

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Environment Committee

Meeting of December 4th 2019, 1:00 - 2:20 pm

VP for Administration Conference Room, Administration 221

Draft 2

Attendance: Thomas Wilson (Chair), Sean Deery, Frederick Walker, Jeanne Charoy, Michael Youdelman (Campus Operations and Maintenance - Recycling & Resource Management), Sarah Battaglia, Malcom Bowman, Mateo Mezic (SoMAS graduate student), Clifford Knee (Environmental Health and Safety)

Meeting called to order at 1:07pm

Consideration of minutes from November 13, 2019. Thomas Wilson entertained a motion to accept the minutes. Malcom Bowman moved and Sean Deery seconded. Without any opposition the minutes were accepted.

Chair report. No overall report from Chair.

Working groups reports.

Natural Environment and Preservation working group (coordinator: Thomas Wilson). The Lake Brianna project is continuing, as data is accumulating. Rain data is gathered by averaging rain levels measured from two important locations: the Health Services Center and the South P lot. With this we can compare the lake level with rain levels. Clifford Knee mentioned that there are multiple wells at Stony Brook and that biannually, a company comes and takes samples to monitor the ground water. Knee agreed to share this data with the committee.

Regarding the designation of the Ashley Schiff Preserve as a conservation area: Interim President Michael Bernstein said he does not feel comfortable making any permanent change to the preserve's status. A new president may be approved by March 2020, so the committee should prepare to present this conservation project to them.

Wilson mentioned that the Natural Environment working group needs more helpers (e.g. undergraduate student volunteers) so it could take on an additional small project. For example, this working group could advocate to add more markers on the old colonial roads that goes through campus. So far it is only marked in one place that has little visibility. Such signs can cost around \$1200, and the Natural Environment group would have to look into finding funding.

Bowman noted that before installing any markings we would need approval from the University. Knee mentioned that Theresa Kist, from the Office of Capital Planning, could direct the committee on how to get approval for signs and markings. A good time to add the markings, once they are approved and a good location for them is decided on, would be Earth Day (as suggested by Knee). Earth Day takes place on the third week of April.

Transportation working group (coordinator: Mona Ramonetti). Mona Ramonetti wasn't able to attend this meeting due to a schedule conflict. There is now a test of valet parking in the hospital garage, illustrating how complicated parking has become on campus. Wilson noted that Uber and Lyft have become a big presence on campus. There are students who have resident parking lot and leave their cars parked for weeks at a time.

These parking spots could be freed up if we gave these students an incentive (e.g. discount on their dorm room) to park their cars at the Research and Development Park, and offered them free Uber/Lyft service to and from their car 24 hours a day. Although there would be a cost, it may be less than the cost of building new parking places. Another idea could be for faculty and staff to sell their parking pass rights back to the University.

Efficiency, recycling and liveability working group (coordinator: Jeanne Charoy). One of the aims of this group is to decrease the use of disposables on campus, including non-reusable water bottles. Through an email exchange with Tom Lanzilotta (Campus Sustainability and Energy Manager) we learned that currently the University doesn't have funding for purchase and installation of more water filling stations, but there is a request list and the committee is free to suggest more locations. These water filling stations cost around \$3000 total (with installation), although the price can be brought down if the station does not cool the water. Departments are free to purchase the stations themselves and put in a work order to get them installed.

Bowman mentioned that there has been events on campus where single-use plastic bottles were banned. Sean Deery added that given the number of fountains and water filling stations in the Recreation Center, it may be a good place to start banning single-use plastic bottles.

The Efficiency group may also pursue Deery's silverware rental project which would help limit the use of single-use plastic silverware by clubs on campus. However, this would be a substantial procedure to implement and the Faculty Student Association (FSA) has not always been responsive.

Research group (coordinator: Michelino Puopolo). Members of this group were all absent. Wilson mentioned that if members of the committee need help with research, he can forward requests to the research group.

Guest speaker: Michael Youdelman, Campus Recycling Manager

Michael Youdelman has a degree in Human Ecology and got interested in recycling and waste management after the infamous garbage barge incident that took place in Long Island in 1987. He has experience with many types of recycling (e.g. bottles, consumer commodities, scrap metal, electronics). Youdelman has been at Stony Brook for 21 years and explained that his role has expanded, as there is less and less staff and resources. When there were more resources, the University was using waste as a resource and able to save money. Unfortunately it is not something that gets advertised much.

On campus, slim jim garbage cans (to collect paper) have been installed in copy areas and classrooms. Youdelman inspects most of the buildings on campus to make sure things are in order and offer training. There are over 800 recycling bins on campus (for paper and bottles), some are exclusively reserved for undergraduate residents. Stony Brook also uses compactors for trash and cardboard to minimize the need for staff to empty bins all the time. Stony Brook also recycles pallets.

Youdelman also explained that there has been a paradigm shift in waste management such that a material's life cycle is taken into account more. At Stony Brook, Campus Dining is cutting edge: for example they try to source produce locally.

Wilson asked whether glass was actually sold on the recycling market or whether it is disposed of. Youdelman answered that there isn't a lot of market for glass, and it's very hard to recycle. Similarly, plastic is not always recycled either. Stony Brook wants to work towards zero waste, but it is a very complex task for this campus,

especially if we take the hospital and dental school into consideration. Zero waste is not possible because of the nature of the resources used on this campus.

Bowman asked whether the issue of climate change makes recycling endeavours more appreciated. Youdelman answered that by some people, yes. For example Campus Dining, together with Culinart and FSA, have started a food waste reduction program and a food donation program. At Roth Dining, waste that doesn't get minimized or donated ends up in a composter instead of trash. 18 years ago Youdelman met with Charles Figlietti (founder of Long Island Compost) on campus. Today he has a partnership with the governor of the state of NY and PSEG Long Island for 120M\$ to take food waste and turn it into energy and high grade compost.

Wilson mentioned that contamination of recyclables is a problem but as consumers we may not know what the appropriate waste bin is for a product. He asked whether there could be stickers printed up for the waste bins on campus so users are better informed. Youdelman answered that it is true that most bins only say "bottles" or "cans" and that certainly signage is key. There used to be mandatory orientation on recycling Dos and Dents on campus - it consisted of a short video. It's not offered anymore and there no more outreach coordinators due to lack of resources. However, Recyclemania is happening soon, from February 2nd to March 28th, and this will be an opportunity for education and outreach.

Old and new business. No additional business.

Next meeting will be on January 29th 2020 from 1:00pm to 2:30pm in the VP for Administration Conference Room, Administration Room 221. The guest speaker will be Laura Osa, an undergraduate sustainability major and coordinator of the Campus Water Bottle Station project.

Wilson entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bowman moved the motion. None opposed. The meeting adjourned at 2:29 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Charoy