

Rhode Island Litter Task Force

235 Promenade Street • Phone: (401) 461-4075 • Email: riacc@surfglobal.net

LITTER TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

February 19, 2004

Present: Geoff DiCenso, RIACC; Lynn Ruggeri, RIACC; Anita SanAntonio, RI Food Dealers Assoc.; Tom Getz, DEM; Allen Bridgman, ASRI; Barry Schiller, Sierra Club

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the January 15th meeting were approved as written.

Dunkin Donuts Project: Tom distributed and reviewed a memo on the Dunkin Donuts “Litter Free” Pilot Project including the list of ideas assembled by the Litter Task Force (LTF), as well as a Draft letter to Dunkin Donuts Corporation.

Litter Survey Results Update: A survey was returned from the Barrington Chief of Police.

Review of Pending Litter Bills: Anita distributed bills that have been submitted to the General Assembly (H7857 and S2198) regarding litter for review by the LTF. The LTF agreed that H7857 (amendment to RIGL 37-15-7), though its intentions are good, is the wrong way to go about addressing the issue. The bill aims to increase the fine for litter offenders and it was agreed this would probably lead to a reduced frequency in the already low number of tickets written. A suggestion was made that the survey results be interpreted to single out police responses regarding fine amounts. Secondly, H7857 eliminates the ability of offenders to pay for tickets of \$55 or less without appearing in court. Requiring the offender to appear in court thereby requires the enforcing officer to do so as well and, therefore, potentially reducing an officer’s tendency to ticket.

This bill brought up the unresolved topic of money from ticketing going to the general fund rather than to the town in which the ticket was issued (as stated in the law). Establishing restricted receipt accounts for ticket revenue is essential to funding town litter cleanups and general litter prevention. Doing so would probably also increase the frequency of ticketing litter offenders. Additionally, it was suggested that changes be sought next year in RIGL 44-44-10 regarding tax revenue from beverage containers, hard-to-dispose material, and other litter controls to go to a restricted receipt account rather than the general fund.

S2198 adds “cigarette and cigar butts” to “litter” in the definitions section of RIGL 37-15-3. There was no disputing the need for this addition. It was agreed that the LTF chair should testify at both bill hearings.

Members

Audubon Society of RI • Buckeye Brook • Watershed Assn. • Clean Water Action
RI Assn. of Conservation Commissions • RI Dept. of Environmental Management • RI Food Dealers Assn. Sierra Club of RI •
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Assn.

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Litter Legislation Subcommittee Formation:

Tabled

Other: A discussion took place regarding the 1% meals tax and how funds are now going back to towns. Lynn reported that Richmond recently received a \$10,000 check from the state - from the 1% tax - and didn't know how it was to be spent or how often they would be getting such checks. Her thoughts were to encourage all towns and cities (through Conservation Commission members or other officials) to use that money for litter control, recycling and environmental advocacy programs.

Barry suggested that the LTF could appear on his wife's cable access show, "RI Soapbox," sometime in April to provide an anti-litter / educational message.

Next Meeting: March 18, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

Allen Bridgman

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