

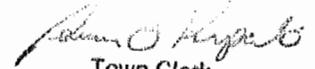
**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION**

**Town of Newington, Connecticut**

Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2020

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1. The regular meeting was held using Zoom platform and was called to order at 6:32 p.m.
2. Roll Call- Commissioners present: Joyce Boncal, Patty Foley, Karen Serio, and Joe Trombetta  
Town Council Liaisons: Gail Budrejko and Chris Miner  
Staff present: Robert Hillman and Renata Bertotti
3. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
4. Approval of minutes- Motion by Commissioner Boncal to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Serio, and approved as amended.
5. Public Participation- None
6. Old Business-

A. Sustainable CT- Mrs. Bertotti mentioned she attended an equity seminar the previous weekend and will try to share the recording with the commission. She also mentioned in order for the town to receive points for equity training we need at least three people to attend. Chairman Foley said back in June/July herself commissioner Serio and Boncal attended a seminar she will get dates.

Mrs. Bertotti will try to arrange a meeting with staff and the Coalition for the Homeless to discuss potential programs.

Bertotti also met with the superintendent of schools and will connect with the science program director in an attempt to get middle school and high school students involved in a pollinator program.

Chairperson Foley and Mrs. Bertotti met together to assign tasks related to Sustainable CT. Foley has a copy of the parks and grounds tree inventory report for review. Mrs. Bertotti mentioned the town's facility review will be presented to council very soon

- B. Facebook- Chairperson Foley mentioned there were 26 posts last month on the Facebook page and she has posted links to environmental bills currently in the state legislature.
- C. Challenge to reduce garbage- Sustainable CT 7.5- Chairperson Foley continues to work on the information to be posted on the Town's webpage.

D. Upcycling Contest- Commissioner Boncal discussed the upcycling contest. She has a draft of the application and rules. The start date is set for April 12<sup>th</sup> and will end on June 12<sup>th</sup>. The final day to submit applications is June 1<sup>st</sup>. She hopes to be able to post the information on the town website if not she currently has no alternate plan. The contest will require 3 photos with each submittal. The ceremony will be held on June 26<sup>th</sup> with two winners in each division. The divisions will consist of family/individuals and business/nonprofits. Boncal reached out to Lowes for donations. She will submitting a letter to Lowes on town letter head requesting two \$100 gift cards. She mentioned the cost of advertisement. Rare Reminder will be \$106 for April 8, 15, 26, Newington Life \$76 for April's issue and they may do an article on the contest. It was decided not to use the town logo in the advertisements. The contest will also be posted on social media. Boncal has submitted a request to the Town's IT department to utilize the town website as a landing page for the contest. This needs to be approved by March 31<sup>st</sup> in order to post information on the website in a timely manner. Boncal submitted her detailed budget of \$725 to the commission. Foley will assist Boncal in getting the letter to Lowes requesting the donations on the town letter head. Mrs. Bertotti recommended they get approval from the town manager and/or the town attorney prior to requesting the donations from Lowes.

Council Budrejko commended Boncal for her work and mentioned in her past experiences it is very difficult to obtain donations from Lowes. She mentioned to reach out to the Rare Reminder and Town Crier to have articles written about the contest.

Commissioner Boncal and Foley will meet to discuss the roll out. Boncal will work on schedule.

Commissioner Serio remarked on everyone doing a great job making the commission visible.

Councilor Budrejko asked if this would be considered the Earth Day celebration and the chairperson responded no.

E. Positions open on Commission- Chairperson Foley | preparing a package to be submitted to the Town Council

F. Girl Scouts- The chairperson mentioned she will work with the group on a recycling project to fit into Sustainable CT. The hope is to record an informative video on proper recycling.

## 7. New Business-

A. Communications/ Education on Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling- Commissioner Serio has compiled a contact list of the 25 condominium associations in town in which approximately 2500 units and over 5000 residents reside. She has drafted a letter regarding proper recycling to be sent to all the associations in hopes they intern can be sent to their respective residents. Her plan is to piggyback this with the articles on the Upcycling contest.

Commissioner Boncal inquired as to what are the issues the condominiums are having in regards to recycling.

Chairperson Foley stated she is working with her association on the winter newsletter to include information on recycling.

Councilor Miner asked if all condominiums are single stream. Staff responded yes and discussed some of the difficulties with the rollout which began in July of 2010.

The chairperson requested the recycling rate for condominiums from staff.

Councilor Miner commented the expense of sanitation services is covered by the town and is not a direct responsibility of the association as in many other towns. He also asked if participation may be lower due to the use of dumpsters. Staff responded that may be the case. Staff also discussed the cost of trash and recycling disposal. Currently the town is contracted with MIRA for a zero cost recycling disposal program.

- B. School Poster Contest- Earth Day is April 22, 2021- the Chairperson stated a litter pick up is probably not a viable option to celebrate Earth Day this year due to Covid. Letters will be sent to all schools, private and public and those who are home schooled to notify them of the poster contest. Last year the chairperson was able to upload all the posters and hopes to do the same this year. Last year there were 100 posters submitted and the commission members where the judges. The theme was "Think before you toss"

Commissioner Boncal and Councilor Budrejko discussed changing the theme of the contest.

Commissioner Serio advocated for keeping the poster contest. And mentioned Earthday.org has a new theme each year. This year's theme is "Restore our earth".

Boncal asked if we will get points for the event. Foley believes we will and hopes to expand it to get more points.

The Town planner asked if Newington has ever done a cleanup day. Councilor Budrejko explained the events the town has held in the past.

#### 8. Public Participation- None

#### 9. Commissioner Comments-

Commissioner Trombetta commented he was pleased the commission was moving along considering the circumstances.

Commissioner Boncal said she would continue to work on procuring funds for the Upcycling contest. The Chairperson will work with Boncal on securing funds

Commissioner Serio is excited for the Upcycling contest.

Chairperson Foley wished everyone a Happy New Year.

10. Staff Comments-

Mr. Hillman discussed he is looking to implement a mattress recycling program in the near future. Councilor Miner asked how mattresses are currently handled and if it would be an option to utilize town staff to collect them in order to be recycled rather than the town's sanitation contractor who brings them to a disposal facility to alleviate the disposal costs. Mr.Hillman stated due to staffing at this point it in not an option.

There was also a discussion between Councilor Budrekjo, Miner and staff regarding the implementation of user fees for the bulk collection. Staff is currently working on a plan.

The Town Planner mentioned Meriden created fund from revenue received through the collection program to purchase cameras to deter illegal dumping.

11. Adjournment- Next regular meeting is scheduled for February 11th at 6:30 p.m. **Motion** made by Commissioner Serio to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Trombetta passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Robert Hillman

Assistant Highway Superintendent