

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF ESOPUS  
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD  
February 20, 2008**

**Present:** Andy Bicking, Chairman; Carrine Brown; Susan Holland; David Murray; Emily Pereira; Catherine Quick; Robert Yerry; Michelle Higgins; Curt Dankelmann; Eli Schloss; Brian

**Absent:** Louise Ferrante

**Town Board Liaison:** Debbie Silvestro

Chairman Bicking called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Bicking welcomed the group and reminded them that Curt Dankelmann would be giving a presentation to the Board at 7:15pm. He also reminded them that D. Silvestro had been asked to look into the attendance policy, and reported back that 75% attendance was required or the Board member "risked" being removed from the Board. D. Silvestro doesn't believe that this policy has ever been used to remove a Board member; however, it was a good policy to have in place.

**MINUTES**

**MOTION** to accept December 2007 minutes made by Michelle Higgins and seconded by Emily Pereira. All present in favor.

**MOTION** to accept January 2008 minutes made by Emily Pereira and seconded by Cathy Quick. All present in favor.

**TRANSFER STATION REPORT**

Bicking introduced the Board members to Curt Dankelmann, contractor for the operations of the Town Transfer Station. Bicking said that the Board was interested in recycling, and invited Dankelmann to report on what was occurring at the transfer station and what he needed as far as Board assistance.

D. Silvestro reported that there would be revisions to the solid waste management act and that there would be a push for the Towns to take a more proactive stance. Dankelmann said that there was a

goal to reduce, reuse, and recycle in the state, however, they were falling far short of their anticipated goals. He said it is not a simple thing to just create guidelines. He said it depended on demographics and economics for participation. He said he understands that everyone wants to promote recycling by making it free, but it does cost to recycle. He believes that recycling should be looked at as a lower cost way to dispose of material while still producing some revenues, not a free program.

Dankelmann said that when the RRA came into the County, revenues generated by the Towns were diverted to the RRA. Now the Towns had to go out to bond so there would be funding to close the landfills. He said each of the Towns with a landfill signed an agreement with the RRA, closed their landfills, and opened a transfer station. He said there is not a transfer station in this County that is breaking even in their budget. He said he commented the RRA attempts now to make a boiler plate program with each Town doing the same thing, and distributing the same educational materials, but they were managing the waste and the costs for disposal.

Dankelmann said his idea was to put together a sixteen part series of half hour shows to air on public access educating the public on waste reduction and recycling. This would be the Four "R"s: READ, REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE. Reading would make consumers better shoppers and reduce packaging, the largest part of the waste stream. He said that consumers should also look through the eyes of the commercial haulers so they could understand where the charges were coming from, and how recycling programs work.

Bicking summarized Dankelmann's comments by saying that it seems education is key to promote recycling. Dankelmann said that everyone had to become a responsible steward. He said that the waste was being collected and shipped out to someone else's community. He said that the public should consider other local options such as composting and smart shopping. He said that loading it into a trailer and shipping it ten hours to a landfill didn't make sense. "Look at all the dinosaurs that are being burned up." Dankelmann said that the Supervisor had discussed making the transfer station more dependent on users of the service not on all of the tax payers which is a 1/3 to 2/3 ratio. Bicking asked if there was anyone at the County level that was addressing these needs. Dankelmann said that he hoped so and knew he had the support of the Towns legislative representative, but he felt that the solid waste authority (RRA) was not responsive. David Murray said he had spoken with the RRA executive director, and had gotten the same feeling.

Bicking said he would like some input from the Board on what could be done to promote recycling in the Town. Higgins felt that the real educational outreach should be for waste reduction, and that transfer station use should be promoted as a cost reducing alternative to waste disposal. She also felt that the transfer station should be called by a different name such as recycling center. Dankelmann said that the funding appropriated for waste reduction by the State did not pay in a timely fashion, and it could take up to five years for the funds that were expended to be received. Bicking asked if usage went up, if the cost to the Town for operations would decrease. Dankelmann said that a higher usage rate by residents would decrease the cost because it would increase revenues.

Silvestro said what she would like to hear is more about the Town transfer station and its operations. She asked that the Board be taken through the process. Dankelmann said that a resident can dispose of household garbage, some construction debris, and recycling. He said that staff would provide them

with a permit for \$20/year, and there were roll-off containers were the resident could back up their vehicle to unload materials. He said the transfer station has a good flow for traffic to enter and exit, but he would like to see more people from the Town of Esopus use the transfer station. Yerry asked about marketing of transfer station use, and possibly opening on Sundays for homeowners that work Monday through Friday. Dankelmann said that was an excellent point, but staff would have to know by Friday what containers to call in to RRA to pull on Tuesday because the RRA doesn't pull containers on weekends. The RRA also just removed a container so there would be no additional containers to put weekend waste in. Yerry felt that a swap shop would be beneficial in waste reduction. Dankelmann said one of the ongoing issues with swap shops was liability. Bicking understood those concerns but asked if Dankelmann would still be open to the idea if they could get around that issue. Bicking said in the Town of Red Hook, it was staffed by volunteers.

Bicking said he would like to have future conversations on composting, swap shops, and other ways to divert waste. He felt composting could be another potential revenue opportunity. Higgins said that New Paltz gave compost to gardeners. Dankelmann said that he ran the transfer station as a service to the residents for the Town, but if it lost money, it reflects badly on him. He also discussed electronics collection. Yerry mentioned that SONY would be implementing a program where they would take back any of their products for a small fee.

#### **WATERFRONT ADVISORY BOARD – Cathy Quick**

Quick reported that the WAB would sponsor its annual Hudson River Clean Sweep on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am with a rain date of April 26<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm. Bicking asked the Board if they would be interested in co-sponsoring the event. Emily Pereira said she was thinking the sapling giveaway may take place on the 19<sup>th</sup> depending on when they came in. Bicking felt they should get back to the WAB with some information on volunteers to help with the event.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Bicking asked for input from the Board on the transfer station report. Emily Pereira felt that one of the ways to communicate with the public and educate on the three "R"s may be with a newsletter. Quick said that would work with the brochure that the Board discussed last month. Murray said that may be correlated with the RRA's new recycling brochure. He said the City of Kingston would be mailing it out with their water bill. Bicking felt that he would like to meet with Dankelmann again after speaking to some of the Towns that were offering over services such as fluorescent light recycling. Murray said he would like to discuss adding recyclables, and understanding why Dankelmann was so concerned with the costs. Silvestro felt that the Towns may be able to work together and could offer different services that could be used by all County residents. Holland said she felt a regional approach could be a good idea similar to what the Mid-Hudson library system did with sharing books – not so provincial.

Bicking reviewed the some projects that Board members were working on including websites, newsletters, and brochures. Petit reminded the Board that recycling education could be reimbursed under the State Waste Reduction and Reuse grant.

Bicking thanked Yerry for bringing in Dankelmann, he said that Holland will be working on education and working with the Town, and Pereira was working on the sapling giveaway. He said perhaps the saplings could be given away at the River Clean Sweep. Quick asked if any revenues could be generated from the giveaway.

**MOTION** was made by Cathy Quick and seconded by Robert Yerry about spending funds for the sapling purchase. All present in favor.

Bicking reported that Murray and he would be having a discussion on reviewing energy expenses for the Town. Murray said he had pulled up some NYSERDA information. Petit told the Board that the County Global Warming Committee had a software program they were utilizing to due energy audits on County buildings. Silvestro said that the Town had a contract with Central Hudson to maintain the lights in Town, and the monthly bills were averaging \$2,000 a month. Murray said that the mercury vapor bulbs were some of the most energy inefficient types of lighting.

#### **ADJOURNED**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.