



**ANTI-LITTER TASK FORCE
MEETING**

Tuesday, January 12, 2021 7:00PM
Via ZOOM

MINUTES

I. Welcome

Task Force members present: Rebecca Vinduska, Maya Adrian, Heather Fullam, Jack Hurley, James Contois, Erin Angley, Liza draper, Chiara Tosi-Nelson, Joshua Lambert

Mr. Hurley and Mr. Contois identified themselves as members of the Conservation Commission. He said this meeting was planned after they received the results of the litter survey.

II. Introductory Remarks

Why the Conservation Commission?

Mr. Hurley said he sees the roll of the Conservation Commission in Claremont as conserving the City's natural resources, but also promoting a healthy quality of life. The anti-litter campaign falls within that purview.

Mr. Hurley said that since the pandemic, members of the Commission been out walking more and were seeing first-hand how much litter there is. Commissioners didn't like it, but wanted to see how the rest of the community thinks about it – hence the survey.

Mr. Hurley thanked everyone present for completing it and volunteering to help address the issue.

How Litter Affects Claremont

Mr. Hurley said litter affects economic development. The City is trying to make Pleasant Street a destination for people to shop and dine. If there is litter there or in the approaches to the downtown on the streets and roads coming into Claremont, it would be a problem. Litter is a health and safety problem. It endangers wildlife, marine life and wildlife habitats. It is an eyesore. Mr. Hurley said the task force will need to address all of these things.

III. Introductions

A. Why are you here?

Mr. Hurley asked everyone to introduce themselves, state where they lived, and share what their connection to Claremont is (residence, employment, etc.). Everyone expressed their frustration with the litter. Everyone helps to clean up the litter, but that

just cleans things up – it doesn't prevent the litter from happening. It just comes back again.

Ms. Draper asked about the anti-litter signs around the City and if anyone had ever been fined for littering. Mr. Contois said the signs are old and currently there is no enforcement program. He also did not find anything in the City's ordinances about it. Mr. Draper suggested having more of the signs put up and asking the City Council to create/adopt a litter ordinance. She felt the signs would make people more aware that littering shouldn't be done. Mr. Hurley said there are State laws that can require community service from those who are caught littering.

Ms. Draper referenced signs that indicate adoption of a road segment by a local organization and asked if anything like that had taken place in Claremont and if it works. Mr. Contois said at this time there are not such provisions in Claremont and that he would like to see the task force come up with ideas to fill the void, like adopting an ordinance, adopting neighborhoods, etc.

IV. Survey Results

Mr. Hurley said two-thirds of the 100 survey respondents thought litter in Claremont is a serious problem. 46% of respondents felt that the rural roadways had the most serious litter problem with the downtown in second place at almost 30%. Food and drink containers and cigarette butts were seen as the most serious problems. Laziness and lack of civic pride were seen as the primary reasons for people littering. These results can help shape the manner of addressing the problems.

A. Any Surprises?

Ms. Draper said she was surprised that that many people responded to the survey.

Mr. Hurley said 30 people said they were interested in joining the task force.

B. Did we miss anything?

Ms. Tosi-Nelson thought it might have been useful to know what kind of trash is common in each area where litter is a problem. In her experience, cigarette butts are prevalent in the downtown, while the larger trash items like food and drink containers are more prevalent in the outlying, rural areas. Research indicates that methods for addressing these two times of litter are very dissimilar.

Ms. Adrian said she thinks people just want to get the trash out of their cars as easily as possible. Ms. Draper added that begs the question of where to put the trash. She said there were trash receptacles that have disappeared. She felt that, while people will abuse dumpsters, having smaller receptacles with shaped openings might help, especially downtown. Ms. Draper suggesting asking businesses to consider providing receptacles for cigarette butts to address that problem. Mr. Hurley mentioned a

“Vote-with-your-butt” program. Ms. Vinduska confirmed that the trash receptacles are maintained by DPW and that they are taken in in the winter. She said the butts are even more noticeable when there is snow and ice on the ground and wondered if containers could be provided and maintained where people live.

V. Committee’s Mission, Direction & Goals

Ms. Tosi-Nelson said that research indicates that most butts end up on the ground because there’s no place for people to put them. It also indicates that people don’t want to put them in trash cans for fear of starting a fire. She said in Europe, many of the trash cans come with an external ash receptacle. She suggested asking businesses to sponsor such containers to increase the number of trash cans available.

Ms. Tosi-Nelson said another side effect of COVID is people having to wait outside of businesses before they can get in. They smoke while they wait – hence more butts on the ground.

Ms. Tosi-Nelson talked about portable ashtrays that can be carried in one’s pocket to hold safely hold ashes and butts. They are inexpensive and could be used as a method of advertising the businesses that distribute them – for example, “Red River” on one side and “Keep Claremont Beautiful” on the other. She said she would be willing to reach out to businesses with the idea.

Ms. Draper suggested partnering with the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Hurley said it made sense to partner with local businesses as this would certainly help them.

Ms. Adrian suggested using signage to remind people not to litter.

Ms. Vinduska said she would check with CVS to see if they have grant funds for such actions since they had stopped selling cigarettes a number of years ago.

Mr. Hurley said there are several trade associations that collaborate with Keep America Beautiful, including convenience stores – McDonalds, Cumberland Farms, etc. They might be willing to partner with the task force and perhaps provide funds.

Ms. Tosi-Nelson spoke about a program where children would borrow a litter-pickery-thingy and be given a trash bag. The bag of trash was weighed and the child awarded with “saving a turtle” or something similar. The competition can motivate kids to get involved. It was effective without being expensive.

These types of activities are “corona-friendly” and could be helpful for students needing volunteer hours.

All agreed that collaborating or partnering with the schools and local businesses was a workable idea.

Mr. Hurley said he had come across a group of middle school students picking up trash on the rail trail because “it needed to be done”. Ms. Tosi-Nelson mentioned a program on Facebook where people shared before/after pictures of areas they had cleaned. Ms. Draper talked about a competition where students were rewarded for the “weirdest” trash found. Mr. Hurley suggested getting kids to become “citizen scientists”.

Mr. Hurley asked the members to come up with ideas and commit to doing them. Ms. Vinduska said she could reach out to the downtown businesses to share some of the ideas mentioned at this meeting and to ask for feedback.

Ms. Tosi-Nelson suggested members think about slogans and poster ideas. Ms. Vinduska suggested reaching out to Mark Brislin. Ms. Draper said she would contact the Chamber. She said the Chamber publishes a newsletter in which litter issues might be raised. Ms. Vinduska said she could do the same with the City e-newsletter. Mr. Hurley said he could contact the school district through the curriculum committee. Ms. Tosi-Nelson said she would look into free programs online and ideas that can be shared in the newsletters. Mr. Hurley said he would talk to the manager at Cumberland Farms and Dunkin Donuts about the trash that comes from their store and ends up on the rail trail and what they can do about it.

Mr. Contois said he would look into model anti-litter ordinances. He also said he would find out if DPW has a budget for signs. He would like to see signs at the entrances to the City, “do not litter” signs throughout the City, and a fine for littering. Ms. Tosi-Nelson said that fines may be hard to enforce and favored a more positive approach to anti-littering.

VI. Timeline and Benchmarks

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 7PM.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse