

Green Newton School Connections MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 3:45pm
Newton Free Library - Druker Auditorium
(330 Homer Street, Newton)

Attendance: Amy Mah Sangiolo, Andrew Thompson, Andy Gluck, Audrey Kissin, Conni Melia, Emily Prenner, Heather Tausig, Hilary Bialek, Joana Canedo, Julie Winsett, Kate Esbenshade, Marcia Cooper, Margaret Ford, Skye Tausig, Tamika Olszewski, Waneta Trabert, Wendy Sheu

1) Sustainability Director

- We formed a committee to apply for the [MassDEP's School Recycling Assistance Grant](#). Allison Kelley, Heather Tausig, Joana Canedo are part of it, working with Waneta and Conni from DPW. **We invite more people to join.**
- There are lots of steps to apply. The first one is to gather support.
- We are looking for support from: Solid Waste Commission; School Committee Members, City Councilors; School Committee candidates, Principals. We already met with a few people, including Councilor Allison Leary.
- We also need to have a "[Commitment Letter](#)" signed, saying that "After the recycling/composting program is established, we will continue to support it as an ongoing program within our school district after the grant funding ends".
- The grant also asks for a [Recyclable Materials Policy](#) for the School District.
- Other tasks: gather paperwork, fill out the online form, etc.
- We are planning on presenting our case to the Solid Waste Commission in their next meeting, **Thursday, March 21st, 7pm, at the Library**. All invited to come.
- It's important to note that this is time sensitive. The application deadline is in June. If the grant is approved in November, we are looking to implement the recycling program in the 2020 school-year. If we do not get awarded in this round, it will take even longer!

2) Earth Day activities plan

- It's Monday, 4/22. We wish lots of schools promoted activities that day or week.
- A Google Groups was created so ideas can be shared. Please join: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/earth-day-nps>
- Hilary Bialek: At Williams they would like to celebrate "Earth week", where each day they promote and idea or experience: wear green, no water bottles, etc.
- [Newton Serves](#) is the Sunday after. I
 - [SGW](#) promotes an annual [Sneaker Reuse/Recycle](#) event at City hall
 - Joana suggested that Bigelow puts up the recycling signs in the school that day. Waiting for the Principal's approval.

3) Signage for recycling and waste in schools

- It's on the Green Newton website:
<https://www.greennewton.org/could-your-school-use-recycling-signs-download-them-here/>
- Question: who orders/pays for printing the signs?
 - Schools should have budget for printing the signs. If not, maybe the PTOs. The last option is to DWP, and they may use their budget.
 - The best option is to print through the Newton North Graphics Department. They have low prices and they give an invoice to take back to the school.

4) Solar canopies at Brown Middle School

- Next City Council meeting is March 18th, when this project will be voted.
- There's not going to be public speaking, but we encourage those who support the plan to go to the meeting with signs.
- It's also possible to send emails to City Clerk David Olson dolson@newtonma.gov who will forward it to all 24 City Councilors.

5) NPS Food Service Management

- Update: [Bids were opened on March 7](#). Two bidders: [Sodexo](#) (current provider) and [Whitson's \(former provider\)](#)
- Newton North Students sent great letters last week. [See here](#).
- Question: Does the service meet the [NPS Wellness Policy and Guidelines \(2015\)](#) ?
- The interviews with the two bidders are going to be at the end of the month. Maybe we can ask to participate?

- We should send a letter from School Connections exposing our concerns and suggestions.
- Letter / meeting should be with [Liam Hurley](#) (Assistant Superintendent/Chief Financial & Administrative Officer), who is in charge of the process. [David P. Stickney](#) is the head of the NPS Facilities Department. Copy school committee members and the mayor.

- Andy Gluck volunteered to write a first draft and share with our group so we can send it soon. Main points that we could highlight:
 - Whoever the City hires, they need to reinvent the way they deliver the food - there's too much plastic and trash created.
 - Serving dishes and utensils should be either recyclable (according to Newton rules) or compostable
 - Can we ask for reusable silverware too? This is complicated because none of the schools have dishwashers, not even the new ones.
 - No more vending machines that sell water bottles
 - Milk cartons are not recyclable
 - Food recovery and composting

- Other ideas
 - Reduced price for people who bring their own thermos

- Have other lunch options near schools. At South students drive out of school for lunch. Could there be Food trucks or other options? (Food trucks are a problem with the Newton Health Department).

6) School Committee Elections

- Elections for schools committee members are coming up in November: <http://www.newtonma.gov/documents/election/School%20Committee.pdf>
- School Connections could propose a list of commitments we think are important for the candidates, regarding sustainability in the schools.
 - Have candidates sign a commitment letter?
 - Have a debate with candidates on this topics? -
 - Send them questions and publish their answers in the Green Newton website
- Homework for the group: Think about the topics we think candidates should commit to. Let's discuss this in our next meeting.
- Two candidates were present in the meeting and introduced themselves:
 - Tamika Olszewski (Ward 4) - twins at Burr 3rd grade. Board member of FORJ and member of the Newton human rights commission. Community is key - supporting each other
 - Emily Prenner (Ward 5) - Children went through NPS system from pre-school to high school. Sophomore in college. Highschool - out of the district placement. PTO president at Newton Early Children Program, Angier, NSHS and PTO Council.

7) Upcoming Events:

- 03/15, 2:30pm, from NNHS to City Hall - "Newton Youth Climate March", promoted by Next Generation Voices
 - Students from Newton North are going to march from the school to city hall. There are going to be speakers.
 - Students from South will join and also speak.
 - Marcia Cooper is a guest speaker.
 - All are invited to support.
- 04/22, 7pm, at Newton Free Library - "Food Recovery: Why is it Important?", with Amy Sangiolo and Alison Cross
 - Amy is working to bring Food Recovery to Newton. They has a tour some at Zervas with the current food services provider about partnering with Food for Free to salvage the pre-consumer food and get them to those in need.

8) Open Agenda

- Heather Tausig introduced **Boomerang Bags Newton**, a community project to make reusable shopping bags from recycled cloth for those in need and no-profit organizations, such as Green Newton and NAC. There's going to be a sewing session at NAC on March 16th - 12pm to 4pm. More information here: <https://www.facebook.com/BoomerangBagsNewton/>

- Marcia Cooper: **Newton Power Choice**. We need more people in the city to opt up for 100% green. This is the least expensive and most efficient way to maximize Newton's reduction in greenhouse emissions. We need volunteers (maybe students) to go around the city and distribute door hangers urging people to opt up. Please contact Marcia (marcia@greennewton.org) if you want to volunteer in April.
- Wendy Sheu: an Art teacher at Pierce is developing a project about cities with k-5 students. They want ideas on how to include sustainability in the project. Looking for ideas for speakers/experts willing to talk about it to the students about sustainable cities and also a place to showcase the final work. Please contact Wendy (wendy.sheu@gmail.com) if you have ideas.
 - SGW showcases students projects at the Library annually (Annual Program 2019: May 20 (Mon.) 7:00 pm, Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium)

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, April 11th, 3:45pm - Newton Free Library - Druker Auditorium