

Transfer Station Committee
November 6, 2019

Committee Chair: Joy Nowell

Town Administrator: Dennis Pavlicek

Volunteer Committee Members: Andrea Crowell, Darren Finneral, Rob Naughton, Sydney Bryk, Joan Burritt, Margo Steeves, David Blohm, Jack Fisher, Bruce Mackenzie, Betsy Courant, Bob Borowski, Katheryn Holmes, Jeff Estella, Bob Davis, Mickey Noyer, Jennifer Sweet, Liz Moulton.

In Attendance: Joy Nowell, Bruce Mackenzie, David Blohm, Katheryn Holmes, Darren Finneral, Joan Burritt.

Ms. Nowell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Nowell noted that the requirement for dump stickers has had a big difference in ensuring the proper use of the transfer station access.

Ms. Holmes asked about the businesses in Newbury who use the transfer station, specifically the business owners who do not live here but use the transfer station. Ms. Nowell said yard workers take leaves and brush from the yards of Newbury residents and deposit them at the transfer station. She added that there is a form regarding same that is to be shown to the transfer station attendants. Ms. Holmes suggested that the homeowners should have a transfer station pass for just that day only instead of an open-ended pass. Mr. Blohm suggested having an affidavit from the homeowner on file regarding this.

Discussion followed regarding the benefits and detriments of leaf blowing and leaf mulching on the property site. Discussion continued regarding how to enforce an affidavit from the property owner and the logistics needed to make the process doable.

Ms. Nowell noted that the Selectboard will consider all suggestions brought forth by this committee and added that the transfer station workers are very conscientious in their duties.

There was general discussion about what to do to deter people from abusing the transfer station (i.e. out-of-towners using the transfer station, vacationers and renters not adhering to the regulations pertaining to the transfer station, etc.).

Mr. Blohm asked if anyone has looked at best practices for transfer station policies/enforcement/etc. He asked if studies have been conducted regarding how neighboring towns handle their transfer station issues. He noted that more personnel on site is probably needed.

Ms. Nowell noted that staff has been increased but that salary costs remain a concern.

Ms. Burritt asked about the duties of the part-times transfer station attendant. Ms. Nowell said he takes care of where the brush goes.

Discussion followed about the history of brush collection in Newbury and how the overall brush collection works at the transfer station.

Dickie Wright noted that, right ow, there is no place to put the leaves at the transfer station. Mr. Finneral reviewed the discussion from the October 8, 2019 meeting regarding the leaf collection and deposit at the station. He also reviewed the discussion about the issues facing the brush pile. He noted that the area where the brush is now is not a good placement. Discussion followed regarding the problems created at Fishersfield with the current approach to brush deposits. Mr. Finneral added that the October meeting discussion included information about what might be needed to alleviate the current situation – equipment, cost, insurance, etc.

Ms. Holmes noted that the transfer station is the one activity in town where the entire community comes together. She suggested that the town should hire an expert to come in and review the current situation at the transfer station and offer a best practices approach for tackling the issues. She referenced the letter submitted at the October 8, 2019 meeting from Sydney Bryk, Newbury Recreation Director along with the email submission (below) from Jack Fisher, committee member. Ms. Holmes cited both submissions as containing thoughtful and valuable points.

Ms. Holmes further recommended that the Selectboard consider utilizing the flat area to the right of the Highway Department location for brush collection. Mr. Wright stated that area is private property and belongs to the gravel pit.

Note: The following email was submitted by Mr. Fisher on November 5, 2019:

Hi All –

Unfortunately, I won't be able to leave early enough to make our 6p meeting on Wed, 6-Nov at the Town Hall. But I do have a few thoughts after our last meeting that I'll ask that you consider...

There seemed to be some enthusiasm for the option to dump leaves at the back of the transfer station on both the town owned and private property. And although this seems to be an easy solution, I have some reservations.

- When leaves are just dumped there, they will slowly compact and decompose. As the fill area gets larger, it will become a large amount of soft compost and mud. Eventually (it may be several years) the area will become unusable as the front fills up it will be impossible to drive over and cars and equipment won't be able to reach the back area, and then we'll be faced again with finding another solution.
- This is not addressing the better solution of actually managing and composting leaves and garden debris. Communities all over the country provide composting facilities for their taxpayers. Why not Newbury? It doesn't require a lot of effort, just turn over and move the pile every few weeks during non-winter months and encourage taxpayers to use the resulting composite. We shouldn't ignore this option simply because it hasn't been done effectively at the current Fishersfield location and a very few individuals have abused the area by leaving non-compostable waste material.

There was also appeared to be some serious interest in using the upper area at Fishersfield for accepting brush for periodic removal by the "chipping" company. This seems to be driven primarily by the fact that no one wants to risk disturbing the south end of the old dump which was not capped.

- Although I agree there is adequate room at Fishersfield for this, the increase in traffic through a recreation area where our children play is a significant risk to their safety. The fields are most heavily used on spring and fall weekends and that is when taxpayers will make the most use of the area for disposing of brush.
- A suggestion was made to move the brush to the back corner of the transfer station and that was rejected because of inadequate space and the lack of a proper cap on the old dump site. I think this concern may be overstated because we are talking only of temporary storage of organic material i.e. tree branches. This is completely benign and won't damage wetlands, or cause increased leaching from the old dump, or interfere with existing transfer station operations. The chipping truck has a big claw which allows for pickup of branches from a distance w/o disturbing the uncapped soil. The pickup could be scheduled when the transfer station is not open to the general public to minimize interference with regular operations.
- And providing a location for temporary disposal of brush at the transfer station would decrease the risk for disposal of inappropriate material i.e. painted or treated wood, with little increase in monitoring costs.
- If there truly isn't adequate room at the transfer station for brush disposal, then I would suggest we consider other town owned parcels where organic material can be temporarily held until removal by the chipping truck.

There was some brief discussion of charging local (Newbury based) landscapers for brush and leaf disposal. I would recommend that no local (landscaper or homeowner) be charged. If landscapers are charged, they will just add that cost to the price charged to their Newbury customers. Some may argue that a local landscaper may dump yard waste from out of town properties and that may happen. But due to the added travel time and cost for the landscaper this additional quantity is not likely to be significant.

Finally, there is a legitimate concern about an improper cap at the old dump. At some time, the state may force some action to protect the surrounding area and wetlands. All understand it will likely be a time consuming and expensive process to adequately cap the dump site but why not get a valid estimate of the costs now and then begin to set aside reserves over a period of time to complete a proper cap?

Please consider the above and let me know when our next meeting is scheduled. And I would ask that we continue to schedule our meetings on Wed evenings. Thanks.

---Jack Fisher, 9 Acorn Rd.

Ms. Nowell reviewed the research conducted to date on the three quotes from outside service providers for on-site chipping and removal of brush at the transfer station. She noted that a fourth service provider will be submitting a quote as well.

Mr. Wright said the town has a chipper that the Highway Department uses and suggested using it and then hiring a contractor to remove the chipped brush. He added that the cheapest approach would be for the town to chip the brush themselves and find someone to haul away the chips. Discussion followed.

There was further discussion regarding the fact that the Highway Department is currently stretched to its limits in terms of meeting the needed services throughout the town. Adding another task such as chipping all brush would not be possible at this time. It was noted that there has been a great deal of difficulty in finding qualified staff for the Highway Department.

Ms. Burritt asked about the duties of the new full-time employee at the transfer station. Ms. Nowell said he will be the brush supervisor for two days each week and provide oversight for the dumping of brush. She added that there will be restricted hours for this activity.

Mr. Blohm noted that there will be an issue with coordinating the schedules of the yard workers and the restricted hours for delivering brush to the transfer station.

Ms. Nowell shared with the meeting attendees a copy of the plat for Fishersfield. She pointed out an area that has been bush-hogged and noted that it goes back a long way and could accommodate the brush collection since it would be chipped and removed quarterly by an outside service contractor. With that in mind, she noted that the brush wouldn't pile up. She added that one of the benefits to hiring an outside service contractor to come in quarterly and do the on-site brush chipping and hauling away is that the road up to Fishersfield will necessarily be improved.

Mr. Finneral noted that the choices are as follows:

- Hire an outside service for \$10,000 per year for quarterly on-site chipping and removal of chips at the transfer station.
- Approach the Highway Department for the chipping and find an outside contractor to take away the chipped brush.

Mr. Blohm reiterated his earlier comment of bringing in an expert to examine the whole situation and recommend a best practices approach to this situation, including how the current personnel are allocated, etc.

Mr. Finneral added that he would like the current transfer station traffic pattern looked at.

Ms. Nowell noted that one of the over-riding concerns facing the transfer station is the end point of the recycling effort – namely, the fact that finding sources to take the recycled goods is becoming increasingly difficult.

Mr. Wright noted that it is too easy to get rid of stuff in Newbury. He cited other communities that require residents to purchase bags and it forces people to think about recycling.

Discussion continued about the larger issue of where the recycled items are going and the potential for products to be produced from the recycled materials. Discussion points included the need for an educational outreach regarding the larger issue in order to get people invested in the process and result of recycling – and away from merely an “out-of-sight-out-of-mind” approach to recycling.

Dick Butterfield discussed the benefits of having a proper transfer station building with separate sections for each material – and to have lots of oversight on-site,

Ms. Nowell noted that the current area needs to be re-arranged to improve traffic flow along with providing better oversight. She added that the amount of available land for the transfer station is very limited. Ms. Holmes suggested using the old town office building and do site improvements such as heating.

Mr. Wright noted that the original access to the transfer station was a central driveway and the original intent was to have a person there to check on what is being brought in. With added personnel, he suggested that it might be time to resurrect that original plan.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for December 6, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Nowell thanked everyone for their interest and attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Whittemore
Recording Secretary