary Kenneth Gilligan and Director of Finance and Administration Tim DeGraff were absent.

From the public: Mannajo Greene, Ulster County Legislator/ROC and guest speaker. Guest speakers participating via videoconference included: Gretchen Worth, CROWD; Diane Cohen, CEO and Andrew Boghossian, Finger Lakes Reuse; and Will Hancock, End Markets Committee, C&D Recycling Committee.

Chair Donna Egan lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Donna Egan acknowledged the members of the public and asked for public comment. There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Donna Egan called for a motion to approve the Agenda. The motion was made by Regis Obijiski and seconded by Andrew Ghiorski. The motion passed, 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 nonvoting (David Gilmour appearing via videoconference), 1 absent (Jim Gordon).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Donna Egan called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2024, meeting of the Zero Waste Committee. The motion was made by Regis Obijiski and seconded by Andrew Ghiorski. The motion passed, 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 nonvoting (David Gilmour appearing via videoconference), 1 absent (Jim Gordon).

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUCEMENTS

The next Zero Waste Committee Meeting will be held on August 22, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

SPEAKERS

Donna Egan welcomed and thanked the speakers for appearing to provide education concerning construction and debris.

Gretchen Worth, CR0WD

Ms. Worth was invited to provide an update regarding NYS legislative updates and trends. CR0WD supports municipalities in New York to provide a circular construction economy.

CR0WD seeks to assist in the recognition of environmental, cultural and economic values of a circular construction economy that includes taking better care of our buildings and deconstructing and reusing the materials of buildings that must come down by providing the following:

- Policy development and support;
- Educational engagement;
- Workforce development;
- Reuse of infrastructure; and
- Research and data analysis.

CR0WD consists of a diverse group of members that are seeking to elevate awareness, support and resources for the vast stream of building materials currently going into landfills and being incinerated. CR0WD's website www.cr0wd.org contains many resources to assist communities to engage in the circular economy.

Building materials (90% demolition/10% new construction) are the largest waste stream in the country, amounting to:

- 600 million tons annually
- 18+ million tons annually from NYS
- Largest component of US landfills
- With deconstruction 80% of building and materials reused

Legislation/policy initiatives

- "Building the Circular Economy through Sustainable Materials Management" was released in December 2023, and includes language, practices and recommendations around a circular construction economy and more sustainable treatment of buildings and infrastructure.
- CR0WD produced a white paper titled "Constructing a Circular Economy in NYS Reconstruction and Building Material Reuse" that will be released next month
- In February, Empire State Development included in its Restore NY Grant application materials language advising of expectations concerning deconstruction and reuse of building materials for applicants.
- 2024 Legislative session saw the introduction of new proposed legislation supporting NYS communities seeking to engage in circular economy.
 - Grants to incentivize municipalities to adopt deconstruction ordinances;
 - Modernization of the Department of Environmental Conservation's C&D data collection; and
 - Reuse of reclaimed wood in new construction.
- In May, Auburn, New York became the first municipality to adopt a (non-binding) deconstruction resolution, adopting incentives (financial and non-financial) for compliance.

Diane Cohen and Andrew Boghossian, Finger Lakes Reuse

Finger Lakes Reuse was asked to present on trends and innovations in C&D recycling. Finger Lakes Reuse is a nonprofit organization in Ithaca, Tompkins County founded in 2007 with goals to reduce waste, relieve poverty and teach skills through reuse activities.

- \$2.4 million sales, 87 employees
- People centric – workforce development
- Currently 2 facilities, but working toward model with a Hub (warehouse/manufacturing facility where materials are received in bulk, sorted and packaged for wholesale markets and distribution) and multiple exchanges (community reuse centers, thrift stores, online marketplace, garage sales and churches)
- Redeveloping Reuse Technical Assistance Program with a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission and anticipate it being online in 2025

The Deconstruction Solution

\$600 Million Tons construction and demolition waste in US per year, 50 Tons material landfilled on average resulting from the demolition single-family home, and 80% of materials in single-family home is salvageable

- Deconstruction is the practice of carefully and systematically dismantling a building or structure to maximize the recovery of valuable materials and architectural components for reuse, resale and recycling
- Deconstruction types include:
 - Soft stripping – salvage of specific building components or equipment prior to demolition
 - Individual assemblies – removal of building assemblies like roofs, walls, floors and structural systems based on size, material and condition in relation to the whole structure
 - Whole building – Disassembly of complete building based on high potential for refuse or salvage of building materials
- Deconstruction value outcomes include
 - Community – local service and volunteering, share histories of regionals architectural style, knowledge of deconstruction
 - Economy – support local workforce development (6 to 1 employment), expand business opportunities, offer quality building materials at an affordable price, competitive to demolition cost by reduction of tipping fees, inclusion of tax-deductible building material donation and the resale of building material
 - Environment – limits strain on landfills, extends the life of quality building materials, reuse saves the use of energy and natural resources needed for the creation of new building materials, and supports a mentality of reduction, reuse and recycle.

Will Hancock, End Markets Committee, C&D Recycling (also an operator with 4 facilities)

Asked to provide oversight of where construction and development reuse and recycling is in US.

We are at a tough precipice with transportations costs high and landfill rates are low (depending on geographic region – NY landfill rates are high).

- Desire to recycle is driven by economics.
- C&D recycling and reuse industry is at its strongest with advancements in technology developments

- Diversion is most efficient pre-construction/renovation at the construction site with the use of rolling dumpsters
- Reuse/recycling of materials is market dependent and there is a need for the creation of new materials
- New materials must be assessed to determine the lifespan of the new material and whether the new material will be suitable for reuse/recycling
- Tax credits and incentives must be created to incentivize builders
- Infrastructure must be in place and outlets established for end markets
- As power costs increase with subsidy reductions, renewable and reusable energy sources become more attractive; C&D materials have potential to be used in renewable and reusable energy markets

Mannajo Greene, Ulster County Legislator/ROC

Information about C&D is contained in the Draft Zero Waste Management Plan and the Reuse Innovation Feasibility Study (although she has concerns about the study because it did not consider the existing hub and spoke structure).

She and a contingency of other legislators are willing to introduce legislation that requires that any demolition project using Ulster County funding is required to prepare and follow a deconstruction plan unless a good reason is provided for the inability to deconstruct. However, she is concerned about the ability to manage C&D without the time to plan and some education regarding implementation and operation. She would also like a dialogue to inform the legislation. She would like to wait to introduce the legislation until the Agency has a pilot-plan to manage the materials. Alternatively, the management of the deconstruction materials could be provided by an existing C&D recycler by entering into an agreement with such recycler. She mentioned that some municipalities are entering the arena by limiting deconstruction legislation to historic buildings.

Ms. Greene stated that deconstruction legislation should not be a legislative mandate, but instead a collaborative process that includes the Agency, Executive Branch, Legislature, stakeholders, and the DEC. She also shared her concern about conducting source separation without markets for the use of the materials separated.

Discussion

Difficult to know where to begin without experience in or a workforce for deconstruction. It is important to have the infrastructure in place before doing construction and demolition. Policy is important but it is critical to build the infrastructure in advance. Need a designated person to learn deconstruction, sourcing, separating and to create markets before any deconstruction process is implemented. There was also an emphasis on the value of a pilot program that is visible, and community engaged and provides for a discussion of the realities of this type of program.

Programs are funded using operational revenue, government grants (primarily state), municipal support, and private donors. A built-in match improves the likelihood of being awarded grants. Economic development grants may be available.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

Andrew Ghiorse motioned to adjourn the July 25, 2024, Zero Waste Committee Meeting at 6:00 PM and it was seconded by Regis Obijiski. The motion passed, 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 nonvoting (David Gilmour appearing via videoconference), 1 absent (Jim Gordon).

August 22, 2024

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of the July 25, 2024, Zero Waste Committee Meeting was made by Regis Obijiski and seconded by Andrew Ghiorse. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

The minutes were approved by the Board.

Transcribed by: Karen Veronica Sheard (DeFio), Agency Counsel.

Signatures:



Donna Egan, Chair