

Zero Waste Minutes

January 18, 2020

Attendance: Carolyn Hart, Diane Landry, Alison Kettering, Jane Martin, Barbara Ochota, Dagmar Schnader, John Moran, Andrea Bennett, Loanne Harmeling, MaryAnne Keane, Gaywynn Cooper, Dean Rowe, Dawn Snider, Spencer Stepniewski, Madison Crittenden, Debbie Hollyer, Chrilo Gontard, Carolyn Galvin, Jay Hildebrand (Safeway)

Business meeting

1. **2019 Accomplishments** – Diane passed out the list for 2019. It is also available on the Zero Waste <http://www.sustainablebainbridge.org/-report.aspx>. She noted that ten different members have led various projects this past year and hopes others will be encouraged to do the same in 2020.
2. **Restaurant composting** – Alison heads up this initiative, which we will continue pushing for 2020. Keeping organics out of the landfill, where they decompose and create methane, is one of the biggest waste management actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Last year Alison surveyed several Bainbridge restaurants to find out if they divert organics into their yard waste bin. The answers so far have mostly been “no,” for various reasons. Andrea is joining Alison in her efforts this year, which may include doing a pilot organics diversion program with one of the restaurants.
To become involved in this project, please contact Alison, aketteri@carleton.edu.
3. **Montessori Earth Day Festival** – The third annual fest takes place on April 25, 11-2pm. For ZW’s first time participating, Diane has offered to lead a booth with children’s recycling/reuse games.
If you have ideas for games and/or would like to help, please contact Diane, bizerowaste@sustainablebainbridge.org.
4. **Possible 2020 initiatives to be considered** – Future discussions may include a) curbside bin labeling or inspections and b) creation of a ZW award for those outside of Zero Waste who make an impact.

Speaker

Jay Hildebrand, Supervisor of Safeway’s Access Recovery (aka recycling) Center for the past five years.

Safeway is the third biggest grocery chain with 3700 stores (under various names). In 2005 they built a 35,000 square foot recycling facility at their Auburn distribution center. All Safeway stores truck their recyclables (plastic film, cardboard, Styrofoam, organics) here. When considering sustainability investments, they aim for a pay-off period of 2-3 years.

Styrofoam - Safeway used to take their Styrofoam to Styro Recycle (where ours goes), but since they accumulate such great quantities, it became more cost-effective to purchase their own densifier and sell the melted, solidified bars themselves. They amass around a trailer a week. Packaging for grapes amounts to the majority of their Styro generation.

Jay offered to provide a truck for our collections!

Organic waste – Donating edible food is a priority for Safeway. Otherwise, stores put organic waste in 40 x 40 containers that are eventually sold to farms with anaerobic digesters (ADs). The ADs produce methane that is used to power generators and biosolids that are composted. Additionally, meat scraps become animal feed. Grease is collected in 55-gallon drums and sold.

Trucks leave the Auburn Distribution Center with goods for the Safeway shelves. Instead of driving back an empty truck, they backload it with the materials mentioned above, as well as...

Cardboard – They recycle 72 million pounds a year and make money selling it.

Plastic film – They sell this to Trex (plastic lumber).

Making changes – Jay acknowledged that some environmental changes happen only with legislation and encouraged us to consider this course of action. For example, he said that in Gig Harbor, they cannot offer produce in clamshells anymore.

He also noted that change comes about through consumer demand, e.g., the huge growth in organic produce selection.

Energy savings – 1) They are converting their distribution center “yard goats” (little semis that are constantly moving stuff at the distribution centers) to all-electric. 2) They are testing out five long-haul Tesla tractors. 3) They don’t deliver daily to stores any longer to cut down on round trips.

We learned lots more interesting tidbits that are too numerous to mention here.