

Salisbury/Sharon Transfer Station Recycling Advisory Committee (TRAC)
Minutes of TRAC Regular Meeting of February 21st, 2024, Zoom Meeting 5:00 PM

Present: Barbara Bettigole (chair), Paul Bacsik, Karen Lundeen, Ed Reagan, Meg Szalewicz, Lynn Kearcher, Brian Bartram

(Anne Saunders notified TRAC she'd be out of town.)

NOTE: Minutes are considered DRAFT ONLY until reviewed and acted upon at the next regular meeting

1. Meeting called to order at 5:00
2. Agenda approved, motion by Paul, second by Ed
3. Minutes of the meeting of 12/10/2023 approved, motion by Meg, second by Ed

4. Transfer Station Manager's Report from Brian Bartram

Brian and Barbara spoke with Maria Horn, State Representative, last month. (She sits on the Finance Committee and has served on Appropriations and Environment Committees, too.)

Maria is a great listener and asks great questions. She also said she would nudge Steve Harding, our area's State Senator, to get in touch with Brian. Steve eventually reached out to Brian. Both conversations centered on MIRA dissolution, and the need for regional support of efforts to maintain access to the Torrington Transfer Station. Brian also reported on the most recent COG, where the consensus was to send a letter to the MIRA Dissolution Board about the COG taking over the Torrington station.

Brian reported on the presentation to the Sharon Women's Club in January. Barbara and Brian showed a slide deck primarily about recycling and food waste. The audience was very engaged, good questions about public outreach and how they might help. The Conservation Committee of the Club will be the main contact for TRAC and the Transfer Station. For now, we hope to develop some outreach ideas, like a presence at events on the Sharon Green, or volunteering to table-sit at the Transfer Station to help residents understand the basics of recycling and provide resources, like RECYCLE CT.

Brian reported on a complaint posted about the lack of gutters at the Transfer Station – something he insisted on during the work of the Building Committee for the new site. He also talked about feedback from a recent Salisbury Selectmen's Meeting, in which Curtis Rand shared an anonymous complaint about the number of parking spaces closest to the two hoppers taken up by those spending time in the Swap Shop.

5. Swap Shop

After Brian's report, a big discussion about the Swap Shop followed. Paul mentioned a neighbor in Sharon who wanted him to bring up the issue with parking spaces. He also noted that some people seem to take items specifically for resell value. While not very courteous or understanding of the Swap Shop ethic, Barbara pointed out that, at the very least, those items are being reused or repaired, which keeps them out of the waste stream. It was noted that the Swap Shop gets cleaned out nearly once a week. Barbara also said we must consider the sometimes-conflicting perspectives about the Swap Shop: 1) Brian in charge of operations, 2)

Selectmen of both towns fielding comments, and 3) TRAC who would like to improve organization and create signage that would set guidelines for dropping and taking items. In general, there is agreement about the wide appeal of the Swap Shop. For most, like Lynn's comment about her granddaughter at the Swap Shop, it is a great asset for residents. Next Wednesday, some TRAC members will do some tidying, attach signs, and consider layout and table sitting for spring weather.

TRAC might pursue creating a policy that is not too encumbered with exact limits on time and on items dropped off or taken.

Karen brought up the discussion from last meeting about setting up a table to monitor and assist the flow of items in and out of the Swap Shop. Meg and Ed both suggested some reiteration of some messaging about the Swap Shop at sticker issue time of year. Paul added one more idea: we could ask residents to enter their sticker number *after* they read the Swap Shop guidelines online. (And someone suggested that if the paper brochure is not being read, maybe something different?)

Consensus of TRAC: best to gently advise people to park in 2nd and 3rd row (Brian will make a sign for now) and to follow some guidelines for dropping off items and general etiquette.

6. Food Waste Program

Over 400 households from the two towns participating. Requests keep trickling in – even without signs publicizing the program.

Curbside Compost sends us Environmental Impact reports every month with year to year data. From January 2023 to January 2024, for instance we diverted over 70,000 pounds of food waste from garbage hopper. Brian added that his estimate for the fiscal year (July 2022 to June 2023) was 29 tons of food waste diverted.

Barbara shared the new CT Statute (CT HB 6664) regarding food waste. On January 1, 2025, CT will require large food generators (those generating at least 26 tons/year to source separate organic waste and ensure proper recycling at an authorized composting facility. While, some of these businesses or institutions in our area may know of this statute, a letter from the Transfer Station and with the signatures of the First Selectman of the two towns should be sent out, so that planning strategies are in place soon. Barbara and Brian will meet to draft a letter.

Barbara brought up our goal to find local options from truck and driver to commercial compost facility. Grants will help us expand.

Karen reported that Black Rabbit will resume food waste separation in the spring.

Barbara reported that LeGamin is generating a little over 100 pounds/week.

7. Grants

Grants for expansion of the food waste program would help us with research, purchase of equipment, and staffing if necessary. There is grant money available, through the Conservation Districts of CT, Berkshire Taconic Foundation, and from individuals in the two towns. The most likely grant source is the Sustainable CT matching grant program. There is no money needed to join; town board of selectmen pass a resolution. A point person for each project in either town would be crowd funding coordinator and a sustainability team would be responsible for reporting to selectmen each year. Curtis Rand and Casey Flanagan joined a zoom meeting with the director and staff of Sustainable CT to learn more about the community match fund.

8. Public Outreach Volunteers

Sharon Women's Club will meet to discuss ways they can help the Transfer Station with its outreach. Barbara will reach out to Salisbury Association director about possibility of similar tasks in Salisbury.

9. Other Business

Further discussion of Swap Shop guidelines.

10. Public Comment – none

11. Barbara adjourned meeting at 6:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Bettigole, chair of TRAC