

MINUTES

Thursday, April 11, 3:45pm - 5pm
Newton Free Library - 3rd floor rear arc
(330 Homer Street, Newton)

Attendance: Wendy Sheu, Meghan Martineau, Margaret Ford, Marcia Cooper, Kate Esbenshade, Karen K Slote, Julie Wise, Julie Winsett, Joana Canedo, Janette Patel, Hilary Bialek, Heather Tausig, Diana Fisher Gomberg, Conni Melia, Chagit Steiner, Andrew Thompson, Amy Mah Sangiolo

1) Sustainability Director - update

On March 27th we talked about our efforts at the Solid Waste Commission meeting. We received their support, and they passed a motion supporting the pursuit of a MassDEP Sustainable Materials Recovery Program School Recycling Assistance Grant.

On April 3rd, we sent [a letter to the School Committee](#) asking for their support in order for the City to apply for a [MassDEP School Recycling Assistance Grant](#).

On April 8th, 4 GNSC representatives went to the School Committee Meeting and spoke during public comments about the grant opportunity.

We received feedback from School Committee Member Matthew Miller, who said that in the process of hiring new food service provider, the issue of having a staff person dedicated to sustainability came up; so he is interested in discussing more.

We have a scheduled meeting with NPS officials on April 25th.

DFG: There was a good reaction from the School Committee. They like the idea, they just want to make sure that the school administration can handle it.

CM: School Committee chair called Waneta to understand where DPW stands. The question is where the hired position should be placed: in schools or under DPW.

2) Signage for recycling and waste in schools

Four schools have already printed signs and are ready to put them up: Bigelow, Oak Hill, Mason Rice and Angier.

Bigelow had them printed and laminated at Newton North Graphic Communications Department:

(617-559-6431 - nnhs_graphics@newton.k12.ma.us). \$0.40 /poster. Bigelow will have the signs up during NewtonServes (04/28).

Mason-Rice had the signs printed at UPS and will laminate at the school.

Williams recently started the Crayola Colorcycle program, so they now have a separate marker recycling program in place. Conni will modify the trash sign accordingly (not to include markers). Hilary Bialek will share more information about the Crayola program.

We have a list of all the schools who are putting up signs so we both Waneta's department and Schools connections can help when people get in touch with us about this.



3) Earth Day activities plan

Becka Smillie, from Peirce, shared by email their plans for Earth week, including week-long competition to reduce trash in school (including encouraging fewer single-use plastics in the cafeteria and classrooms) and leaning up the grounds around the school. She will share more with the Earth Day Google Group. At Angier they will have a theme for each day of the week as well, with a raffle system to reinforce sustainable behaviours, including presentations at lunch time about food waste reduction.

On April 22nd at 7p, there will be a Green Newton sponsored event at the Newton Library about [Food Recovery program](#), with Amy Sangiolo and guests from Wellesley.

Some schools will plan activities for the week after Earth Day.

4) School Committee Elections

Elections for School Committee members will be held in November. We would like to propose a questionnaire for candidates about their views on sustainability and topics that are important to School Connections, and what we are working on. It should not be too long and maybe integrate with other organizations, such as the League of Women Voters or Progressive Newton.

Amy Sangiolo will write a first draft to be discussed with the group.

The idea is to make the answers public through the Green Newton website.

5) NPS Food Service Management

The interview process with the two candidates happened on March 28th. It was open to some representatives of teachers, parents and students to watch (but not ask questions). It is the first time the process was opened like this. They welcomed the questions from the community and thanked for the inputs about sustainability. Sustainability was included in the questions for the first time thanks to our suggestions.

6) Textile Recycling in Schools

Heather Tausig is working on having textile recycling in schools. She has had a meeting with Waneta about it and now she is reaching out to school representatives to get feedback from them about interest in the program and placement of recycling bins.

Bay State Recycling School Program is a revenue generating program for the city. They partner with a dozen schools around MA to collect clothes and textiles. Schools are paid on a per pound basis. One concern is if the funds go to the individual schools or to the school district. This could be a way to help pay for sustainability director/staff.

"It is a triple winner:

1. The schools generate needed revenue.
2. The town saves by keeping it out of the waste stream and reduces tipping fees.
3. Helps the environment, the economy and educates students."

More information here: <https://www.baystatetextiles.com/acceptable-items> and here: <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/096fb2fb/files/uploaded/Christa%20McAuliffe.pdf>

Next step - sharing feedback from schools.



7) New logo and email address

School Connections has a new logo and a new email address: schoolconnections@greennewton.org

8) Upcoming events:

- **04/22**, 7pm, at Newton Free Library - "[Food Recovery: Why is it Important?](#)", with Amy Sangiolo and two guests from Wellesley.
- **04/27** - The City of Newton will be hosting a paper shredding and drug take-back event from 8:00am-12:00pm at the Newton Resource Recovery Center, located at 115 Rumford Ave. For [more information](#) or to reserve a drop off time, call 617-796-1660.
- **04/28** - NewtonServes - [Volunteer SignUp](#)
 - SGW - [Sneakers Drive at City Hall](#). Please contact Margaret Ford (margaret@greennewton.org) for more information. [Download Flyer here](#).
 - [Recycling Signage at Bigelow](#)
 - [Newton Power Choice door hanger distribution](#) - citywide
 - [Mothers out front](#) - Tagging leaks city wise. It increases awareness of the extent of this problem and serves as a tool as we advocate for fixing the leaks for a cleaner, healthier future in Newton and beyond.
 - Newton South students are doing a [Gently Used electronics drive](#).
- **05/20** - [Students for a Greener World](#) Annual Program. Newton Free Library @ 7pm. Presentations from Angier and Oak Hill.

9) Open Agenda

Brown PTO made a complaint against City Council about solar panels at Brown. The concern is the placement of the solar canopy in front of the school. They have safety issues at that location. Besides, without that, Brown will already have over 100% solar energy, that spot would add solar to 125%. Our Schools Connections group has not been able to talk to Brown representatives about it.

NEXT GNSC MEETING

Thursday, May 23rd, 3:45pm - Newton Free Library - 3rd floor