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**Regional Recycling Task Force Meeting
Thursday, December 4, 2008, 10:30 a.m.
Brookfield Town Hall
Second Floor Conference Room**

MINUTES

The December meeting of the RRTF was called to order at 10:37 a.m. with the following members in attendance: T. Cutsumpas, W. Lionetti, S. Von Holt, A. Miles, T. Yonsky, M. Pascento, E. Rossini and C. Reedy. New members attending for the first time were Ralph Manning (interested public), Trisha Dean (Bethel BOE), Gretchen Bishop (Ridgefield RACE), Kelly Ferris and Barbara Coelho (Town of New Fairfield), Dave Dunleavy (RTI), and Steve Hastings (Hudson Baylor). Guests in attendance were Dan Holmes (Newtown) and Bob Heffernan of the CT Nursery and Landscape Association.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion by M. Pascento, second by C. Reedy, to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2008 RRTF meeting as presented. **Vote:** All in favor.

2009 Meeting Schedule

Motion by T. Yonsky, second by T. Cutsumpas, to approve the meeting schedule for 2009 as presented. **Vote:** All in favor. RRTF meetings in 2009 will be the first Thursday of each month at 10:30 a.m. at the Brookfield Town Hall except for January and March, which will be the second Thursday. There will be no RRTF meeting in July or August.

Recycling Markets Update

C. Reedy advised members that in mid-November the bottom fell out of the recycling market due to the worldwide economic downturn and falling petroleum prices. China is not purchasing recyclable commodities in nearly the quantity they were and lower oil prices makes the manufacture of products with raw materials less expensive than using recycled products. Old corrugated cardboard (OCC), for example, was selling for more than \$100/ton and the price went to \$5/ton in just a couple of weeks. D. Dunleavy and S. Hastings confirmed that prices are down across the board for recycled commodities and in some cases there's even a problem finding anyone who will buy a commodity.

Food Waste and Organics Composting

C. Reedy reported on a meeting she had recently with Peter Klaich, Senior Organics Program Manager for Garick, the owner of New Milford Farms. According to Mr. Klaich, all windrows at the New Milford facility are now inside and the biofilter has been completed, hopefully

addressing the odor problems that have plagued the facility for the past few months. The company has made arrangements to take food waste from New Milford Schools and Canterbury School as well as Costco and is working on contracts with Stop & Shop, Big Y and New Milford Hospital. Mr. Klaich says that the arrangement with New Milford Schools will save the school system 50% of its MSW disposal costs. Food waste tips at the facility for \$45/ton compared with approximately \$80/ton for MSW at the transfer station. Tonnage delivered to the facility from HRRRA municipalities will be reported to HRRRA going forward on a quarterly basis. New Milford Farms plans an open house in the spring of 2009. Schools in both Brookfield and Bethel are moving forward with onsite composting of food waste.

New Tools and Information From EPA

C. Reedy provided RRTF members with the website links to a new office carbon footprint calculator tool available from EPA as well as information on the monthly EPA Webinar education series. Webinars of particular interest to municipalities over the next year include February 19 on how to judge green marketing claims, March 19 on school chemical cleanouts, and April 16 on climate change and waste. The Webinars are free to those who sign up and can be done in the office using the telephone and computer.

Flower Pot Recycling

Dan Holmes, a Newtown resident with a background in horticulture and landscaping, asked the RRTF to consider how used flower/plant pots from commercial landscapers and nurserymen could be recycled in the region. Most pots are #2 HDPE plastic. Bob Heffernan, president of the CT Nursery and Landscape Association, said that flowers and plants account for half the agriculture in the State and produce about 1,000 tons of used pots each year. The Association received a grant from the USDA to study the issue in 2001 and 2005 and found there were all kinds of problems with recycling the pots. They cannot be reused by nurseries for fear of introducing pathogens into new plant tree/perennial stock, which can take 3-7 years from propagation to sale. Contamination of the pots with soil can be a problem for recycling and while some pots are #2 plastic, many are different kinds of plastic which have much fewer markets. D. Dunleavy and S. Hastings both noted that at present the market for all plastics is severely depressed and it wouldn't make economic sense to add to the commodity stock right now.

2009 Recycling Poster Contest

Union Savings Bank has signed on as a co-sponsor of the Earth Day poster contest again this year. RRTF members reviewed a draft of the poster contest flyer and rules and approved it for distribution to local coordinators. C. Reedy will send the final flyer out by e-mail and urged members to start distribution in their communities ASAP so that the schools and other participating groups have adequate time to participate.

Issues Raised by Members

- M. Pascento noted that the Sherman School would be installing solar panels on its roof as a result of the Town working on a program with CL&P.
- G. Bishop reported that Ridgefield was working to get recycling containers for its downtown business district.

Without dissent the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.