



STONEHILL COLLEGE

Environmental Stewardship Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

1:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

MINUTES

Attendees: Lucy Almberg '21, Craig Binney, Bruce Boyer, Kristi Burkholder, Christian Castriotta '22, Kim Cordeiro, Kathleen Fitzgerald (Sodexo), Jessa Gagne, Michelle Lee Guiney (Waste Management), Gina Herosian '23, Bridget Lawrence-Meigs, Brittany Lorgeree, Bob MacEachern, Chanel Mazzone, Fr. Tim Mouton, Deb Norton, Paul Ricci, Louisa Rossel '21, Cheryl Schnitzer (Chair), Colin Spencer, Greg Wolfe

Guest: Justin Sandler of Black Earth Compost

The meeting commenced at 1:00 p.m. and was chaired by Prof. Cheryl Schnitzer.

1. Meeting Minutes

The March 30, 2021, meeting minutes were approved as amended.

2. Black Earth Compost Presentation

Justin Sandler, Partner at Black Earth Compost, discussed the importance of composting. We are running out of landfill space, and food scraps are the heaviest part of the waste stream. 40% of solid waste is organic matter; Black Earth Compost's mission is to take as much of this waste as they can before it ends up in landfills.

Nutrients within the food scraps are what create compost over time. Utilizing this compost gets those nutrients back into the ground, where people can grow their own healthy, organic food.

The company, which has 25 trucks and 45 employees, has many residential customers as well as large organic waste producers such as Wegmans, Brandeis University and Clark University.

Current Massachusetts legislation limits organic waste disposal to one ton per week at institutions such as Stonehill. DEP officials are at transfer stations, and violators are being fined. Next year, the State's threshold will be reduced to ½ ton of organic waste per week.

Currently, Stonehill collects kitchen food scraps (pre-consumer) and coffee grounds for composting at The Farm. Compost bins in the cafeteria and residence halls would likely become contaminated without proper oversight. A successful composting program requires communication, education, and oversight. Otherwise, if contamination occurs, the entire load is disposed of.

Justin explained that Brandeis U. has six compost locations across campus. Tufts U. has compost bins in their residence halls. The bins need to be placed out-of-the-way where passersby will not contaminate them. The idea is that students who want to compost, know where the bins are located and will go out of their way to do so. If the bins were managed by Residence Life and

student volunteers, this could be a great program. They could be picked up, possibly twice per week for 13 weeks in the fall and 13 weeks in the spring.

Unfortunately, with cuts to the College's operating budgets, it is unknown how this could be funded. Justin noted that if the College had a composting program, we would be reducing our trash amount by as much as 40%, reducing trash fees through smaller dumpsters or less frequent pickups. It was suggested that the Green Fund be used to start this program. This idea can be discussed separately. Justin added that they have a referral program that can reduce costs.

3. Choose2Reuse App Update

The app is coming along nicely and must be completed by the end of the semester. It is now a working app for both Android phones and iPhones, and the students have developed a website that provides information for Sodexo and Facilities, e.g., container numbers, users, bin levels, etc.

The Choose2Reuse process: Users will scan the container's QR code with their phone and receive a confirmation and time stamp, which they show to the cashier. The plan is to place QR stickers on containers during the summer and pilot the program in the fall. Assistance/updates will be provided by a Computer Science student and Professor Dugan.

A Choose2Reuse app demonstration and Q&A will be held via Zoom on May 13 at 11:00 a.m.

4. 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge Review – April 5 - 28

Greg and Craig discussed their experiences with this year's Challenge. They did not find it to be too time-consuming. The Challenges were very interesting, but they are not sure how to apply what they have learned. Overall, it was a worthwhile learning opportunity.

The Native American history of the Stonehill land was noted. The Ames family acquired a land acknowledgement statement, and there were several archeological findings in the 1950's.

Stonehill's former Assistant Director of Archives, Jonathan Green produced a video "Placing Stonehill in the Context of Southeastern Massachusetts's Indigenous

History." <https://stonehill.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=601af46b-926d-4a78-b481-acbb00f118e5>

Next year, Greg hopes to have group participation (student, faculty, departmental), which would support the College's DEI and Sustainability efforts.

5. Leave No Trace Behind: Student Move-Out

In anticipation of a coordinated effort for student move-out, Greg received an updated list of the most needed items from My Brother's Keeper. People should be kept in mind that the Easton Food Pantry can always use donations. Also, the on-campus Baystate Textile bin is available for unwanted textiles, rather than throwing items away.

Unfortunately, Greg has not been able to reach Residence Life, and this initiative cannot happen without sufficient coordination.

6. Subcommittee Updates

- Strategic Planning / Waste Reduction – Craig presented several graphs highlighting the College's waste and recycling data:

- Our total solid waste tonnage has decreased from 640 tons in FY15 to 446 tons in FY20, while the amount of waste per resident per year has remained somewhat steady at ~115 lbs.
- Our recycling tonnage has fluctuated from a maximum of 148 in FY17 to a low of 122 in FY20.
- Recycling as a percentage of recycling plus waste has steadily increased to 21% in FY20.

Specific goals for further decreasing our waste stream should be established. Composting our organic waste would be beneficial, as would the Choose2Reuse initiative.

- Communications/Marketing – An Earth Day events announcement was distributed campus-wide.
- Environmental Justice – nothing to report
- Real Food – Next year, Kristi will oversee Food Truth, and Bridget Gill and Gina Herosian will be the group's student leaders. They are working on the development of an ACE Approved food program, and have issued a student survey to help determine the criteria for ACE Approved food. Professor Mike Sale will oversee the Real Food working group.

Other Business

This is Bridget's final ESC meeting. Many thanks for her countless contributions over the years. Lucy and Louisa are graduating and will be missed for their hard work on their subcommittees! Thank you and best wishes!!

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

Next meeting:

May 25 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom

Please remember to send information about all campus wide sustainability-related initiatives to Deb in order to be captured in the next Sustainability Report.

Submitted by Deb Norton