

City of Shelton, Anti-Litter Committee
Minutes for Meeting of March 26, 2008 at 7:00 P.M.
Shelton City Hall, Room 303

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Note: If you have questions regarding Litter Committee agenda or minutes,
contact Conservation Agent Teresa Gallagher at 924-1555 x315

MINUTES FOR MARCH 26, 2008

(All minutes are considered to be in DRAFT form until formally approved by the Anti-Litter Committee at the next meeting).

Chairman Gil Pastore called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.
Members Present:

Gil Pastore, Chairman
Lorraine Blohm
Teresa Gallagher, Conservation Consultant
Audrey Nefores, Shelton High School Representative
Ron Pilkowicz
Jim Taradine
Ingrid Waters
Karin Tuke, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion made by Teresa Gallagher seconded by Ron Pilkowicz, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2/27/08 meeting minutes.

PUBLIC PORTION

Gil asked if there was anyone from the public who wanted to speak.

Tim Foley, 34 Newcastle Drive, Shelton, CT addressed the Committee.

Tim indicated that he was the store manager of Starbucks on Bridgeport Avenue and he'd been there for two years and expected to be there for awhile. He was happy to be working in the Shelton community, and this was a group he wanted to get involved with.

SHELTON CLEAN SWEEP

Before beginning the discussion about the Clean Sweep, Gil announced that the Committee had a new official member, Alison Menendez. He asked Teresa to get her on the e-mail distribution list. She wasn't present for tonight's meeting, but she was to become a member ASAP.

Gil stated that the word was out about the Clean Sweep and they've gotten a great response from a lot of people. He indicated that he sent a letter out to Mr. Mooney in the Department of Highways and Bridges to prepare him for an onslaught of calls during the week of April 22nd for additional trash pickups.

Ron Pilkowitz asked if they should give him a call when they are ready for a pick up on his street.

Gil responded yes, that the focus was to have people put trash roadside and then contact the Department of Highways and Bridges to send out a truck for pick-up. The number was available on the website. He'll be doing a follow-up call with both Mr. Mooney and Ray, who is the Assistant at Highways and Bridges. That way everyone would be clear about them picking up the garbage and taking it to the transfer station on River Road.

Gil added that he also sent out a letter to some companies for donations – Sears Hardware, R. Scinto, Adam's Supermarket, Starbucks, Bruegger's, Cumberland Farms, Carroll's Home Improvement, Huntington Hardware, Super Stop & Shop, Shaw's Supermarket, Dunkin Donuts,

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The Donut Shop, The Donut Center, Staples, Brennan Construction, Connecticut Waste Transfer and Trans-Clean.

Presently, there were four businesses that were going to contribute. Trans-Clean would be donating gloves and bags.

Teresa stated that they were received today – they're good heavy duty bags. They're talking about setting up two pickup locations starting April 7th – one at the Community Center and one at Town Hall. She didn't have an exact location at City Hall yet. She told everyone that she would be going on vacation April 9th and she didn't want to just leave these things unattended. Perhaps, the Secretary in the Mayor's Office or maybe Marilyn Gannon because she does Recycling and Hazardous Waste coordination would be able to store them.

Gil stated that Connecticut Waste Transfer agreed to give them gloves and bags also. Dunkin Donuts downtown called him and said they would donate donuts and coffee.

Teresa asked if they were donating coupons or actual donuts and coffee.

Gil responded that they just said donuts and coffee.

Teresa asked how a group would come a get that.

Gil indicated that he needed some ideas on that because Bruegger's Bagels offered to give them five dozen bagels with cream cheese. He thought that if the Shelton High School has a planned group activity going on, they could give the bagels and cream cheese to them on the day that they have their event. The same with the donuts and coffee...

Audrey Nefores responded that she hoped they would have kids and parents involved, and hopefully, team directors, coaches and teachers.

Gil relayed that he received a verbal donation from Sears Hardware but he hadn't heard back from them to confirm. He commented that he hadn't had the time to get to Plumb Memorial Library to put out flyers and set up the easel display that he made. He told everyone that the flyer was printed in the March 2008 issue of Shelton Life about the Anti-Litter Committee.

Audrey Nefores hadn't formally asked anyone about donations for the concession stand that would be open for the Clean Sweep event at the high school, and she asked for some direction in asking Stop & Shop, for example, for burgers and buns, because she wasn't sure how she should do that - if she should go in person, call, or write a letter.

Gil showed her a copy of the letter that he sent out if she wanted to use it as a format to ask for donations.

Tim Foley suggested going to a smaller place, like Beechwood Market. Being from a large corporation, he knew that stores like Stop & Shop have big store policies that they have to adhere to. Stop & Shop's policy may be to give a gift card; whereas a smaller Beechwood type store, or a local merchant around the corner would just donate 50 frozen hamburgers and buns.

Audrey thought that was a great idea and asked if he thought going in person was the best way to do it.

Tim agreed that going in person or asking to speak to the owner would be a good way to go.

Audrey asked, although Nahida wasn't at the meeting and she had attempted to email her with no response, for some specifics about what Nahida wanted her to ask Mr. Ramia for. She doesn't want to go and ask Mr. Ramia for anything until she knows exactly what Nahida wants the high

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school students to do when they visit the elementary schools. She asked if anyone knew what Nahida wanted them to talk about with the kids.

No one knew exactly what Nahida had planned, so Audrey indicated that she would again try to contact her by telephone. Audrey added that kids are going to be helping her with the Green T's bulletin board, and they've signed up for the club, and her teacher sent out an email to every organization in the school. She's waiting for a response to find out what teams were going to come to the clean up event.

Teresa commented that she wanted to add the Green T's to the website.

Audrey said that by the end of the week she'd have more info about her event and whose signed up for it, so she'll e-mail Teresa then. She said the Green T's event was going to be on Saturday, the 26th. She said that Mr. Ramia had arranged for someone to come and set up a sound system for free for all the kids that who are going to play the local music. They are very excited to play.

Ron asked what time it would be and Audrey responded that she wanted to ask the Committee how long they thought the event should go. She thought because there were so many teens involved maybe it wouldn't matter if it was longer because then people could come at their leisure. She was thinking about 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. The concession stand would be open to have lunch or to have dinner.

Gil asked how much work had to be done.

Audrey responded that it would be open to the whole area – the high school grounds, they could go down to the Intermediate School and they could go down Constitution because the Committee mentioned that people were complaining about that hill. They could assign different teams to different areas, wherever they wanted to go. It's a large area but they'll be music to make it less like slave labor all day long. She asked everyone if they thought 12 – 6 was too much?

Teresa commented that she didn't think so because people would probably come and go.

Ingrid suggested 11 a.m. for early risers, and it would still give her time to set up.

Gil suggested planning a rain date for Sunday.

Tim suggested that Audrey should have a schedule because if they're cleaning a large area with a lot of groups, there needs to be some organization; otherwise, it might get chaotic.

Audrey commented that the football team would be sending a few people and the National Honor Society would be sending a few people.

Teresa asked if everything would be within walking distance or would they be driving to other locations when they finish the high school.

Audrey responded that there was enough trash to pick up at the high school that it would take months just to clean up the grounds there.

Lorraine commented that once they have all the details, she would contact Fred at the Huntington Herald. She said that she already spoke to him about putting the flyer in, but he said he had already done the article plus he had it in Spotlight. He said he'd be happy to put any more information they have in the paper.

Ron suggested contacting local TV stations Channel 12 or 3 just to let them know about it, so if they wanted to come down they could.

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Tim commented that Starbucks has called them because they've been involved in Earth Day activities every year in different communities. This year his district was taking care of Bridgeport and last year they took care of Norwalk. He stated that they've asked many times for them to come down because they did big projects – they reseeded, spread mulch one of the parks in Norwalk last year for about 10 hours. The television stations never come down.

Teresa commented that it has to be a real slow news day - television news likes controversy, not good news.

Gil suggested that they send out info to the newspapers anyway though – the Connecticut Post, the New Haven Register and other local papers.

Teresa suggested taking pictures of at these events and sending those in.

Gil thanked Audrey for all her efforts with the Green T's at the high school and told her he'd attend her event and help out.

Audrey said that they've been slow with nothing to do, so they're looking forward to having a big event.

Lorraine commented that she sent copies of the flyer to all the churches in the area thinking maybe youth groups at different churches might want to get involved. She said she also e-mailed it to WEBE and WICC – they have community things on their websites. She asked about a sign being put on RT 108 and Bridgeport Avenue – the \$250 for littering.

Lorraine asked about the Litter Signs and the list they made up of where those signs should be posted – she said that there was still no sign posted on 108.

Teresa responded that she thought 108 might be a State Highway, and Shelton might not be allowed to put those signs up. She said there weren't any on Bridgeport Avenue either because it's a State Highway.

Lorraine suggested contacting the State so that they could post the \$250 littering fine sign.

Ron mentioned that they still needed to replace some of the smaller littering fine signs with larger ones like on Mill Street.

Gil suggested that someone find the list they drew up with the names of highly littered streets and add to it, then he could contact Mr. Mooney with it as a follow-up.

Lorraine said that she would dig out that list and asked who they should contact at the state level.

Teresa commented that she thought they shouldn't be contacting anyone at the state level– that it should be done by Public Works or Engineering.

Lorraine commented that she called the Police Department yesterday in regard to closing off Nells Rock Road for a clean up, and they told her to write a letter to the police chief asking for permission.

Ron added that he had to write a letter to the police chief last year when he had his first clean up on Mill Street.

Gil thought that Nells Rock saw too much traffic to close off easily – it's a main artery. It would have to have at least two police officers for the day to direct traffic.

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As an alternative, Lorraine thought she'd just put flyers in mailboxes and ask people to clean up in front of their own property.

Teresa suggested that for the long term they should identify the roads that volunteers really can't pick up for safety reasons (too narrow, too busy...) and can't be closed. Those roads should be roads that the City has to clean up.

Gil commented that he'd like to address that in May after the Clean Sweep event. He asked Lorraine to e-mail the flyer and ask to have an ad put in the next issue of the paper or the Shelton Weekly.

Lorraine asked Teresa about the individual who had contacted her volunteering to do community service.

Teresa responded that he hadn't done it yet, he may have started, but he needed a 100 hours. She told him last week that she'd sign his log for the community service.

Lorraine said that she sent Fred at the Huntington Herald an e-mail thanking him for the great coverage and attached the flyer. He responded that he already put it in the Spotlight section and he'd be happy to put any updates in for us.

Gil asked Lorraine to send him the flyer in e-mail format.

Lorraine said she e-mailed it to him and that's what he said no to.

Gil asked her to get a price on putting an ad in the Huntington Herald for the next two week's papers.

Teresa suggested that it go in the Shelton Weekly because not everyone gets the Herald.

Lorraine said she'd get the price on an ad tomorrow, if they had the budget. She asked how big the ad should be because the larger the ad, the higher the cost.

Gil suggested an 8 ½ x 11 size, not a full page or anything, As soon as she gets a price on it, he'll forward it to John Anglace and the Mayor for billing to an account. We need to provide the dates that it will run – next week and the following week.

Lorraine commented that she did all the fast food places on Bridgeport Avenue and most said that they were franchises and weren't allowed to post anything. The guy at Duchess, Starbucks and Huntington Café were very enthusiastic though.

Ron asked if anything went out to the corporations like Pitney Bowes.

Gil responded that they never really followed up on that.

Teresa commented that was there real missing piece – the corporations.

Tim commented that a lot of corporations are trying to touch base with the communities. He had heard that HealthNet was very community oriented.

Teresa and Ron disagreed in unison that you wouldn't know it from the trash in the area – Bridgeport Avenue, all the way down Old Stratford Road, it's a horrible mess in that area.

Gil said that he was sending a letter and a flyer to Iroquois Gas because they've been a big contributor to anything outdoor efforts like wetlands. He was trying to get them on board to do something.

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Teresa mentioned that Aquarian has a lot of frontage on Isinglass Road that no one picks up because it's nobody's yard and it goes far in.

Lorraine had mentioned that in her letter to Aquarian when she wrote to them about the fence and asked if they could put trash receptacles there along the fence, but she didn't receive a "yes" on that request.

Tim commented that in regard to what businesses in Shelton could do for this effort, the news article suggested that just putting a trash can outside of their business areas would help. He mentioned that they do that at Starbucks and they should try to enforce that with other companies.

Gil responded that they really can't, it was just a suggestion that they put out there.

Tim stated that with the trash can outside his store, he gets everybody else's garbage. There weren't Starbuck's cups in there, it's everything from their cars. They've found so many odd things in that trash can. It's emptied three times a day. Starbucks was a stickler with their trash – they double bag and tie every bag of trash, make sure it goes in the dumpster, recycle their cardboard and paper. Additionally, they always clean up around their store outside – that is part of the Starbucks company policy. Having a trash can out there is a great thing. He hates to say it, but people throw their *Dunkin Donuts* coffee cups and *McDonald's* stuff in there before they come into his Starbucks store. But at least, it's keeping the trash off the street. If Subway, the gas station and everybody else on Bridgeport Avenue put out a trash can or on the sidewalks of these strip malls, people would use it. But no one is going to go out of their way to dump their garbage. It has to be convenient. They empty their big garbage can three times a day.

Lorraine commented that after the letter went out, Wal-mart and Dunkin Donuts downtown had trash cans outside their doors.

Tim mentioned that the majority of his customer's have a routine of coming to Starbuck's for their coffee every morning. They get their coffee, clean the trash out of their car, and if there's a trash can right there, they'll use it.

Ron suggested that they just send that request out to other companies to see if it creates the same response.

Tim thought that businesses might respond if it's put to them as "if you can't volunteer your time, could you volunteer to put a garbage can outside your door?" It would be helpful everywhere from the bank to the liquor store.

Lorraine suggested contacting the owners of the strip malls in Shelton to make it their responsibility.

Tim commented that might not work because businesses rent the space and have to take care of their space.

Gil stated that was helpful to know– if there's a garbage can available, people would use it, it's that much less garbage on the road – and that's a big contribution for Starbucks to do that every day.

Ingrid asked for advice as to how to contact her neighbors on Long Hill Crossroads because it's 75% commercial and there's a lot of trash on the road. She doesn't want to be the only one out there cleaning it up, but she's uncomfortable going up to her neighbors.

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Ron commented that he didn't know any of his neighbors on Mill Street until he organized his clean up last year. That was how he met Teresa Gallagher. He put notices in mailboxes and everyone came out to help. He designated his driveway as a meeting place and they filled up about 40 or 50 bags of trash and other large items – tires, air conditioners, large stuff that was just dumped in the woods. He expected this year to be much easier because of all that work last year. He said that when he initiated the event he had no idea that he'd get such a great neighborhood response.

Teresa suggested to Ingrid that she use the form available on the website, fill out the information for her clean-up such as time, date – and put it in the neighbor's mailboxes. Ron said he would be doing that this year too.

Gil thought that Long Hill Cross Road should go on the list of streets that can't be shut down and weren't really safe to go and clean up.

Audrey suggested putting up a sign at the top and the bottom of the street alerting drivers to slow down because people were out doing a community trash clean up going on.

Tim thought orange cones and signs – like "Men at Work" would be a good alternative to having the City close off the street, maybe they could supply the signs.

Audrey suggested contacting someone about getting some signs like that.

Ron stated that he would get in touch with Mark Petak about that.

Teresa stated that she had been taking a lot of calls, e-mails and started compiling information. There have been a lot of people calling just to get more information because of the whole thing with Belden's Bums and the articles in the paper about that. She provided her telephone number as the point of contact for Belden's Bums so she's been getting their phone calls as well.

Teresa indicated that she also contacted Clean Sound because they do big clean-ups along the water – Long Island Sound and the Housatonic – and they have a Tri-City Clean-Up at Clean Sound and Harbor Valley Marina. They're doing Shelton, Stratford and Milford. In Shelton, they are doing it at Sunnyside and the first 100 people get free T-Shirts. They have a 6 foot sub being donated by Subway. Teresa said she received a call from one of the organizers who was touching base with different towns for that event on May 3rd.

Gil told everyone, in case not everyone knew, the Clean Sound was started up as a non-profit organization run by Shelton resident, John Toth. They do a lot of great clean up projects at areas that can't easily be reached without a boat. It's very well organized group.

Teresa thought this Committee could learn a lot from them because they've had events and had sponsors for those events.

Ingrid suggested for a future event, wearing T-shirts with sponsor names on the back would be a good idea to wear during a clean up so they'd be recognizable to cars.

Audrey added they'd she had been thinking about doing T-shirts like that for the Green T's – an event shirt. She mentioned that her club wanted to do organic cotton to go with the green movement.

Gil asked Audrey to keep everyone up to date on her high school event. The next meeting would be close to the date of the event on April 23th. Gil said he would get a letter out to some of the corporations, especially like Healthnet, UI and Pitney Bowes.

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Teresa suggested that it would be helpful if someone got a Letter to the Editor published to call on corporations and local businesses to participate in doing something positive during Earth Week. They have a lot going on but they don't have the big businesses participating. Teresa suggested sending it to the Huntington Herald, the Shelton Weekly, and the Connecticut Post.

Gil relayed a story in which he was recently driving on Route 8, following an open truck with no cover on it, that had a lot of debris falling out all over Route 8. It was probably on its way to the waste station in Bridgeport. He wanted to follow up on stuff like this with a letter to the Police and the Governor about dump trucks driving on the roads with uncovered debris dropping on the roadways. Besides the trash all over the highway, it was a safety concern.

Teresa relayed that she had read that a high percentage – 40% or 50% of the litter on roadways was unintentional stuff that just flew out of cars and trucks.

Tim asked about the signs that have been posted around town regarding the increased fines for littering. He thought increasing the fine was great but asked if anyone knew if the police in Shelton have ever fined anyone, like in the last ten years, or if the littering fine was ever even enforced.

Gil responded that the Chief of Police came to one of the Committee meetings. The Chief told the group that the police were enforcing the dumping and litter laws, but it usually doesn't make the newspaper because it wasn't really newsworthy.

Teresa added that they were enforcing the dumping to a greater degree than the littering, because the littering was so difficult to catch people doing. They've tried to focus on the larger dumping problem areas. She told Tim that the Committee had provided the police with a list of what the Committee felt were some of the larger, more problematic dumping areas around town. The Police Chief agreed to keep a better watch in those areas.

Lorraine commented that she had traveled around the United States and had seen much higher fines for littering in many other states.

Teresa responded that if the litter fine was too high, the police might be less likely to fine people, but ultimately it was really about the enforcement of it.

On a motion made by Gil Pastore seconded by Teresa Gallagher, it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karin Tuke

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