

Public Works Committee Meeting – Monday January 14, 2013

The RTM Public Works Committee meeting was called to order at 8:04pm with Frank Adelman, Dick Poli, Allison Stolar, Steve Anderson, Tom Valentino, Janet Grogan, Katie Keith, Tom Moore, Patti Bumgardner, Mark Adiletta and Nina Miller in attendance.

Mark Adiletta, the chair of Public Works committee stated that he has the minutes of our organizational meeting last month in case they are needed for the record. He doesn't believe they are since it was purely an organizational meeting with no official business conducted.

Bob Steeger, Director of Public Works was a guest speaker. He answered questions members come up with last month and included the following:

- Lessons learned or vulnerabilities exposed from the coastal flooding caused by Super Storm Sandy
- Current status of existing sidewalk redevelopment program and expansion, if applicable.
- The two flood remediation capital projects cited in the First Selectman's address to the RTM in December . What are they? How were they selected? Were they noted in one of the studies previously commissioned by the Town?
- Update, if any, on implementation of the recommendations put forth by the Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee a couple years ago.
- Projected budget transfer to the transfer station operating deficit 2013-14.
- Existing catch basin clean out program. Recurring problems.
- Implementation and acceptance of single stream recycling so far

Discussion provided by Mr. Steeger:

1) What is the purview of the Department of Public Works (DPW)? Responsibilities include bulk pickup, snow and ice removal, leaf pickup, highways, streets, storm drains, parking, sewers, solid waste, recycling, colonial cemeteries, buildings and grounds and 15 pump stations. It was noted that the DPW eliminated the use of sand five years ago prior to snowstorms because of complaints and now uses strictly salt. DPW has the largest budget besides the Police and the Board of Education with 31 full time employees, 2 part-time and 1 seasonal employee. They operate out of 126 Ledge Road near the Darien Dump and the Nearwater Lane Pump Station near the entrance of Weed Beach. The Nearwater Station is the main pump station and is where DPW monitors the various pump station through a system called Supervisor Control and Data (Analysis?) (SCADA) via a PC, password and iCloud connections. Mr. Steeger said there are 5 appointed officials on the Sewer Commission. Patti Bumgardner asked how most sewer projects are determined and Bob said they prefer to be approached by the neighborhood. There are no sewer projects on the schedule for 2013. The last one was the Goodwives River Sewer Project near Salem Straits. Darien is without a sewer agreement with the town of Stamford at the moment. Bob said he would come back and give us a broader power point presentation on the DPW at our February meeting.

2) Lessons learned from Super Storm Sandy? The main pump station on Nearwater Lane is/was vulnerable. The morning of the storm, DPW built a dirt berm to help to keep the water out. They followed up after the storm with masonry and cement barriers that went up as high as the windowsills at the Weed Beach pump station, so flood waters wouldn't reach and overwhelm the pumps. The masonry was three feet higher at the emergency generators. They operated on generator power during the storm. Some other locations of town pumps stations include Stony Brook, Hoyt near the Procaccini property, West, Avenue, Behind Bertuccis, Five Mile River near Chasmar Pond, Middlesex Commons, etc.

3) Sidewalk Redevelopment and Rehabilitation: There is \$150,000 earmarked for this purpose each year. It started on Post Road near Hillside. Per mile of construction, building sidewalks are more expensive than road resurfacing. They have established a list of priority projects which Mr. Steeger had reported to the BOS earlier that evening. Attached Exhibit A summarizing these appeared in the Darien Times.

4) Flood Remediation Project: After the 2007 flood there was a study done which focused on the three basic watersheds in Darien which are the Stony Brook River, the Goodwives River and the Noroton River. In May 2010 there were twelve flood remediation recommendations put forth to the BOS by the Flood Mitigation Committee. The town has two projects waiting for bonding in Jan 2014/Jan 2015 --- Abbey Rd./Intervale Road and West Avenue between Brown Road and the Stamford Line near Woodland Park. These projects were selected as a result of the Noroton River Watershed Study. The Abbey Rd project requires easements from property owners. The West Avenue project drains 120 acres and will need permits from the state EPC so that project will take longer.

5) Catch Basin Program: Goal is to clean out every one of the approximately 1,880 catch basins in town once a year and the problem ones more often. The DPW tries to make sure all major culvert crossings are clear prior to a storm. Heights Road is one such location which has had issues in the past and gets more frequent clean outs. Patti Bumgardner asked if there was a maintenance schedule, district by district, but Bob said there was not one.

6) Cost of Super Storm Sandy: The number one cost to the town of Darien right after the storm was that of collecting, handling, stockpiling and disposal of the brush and trees. FEMA's will help reimburse costs to our town and they specifically reimburse wind related costs for time and overtime. That doesn't happen for blizzards. The Town won't see the money until next fiscal year but will likely get 75% reimbursement. When asked about burying electrical lines to avoid power outages, Mr. Steeger said it costs \$1 million a mile to bury a line. That does not include the costs of redoing the sidewalks so it is prohibitively expensive. Mr. Adiletta noted his understanding that burying lines especially in a developed area such as Darien is very expensive.

Mark Adiletta asked Alison Stolar from our Public Works Committee to give us an overview on the new Darien Transfer Advisory Committee (TSAC) and their work with the town Dump. Their goals are the following:

1. Develop a public education program emphasizing:
 - a. How residents can better use single stream recycling.
 - b. Identifying items that can/cannot be recycled in the single stream;
 - c. Identifying items that can be recycled but are not single stream (e.g., what should be done with specific materials — construction debris, mattresses, wood)

d. Tracking progress in increasing recycling volume.

2. Examine the business model of the transfer station to:

a. Evaluate the impact of single stream;

b. Analyze the transfer station operations and develop alternatives for the Board of Selectman to consider;

c. Identify desired services and how they should be provided; and

d. Evaluate the revenue generated by the transfer station with the intent of limiting tax dollar support needed for the facility.

3. Evaluating other recycling initiatives to increase general awareness and handling other wastes (composting, paint, etc...).

The goal for Darien is to “Recycle, Repurpose, Reuse.” Bob Steeger and Alison Stolar said the entire cost of operating the Transfer Station has been budgeted and approved. Bob said there should not be a budget deficit. It was noted by several members that the revenues from tipping fees, licenses etc. are a few hundred thousand less than the expenses of the transfer station resulting in a shortfall covered by the Town. Alison mentioned they may look at adjusting or raising some fees and review some services to narrow the gap and improve operations. The tonnage of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is going down and that is significant because it costs the town money to transfer it out (approximately \$85/ton). The fact that it is going down will help reduce costs. Alison spoke at length about Single Stream Recycling. The TSAC will likely recommend the Dump have a name change to the Darien Recycling and Refuse Center. In the Transfer Center, a second compacter should be in place on February 2nd. For the 40-50% of people in Darien and private haulers who use the Dump, it will be a vast improvement visually and operationally. Alison said the TSAC’s goal is to get Single Stream Recycling into every household, school and business in Darien. They have created a list of what can be recycled via Single Stream Recycling and are using the phrase “loose, empty and lightly soiled.” Most things, including books and plastic bags can be recycled. You cannot recycle food, dirty diapers, mylar balloons and take out food bags with the silver lining at the bottom of the bag. The TSAC’s goal is to distribute the list of recyclables and non-recyclable items to every household in Darien. Dot Kelly and the TSAC will be doing a presentation at the next RTM meeting.

Alison Stolar reported Chris Oxer from City Carting who attends TSAC meetings said they invested \$10 million in technology in August 2012 to upgrade their recycling program. They have a machine that is a sorter with a magnet that pulls out cans, metal and wire and a machine that pulls out cardboard. They pay \$15 a ton for our recyclables. It was noted by several members this is a \$100/ton savings to the Town for recyclable material removed from MSW and properly disposed of via single stream. Single Stream Recycling is important for Darien because it makes us more efficient, reduces taxpayer’s dollars and makes our town green. The TSAC contacted every Transfer Station in Fairfield County plus Greenwich and Stamford to learn more about their programs. Darien has five private commercial haulers and the goal is to get them all to do Single Stream Recycling. The TSAC put together a list of proposed guidelines for our town haulers and has recommended that if they do not follow them, to not give out fines, but instead to do a report card on each hauler, like Greenwich does. City Carting will be putting up signage at the Transfer Station to promote Single Stream Recycling.

It was noted that although the Choose to Reuse (CTR) Committee’s goal to pass a

plastic ban ordinance did not pass the RTM last Fall, the result has been an even broader effort to educate and inform residents of Darien on the best ways to recycle. The TSAC, which includes Chair Dot Kelly, DHS student Finley Wetmore, Caroline Bayne, Craig Flaherty, Alison Stolar, Terrance Gaffeny, Susan Cameron, City Carting's Chris Oxer and others was created as result of CTR's hard work.

The Public Works Committee made the following assignments for Sub-Committees:

Budget – Anderson, Adiletta

Transfer Station – Stolar, Moore, Cameron

Flood Mitigation – Bumgardner, Poli, Hardison

Sidewalks and Storm Drains – Miller, Keith

Sewer Commission – Adelman, Valentino

Other/Bulk Pick Up - Grogan

The motion for the meeting to be adjourned was made by Mary. The meeting of the Public Works Committee was adjourned at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Bumgardner
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