

Recycling Task Force [L] [SEP] Public Forum

Monday December 4, 2017 [L] [SEP]

6:30 p.m. [L] [SEP] Town Hall [L] [SEP]

Draft Minutes

1. Members Present: Chris Stroech - Chair, Lori Robertson, Liz McGowen and Shane Broadwater.

Absent: None

Meeting called to order at 6:31 p.m. by L. Robertson.

3. Visitors: Jan Hafer, Mark Everhart, Vanessa McGuigan, Deb Tucker, Pam Berry, Mary Beth Kilmer, Laurel Parker, Diane Niedzialkowski, Mayor Auxer.

3a. Visitor's Comments - are logged in where applicable.

4. C. Stroech introduced the members and read the opening statement, and noted what the task force (TF) has done to date. There was a buzz in town regarding the use of Styrofoam and plastic bags. The discussion then lead to also looking at plastic straws. The TF was formed and over the last several months we have had several public meetings. A survey was hand delivered to each business requesting a response via email. We received 6-7 responses. We asked for opinions for and against. The process of public input is very important.

He noted that no decision has been made as the TF is still fact-finding. When and if a recommendation is made, it will go to Public Works the Town Council where there will be more opportunity for public comment/hearings. He then opened the floor for comments.

Several visitors's stated they were here to learn and may comment later during the forum.

D. Tucker, restaurant Bistro 112 owner – has strong opinions about recycling and cares deeply about the environment. She supports the elimination of Styrofoam, plastic bags, and straws. Her restaurant has little boxes and foil for carry out. It is a cost increase but worth it. Maybe there can be a group purchase to reduce the overall costs to help those out not needing large quantities. She is paying .25 cents more for the little box over Styrofoam. Maybe create a cloth/reusable bag with a Shepherdstown logo, sell for .99 cents at retailers. Maybe the town can purchase these in bulk and sell to retailers at cost. Can we get SU on board? Can people reuse plastic bags already in circulation? Customers are not allowed to fill their own take-out containers in the kitchen, but can at the table. Education is a key component.

P. Berry, owner Sweet Shop – pro-recycling but you have to factor in cost and functionality. It is a .5-cent

difference (more) per cup if not using Styrofoam, plus a sleeve is needed, as the coffee is hot. How do you measure the effectiveness of eliminating these products? Coatings used on paper hot cups make them not recyclable/compostable. Styrofoam can be recycled but no one in this region does it.

MB Kilmer, Blue Moon – is all for eliminating these items – hates Styrofoam. The Blue Moon has converted to recyclable or compostable products, and is trying to eliminate straws. She gave the example of clamshell containers for take-out as 6x6 is .12 cents, and a 9x9 is .37 cents. She presented a list of prices to the TF. Agrees that a bulk order could be purchased to help others out, and the Blue Moon could order, store, and sell to others.

Mayor – reported that glass recycling would be implemented again in a few months, or less. We are waiting on the delivery of a truck. He has reached out Jack Shaw, and President Hendricks with Shepherd University regarding the use of Styrofoam at the cafeteria. They are willing to look into it.

D. Niedzialkowski, lives just outside of corporate limits – an avid environmentalist, and has studied it professionally. Styrofoam is recyclable, sort of, as you need a lot to recycle it. It doesn't go away, especially if is buried in a landfill. The coatings on paper cups can

be compostable. Montgomery County banned Styrofoam. Enlist the help of the environmental science group at SU to help. She would be happy to see on her receipts a recycling surcharge.

L. Parker, county resident, original creator of the Source retail store – has taught trash classes to students as to how they decompose at Shepherdstown Elementary School. She is extremely against plastics. People and businesses need to change their habits, it's all about reeducating. Loves the idea of cooperatives to help smaller businesses in town cut costs. Cloth bags instead of plastic bags work well, and some towns have compost hills.

J. Hafer – great discussion. Saw a FB post and was concerned about the costs to businesses. Suggests that the council and this task force address these issues with education, and don't brush aside their concerns. Can the town help subsidize the switch over for businesses? Likes the coop idea.

C. Stroech – the TF has reviewed the FB thread and appreciated the feedback on it.

M. Everhart, councilman – has a friend with the Plastic Pollution Coalition, and will get the TF her name.

C. Stroech – Shepherdstown can use the reduction/elimination of these products as a positive

marketing tool to attract tourist from DC, VA, and Md. We can get more info on exactly what is accepted at Apple Valley, and also find out how it's processed. Everyone should tour the Apple Valley facility; the plastic bags are used in Trex.

L. Robertson – she and C. Stroech toured the Apple Valley recycling processing center. The manager remarked that Styrofoam and plastic bags are “evil” as they bind up the machines and take hundreds of years to breakdown. An in-depth dedicated page could be added to the town’s website regarding recycling.

P. Berry – the town could become a beacon for other towns.

L. Robertson – if there are no objections, the meeting is adjourned at 7:20 p.m. No objections noted.

Minutes respectfully submitted by L. Robertson.