

Materials Reuse Network November 17, 2009

Present: Sherill Baldwin, Rich Desautels, Tony Philpin, Charles Paonessa, Elliot Henowitz, Vincent Mastriano, Elsa Joiner, Ross Bunnell, Bonnie Wallinger, and John McDonald. Phone: Chris Beling, Ann Travers, Joe DeRisi, Andrew Drabkin, and Mary Ann Etienne.

Summary of Meeting (notes submitted by Sherill Baldwin)

1. **Yah! We've been meeting for a year!**

Sherill surprised the group with cookies (she made) and a beautiful giant 'cupcake' (Melissa made)...

Many accomplishments have been made this past year including:

- Started as a group of 6 people, there are now 138 people on the e-distribution list with more folks every month!
- Many members are from other parts of the region and the country helping us to understand the bigger/national picture as we focus on Connecticut
- Members include the Department of Public Safety and the Historic Preservation Office – who help us understand their issues and concerns and are learning more about deconstruction and building materials reuse!
- A couple of new jobs in deconstruction have happened – congrats Mike and Charlie who will be working full time with The Reuse People!
- A partnership between the City of New Haven (working with the Reuse People) and the Northeast Recycling Council was formed for a zero waste construction project in New Haven.
- Department of Public Safety is now looking at the demolition regulations, looking to add a definition of deconstruction!
- Lots of networking and swapping of business cards every month!
- Sherill was told recently at a national conference that the Materials Reuse Network –is unusual and distinct in that it's the only state-wide effort focusing on deconstruction facilitated by a state agency like DEP

2. **Update from Elliot Henowitz from DPS**

- Elliot shared that DPS continues to talk about 'substitutions' for experience that will be acceptable in a demolition testing situation. He said basic substitutions will be showing certification/classes taken in OSHA, lead, and asbestos.
- Elliot said they also are talking about deconstruction training – and needed to better understand the different kinds/levels being offered – and that currently none offer 'structural training'. They feel there's a difference between structural and non-structural deconstruction and that a supervisor level person will need to show they've have an understanding of a building's structure. Elliot gave the example that an engineering degree would suffice, but wondering if there are other 'shorter' courses or classes that would give

the same level of sufficiency. They also looked at fire training courses. **If anyone has suggestions or ideas for courses that exist now that would provide this experience** – please contact Elliot by email: osfm.cranesdemo@po.state.ct.us or phone: 860.685.8223.

- To do any of the proposed changes, will require a regulation change. They will also be looking to define deconstruction as part of this change. Non-structural deconstruction (ie soft-stripping) will be considered exempt from needing a demolition registration/license.
3. **Zero Waste Conference** – Sherill attended this conference last month in Massachusetts. A full day included panels about reuse including building materials reuse. Lots of interesting conversation and people to connect with – including a fairly new organization called the Reuse Alliance.
- Mary Ellen Etienne, Exec. Director of the [Reuse Alliance](http://www.reusealliance.org) joined us to talk about her organization – the ‘national voice for reuse’.
 - Reuse Alliance was formed in 2005. They are a membership organization – with chapters in New York and North Carolina. New chapters are being formed in Washington, Oregon and California. Mary Ellen shared that Mass may hopefully be joining and she has hopes Connecticut will soon follow.
 - The Reuse Alliance is broader than building materials – encompassing the entire sector of reuse including thrift shops, arts reuse centers, junk yards and used book stores.
 - She encouraged members to learn more about the Reuse Alliance and think how we might work together.
 - Mary Ellen can be contact by email: or phone or check out their website www.reusealliance.org .
4. **Reuse Centers** – needs/wants, existing resources, other issues
Sherill lead a brainstorm/discussion...

Needs/Wants

- Money – grants, loans, money
- Publicity/increased awareness
- Inventorying systems/software
- Volunteers – more than the short term – need long term ‘core’ of volunteers for store
 - Rich shared that even HfH ReStores has problems getting volunteers because all the volunteers want to ‘build’ an may not be aware of other opportunities in the ReStores.
 - Need to market differently for volunteers
- Volunteers – good board members
- Space – Stratford currently has 16000ft² – enough space at this time; UrbanMiners looking to expand (needs to expand) for 10000ft² + space in Hamden; Danbury HfH ReStore needs to move (zoning issue?) and will be moving from their 2000ft² space to a 10000ft² space – will remain in Danbury; ReCONN has 6500ft² (and hope to expand to 25000ft² by 2010). Salem, Brooklyn and Green Demo’s current warehouse space unknown.

- Issue of space is also that warehouse space is needed, but that the problem with space is that outside space is needed/wanted but may not be possible due to zoning. Retail zoning is best for retail traffic, but the type of business is zones more industrial...
- Time – to seek/solicit donations of materials – not just used, but new too
- When town issues building permits/demo permits – officials should encourage/provide information about reuse stores
 - Sherill shared that DEP has a list of sample C & D ordinances for municipalities that are interested in encouraging/mandating C & D reuse/recycling/recovery. Most require construction waste management plans.
 - Melissa is research and creating a list of sample construction and demo waste management plans for municipalities. A DRAFT is available if folks want a copy – ask Sherill.
 - Both of these resources are available by email now and are scheduled to be put on the DEP website.
- What about legislation at the state level? Requiring state projects or projects with state money or requiring municipalities to recycling C & D? Or how can we increase tipping fees so there's more incentive to think about reuse building materials?
 - Sherill shared State Rep. Barbara Lambert (in Milford) is a member of MRN and would be a good person to discuss these issues if MRN is interested in pursuing state-wide initiative needing legislation.

Existing Resources

- Volunteers
 - Community Service requirements (court appointed, high schools, seniors, churches)
- DEP/DPS – local building inspector training – need to include reuse stores in addition to deconstruction training – to mention the availability/use/can donate/give materials
- Sample ordinances – they need to be more widely distributed
- Sample waste construction & demolition plans – still drafting
- Partner with municipalities – encourage them to create a swap shop for building materials for the local reuse center and/or begin one
- New MRN brochure
- HfH – Deconstruction Safety manual – Tony provided a hard copy and will send a digital copy to Sherill to share with everyone
- My.habitat.org – restore items – including promotion samples/examples
- Habitat on-line forum (sherill will look into to see if MRN members can use/benefit from)
- Craigslist/EBay

What needs to be researched?

- 'mixed' reusable construction and demo materials (as opposed to source separated) – what are the processing issues – what type of permits are required if its reuse and not recycling?
- Learn more about 'anti-scavenging' language – found in permits
- How to start a reuse program? issues related to permits and/or zoning...

- After meeting – Tony and Rich shared that something worthwhile would be an outreach/promotion campaign that would include billboards

Other issues

New stores:

- CT Central Recycling Transfer (a C & D volume reduction facility/recycling facility) looking to start a reuse center
- Middlesex HfH ReStore – Rich D. shared that Jack Doyle, an AmeriCorps volunteer working on this? Sherill will follow up to learn more.
- Reusable Green Works – a new model – accepting/taking C & D materials from job ‘new’ construction job sites – reuse scrap instead of collecting for recycling
- New Haven looking at starting something? Just rumors?
- ADDED AFTER MEETING: ReBuilding Together Hartford approached Sherill early this year with interest

5. Brochure idea

- Sherill shared her passion/addiction to ‘thrifting’ (yes, it’s a verb). The Cape Cod Council of Churches created a small brochure of all the different church thrift shops that each shop displays in their store. This is a wonderful resource for these reuse stores and Sherill wondered if it would work for building material reuse stores.
- Melissa Maciag, who is interning with the recycling program working on C & D recycling, created a DRAFT brochure for the group to consider.
- Everyone was given a hard-copy of the DRAFT brochure and it was also given as a digital (.pdf) version by email this morning.
- Sherill asked what people thought of the concept and if it was a good idea/helpful.
- Rich Desautels and Tony Philpin both felt it was a great idea and that they would use it. Tony also shared that copies should be given to town officials – especially local building inspectors should be given copies too.
- Sherill said when complete, everyone will be given a digital version and they can print as many as they want.
- Changes/edit suggestions:
 - add revision date;
 - what about new stores (CT Central Recycling Transfer looking to start a reuse store, Reusable GreenWorks also looking to start up)? Melissa suggested we include language/information about “coming soon” reuse stores, Ross suggested we post this information (brochure and the coming soon about new businesses) on the DEP webpage. Each member of MRN can also put the brochure on their website;
 - Ross wondered if we could put little maps on the brochure helping people understand where the different towns are in CT;
 - Rich D. said that the HfH in Middlesex was looking to start a ReStore too.
 - Melissa took more detailed notes of typos and ideas to create a revision.

- **EVERYONE** should closely review their information and give feedback before the next meeting (tent. December 15th). Email comments to Sherill.Baldwin@ct.gov and Melissa.Maciag@ct.gov
 - A new FINAL DRAFT will be brought on December 1^{5th} for everyone to review. PLEASE GIVE COMMENTS TO US BEFORE THEN!!
6. Sherill brought up the concept of a **materials exchange** (a virtual store as opposed to a brick and mortar retail business) in the context of marketing. Material Exchanges are like craigslist and ebay in how it operates – individuals/businesses post items for sale and others purchase them.

For the past year, the [Northeast Recycling Council \(NERC\)](#) has been working with [iwastenot systems](#) – to help different material exchange programs in the region have the ability to link to each other by using the same software system. There were no material exchange programs in Connecticut, so NERC partnered with the ReCONNstruction Center. The project is the Reuse Marketplace Program.

Sherill emphasized that successful material exchanges are successful because there's lots of activity. Ebay is national – so there's always lots of activity. Craigslist is organized by city/region and is as active as that region makes it. Larger populations usually mean more activity. Currently only the ReCONNstruction Center represents the only building materials reuse activity in Connecticut on the Reuse Marketplace website. The result is not a lot of activity – enough to make it as successful as it could be. Sherill opened the discussion to the group – to see if 1. Folks felt having a materials exchange program for MRN members would be a useful marketing tool and 2. If interested, could begin conversations about how to partner with the ReCONNstruction Center to be part of the Reuse Marketplace Program/the new iwastenot site.

- Rich D. said they've tried craigslist and found little success – no longer use it.
- Charles said it takes a lot of effort to inventory the system to be able to put it on the web. Working with the Reuse People – they hope to create a system that will inventory the materials at the deconstruction job site so that they won't have to do the data entry on the store side.
- Sherill shared she thinks UrbanMiners and others do some marketing/selling via EBay and assumes they are successful because they still use that venue.
- The system, Sherill shared, could link all the reuse centers in the state – so if a customer were looking for a particular item – they could discover 4 were in Hamden, 6 were in Stratford and 10 were in New Britain – for example.
- Ross shared this reminds him of junk yards – and the ability they have had for a long time – to be able to find that unique car part somewhere else (via computer) if they don't have it on their lot. That it's a specialized need.
- Tony shared that the most successful businesses are those that do it all – they provide the deconstruction and the retail operation – but wonders if there's a need to inventory.

- Rich said that it's not worth it to inventory – the good stuff moves too quickly – and that there's too much to do to worry about inventorying.
- Charles seemed to think the industry of building materials reuse stores are still too small in Connecticut to be able to benefit from this type of a service.
- Sherill said that this idea will not be pursued at this time, but that NERC and iwastenot systems are both willing to share the project with us if we decide to return to it at a later time.

7. Workshop/Training/Seminar for Reuse Center staff - idea

Sherill asked if folks are interested/would benefit from a workshop or training program? Would they like to learn how to use Ebay for instance? Or want to learn more about outreach and promotion? She could probably coordinate a program if there was need/interest.

- Rich D. shared that HfH already provides support for HfH ReStores – and that it's also increasing as the organization learns that more and more ReStores exist. He said they have an on-line Forum (a place for folks to ask/answer/share/network with each other), and conference calls. They also provide a training program for new ReStore managers (which he received last spring).
- Bonnie said as someone looking to start – she would benefit from hearing from others.
- No one else came forward with any interest/need related to training/workshop needs (beyond the need for a 'start-up' workshop).
- Sherill asked if instead of creating some new, could MRN members join in on the existing HfH information/educational opportunities? Rich said he'd get a contact person for Sherill.

Updates/Announcements/Events:

Sherill shared a slew of green drink networking events

1. Sherill, as a volunteer and not paid by DEP/state-time, will be sharing information about the MRN at the Meet Your Greens in Middletown tonight (5-7pm)
UPDATE: Sherill's volunteer presentation was very well received. She gave out DRAFT MRN brochures – as well as others who happened to have some on hand. People were very interested and took a lot of the literature. Sherill will add to agenda for next meeting – should we (MRN) do the 'circuit' to try and speak at more GD's with MRN brochures and brochures from all interested members?
2. Green Drinks in New Haven tomorrow (wed) night, Stamford and Milford both have Green Drinks Thursday night.
3. Rich D. shared that Fairfield also has a Green Drinks (specific night/date unknown at this time)