

**General Introductions** – David Jeffers

- Brief overview of partnered NEWMOA Event from Nov. 5 – Paige Wilson

**Presentation** – Athena Bradley, Northeast Recycling Council (NERC); *Food Waste Management & Composting: Issues and Opportunities* [\\*available on LRPC website > Solid Waste\\*](#)

- Project summary about NERC's Community Composting Project – option available to join project but whether or not the site is selected, public can still participate in the trainings to gain experience
  - Goal is to keep things local (collection/resources)
  - Need to increase education with residents (i.e. – get over the “yuck” factor)
- Community compost system is meant to fall under regulations
- *Jora Tumblers* designed for our New England climate – insulated
  - Offers rapid decomposition and reaches required temperature of 131 °F
  - Dual chamber tumblers encouraged – fill one side while the other side decomposes
- Carbon sourcing is important due to large carbon to nitrogen ratio
  - Biobags – certified compostable
- Compost process is the same no matter the size of the pile/operation
- Fungi is good! Allows for mineral and nutrient exchanges with bacteria and other decomposers
- Squeeze test is easy method for testing compost maturity
- Community compost projects should notify neighbors, board of health and other stakeholders to identify any immediate concerns [\\*NERC assistance available\\*](#)
- Second structure for compost process can vary:
  - 3-bin system with roof – concrete or soils
  - Aerated static pile – good for transfer stations – low cost, low odor, low maintenance
- Inspection form – creates a professional community compost system with safety plans, protocols, description of recording methods, closing plans [\\*NERC assistance available\\*](#)
  - Learn about your town's set backs
  - Implement best management practices (BMPs)
- NH's current composting regulations are being updated – as of now, community composting doesn't “fit” under existing regs. – only through application waiver for dairy and with permit by notification

**Participant Introductions** – name, town/business representation, purpose for attending roundtable

- 16 attendees (not including LRPC staff and presenter)
- Representatives: transfer stations, local/regional committees, town residents, state departments

## Discussions/Questions

David Jeffers: Can we try to start a community compost project? Is this something we can make happen? From listening to the participant introductions, there are current interests with private business owners, schools, farmers markets, transfer stations, camps, and resident community groups.

### QUESTION 1

David Katz: Can you please explain the applicability of permits?

Tara Albert: Transfer stations with permit-by-notification (PBN) can accept food waste, up to 20% more than current total accepted organics with a simple notification to NHDES. No meat or dairy can be accepted under current regulations – subject to change under current revisions to accommodate.

- Dairy is easier to do with backyard composting where meat takes longer to decompose and is better with larger piles

With a standard permit, you need to file a permit modification and be re-written to accommodate food waste collection in operation.

Athena Bradley: NERC and NHDES will work with stakeholders to create a site plan and fill out permit(s)

### QUESTION 2

David K: How do we change consumer behaviors? How has it matured in other pilot cases?

Athena B: Starts with trainings and education – advertise drop off dates, have staff work directly with generators dropping off food waste and identify contaminants with them during collections

### QUESTION 3

Kerry Long: Are there any examples of municipalities composting themselves?

Athena B: Yes...

- Brattleboro, VT – incorporates compost in curbside pickup. 74% diversion rate of total recyclables and food waste
  - o Windham Solid Waste Management District (WSWMD) – saves approx. \$35,000/yr. – cost neutral operation and makes money from composting
- Barre, VT – has a couple smaller sites
- VT in general – by 2020, food waste is banned from landfills
- Burlington, VT – operates an aerated static pile system (ASP) with a population of about 30,000

### QUESTION 4

Glenn Johnson: Does the solid waste district run Burlington's compost operation? Who monitors it?

Athena B: The solid waste staff helps operate and monitor

Glenn J: Tamworth has a 3-day/week pick-up and we don't need more work put on our staff...

Athena B: Residential education helps with labor when it trickles down in the disposal process. Community compost projects are a method for starting a larger operation.

#### *QUESTION 5*

Barbara Bloomberg: Where do the food scraps go in Brattleboro?

Athena B: They're dropped on a pad at WSWMD and a front end loader carries the materials to build and manage the windrows on site

#### *COMMENT 1*

Sara McGraw: Tamworth Community School has a great compost shed and have been composting for many years now. Other schools have been asking about their system and it could be a great learning opportunity for other schools.

Barbara B: We want to connect the farmers market to the school compost system. Food waste could be pre-mixed and brought to the Tamworth transfer station for more processing.

#### *QUESTION 6*

Sue Wingate: Would the community compost project at the school need a permit waiver for off-site composting?

Tara A: Yes

Sue Q: Okay, because it's difficult to incorporate it on school property because of budget issues between the school and the town. They need to be separate.

#### *QUESTION 7*

Dean Allen – Kids co-mingle waste at school and it's hard to have them separate the types of food. How can we get schools to change?

Athena B: You could install separate bins and build them into a table with areas to set lunch trays - tray area makes a big difference because kids can set it down and sort instead of trying to balance the tray. It's important to train kids in school.

Dean A: We'd need to bag it up and bring it to a transfer station close by to sort (mixed waste processing system). There's no composting at the school, we would need to move it.

Athena B: Dairy is not usually an issue, meat is typically harder to separate and needs a large pile to decompose.

Tara A: DES is looking for a pilot program to test composting methods with meat and dairy. Tuftonboro could be a good community for this.

#### *QUESTION 8*

Glenn J: How much land is needed to manage food waste at a transfer station for a certain population size?

Tara A: It's hard to say, but you can assess the Sunapee pilot project. A transfer station can start with a few residents with a known interest in sustainability and grow from there. It doesn't need to start out huge.

Glenn J: It seems like this option could be a waste a time and our resources are valuable.

Dean A: This is not a waste of time. As a population, we need to change our habits. We are throwing out valuable resources and it's costing all of us lots of money to manage it as a "waste" when we could be using it for other purposes. The tipping fee is the most expensive.

Tara A: I just want to mention that it's important to bring up these conversations and concerns at town meetings to get ahead of things. Food waste makes up about 30% of our trash and we can throw out much less if we divert it to another processing system. (Weight of food waste in solid waste stream will be diverted)

#### **Closing Points – David Jeffers**

- Recognized the benefits of roundtable conversations
- Identified potential pilot projects with NERC
- Thanked everyone for coming
- Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM

*\*Small group discussions proceeded until 12pm after meeting had ended\**

#### **MEASURABLE MEETING OUTCOME – 3 pilot sites for NERC Rural Community Compost project and LRPC initiatives**

1. **Tamworth Community School** – expand current compost operations to Tamworth farmers market
2. **Tuftonboro Agriculture Committee** – creating a compost site in community garden
3. **Highland Mountain Bike Park** – creating a compost program for managing food waste from restaurant (private business)