

Town of Thurston Casella Resource Solutions Bonny Hill Facility Presentation Minutes  
Held: Wednesday February 15, 2023 at 6:00 P.M.  
Location: 7578 County Route 333 Thurston NY

Present: Wendy Lozo, Noel Sylvester, Paul Peck, Michael Volino, Holly Chase, Diana Dixon, Richard Gauss, Jr.

Visitors: Attorney Rachael Treichler, Tim & Lisa Hargrave, Sheree Gauss, Valerie Peck, Colton Peck, Dawson Peck, Elaine Benjamin, Darrell Benjamin, Gena Benjamin, Veronica Seeley, Elizabeth Donderewitz, Marge Taft, Mary Catherine Rayeski, Jim Taft, Shane McGarvey, Eugene McIlwain, Lamora Hoad, Cal Hoad, Wayne Wells, Eric Schwarts, John Leslie, Jeffery McBurnie, Tim Langley, Larry Schilling, Bret Dickson, and many other Town of Thurston Residents.

Wendy Lozo opened the Casella Resource Solutions Bonny Hill Facility Presentation at 6:00 p.m. Lozo stated that the Casella Bonny Hill Organics Team would give a presentation then there would be a question and answer session until 7:00 p.m. at that time the Regular Town Board meeting is scheduled. Jeffery McBurnie presented the Town Board members a sustainability report, 3 reviews from area locations accepting biosolids, and a copy of the presentation. McBurnie stated that the Steuben County waste management plan aligns with both NYS and Federal regulations. McBurnie stated that there would be no Landfill development. Casella plans an open house in mid June of 2023. Shane McGarvey asked McBurnie why Casella didn't come forward sooner and inform the Thurston Town Board of their plans. McBurnie stated that he missed a step and he should have approached the Town.

Thurston Town residents explained their concerns about increased traffic and road conditions. Mary Catherine Rayeski complimented Casella as a reputable company. Rayeski stated that there have been many improvements made at the Bonny Hill site such as site cleanup, repairs to electrical utilities, and installation of gates. Rayeski stated that the food waste has been removed from the lagoons and the lagoons will be closed the summer of 2023. The plan is to reconstruct the compost facility. Ruth Schoonover asked what the compost facility was going to be built of. Leslie stated that it would be permeable material, being concrete or asphalt with a canvas roof.

A concerned Thurston resident asked for a definition of the word biosolids. John Leslie explained biosolids as the solid waste after going through a process at a waste water treatment plant. At this point the solids are considered land application ready. Rayeski stated that the application has to be incorporated within 6 hours of spreading.

Michael Volino stated that there is PFAS in solid waste. Leslie stated that soil levels would be monitored. Volino stated that the state of Maine has ban biosolid spreading. A Thurston resident stated that the PFAS levels were so high in Maine that the cows eating crops from the land spread with biosolids had PFAS levels showing in their milk. Volino asked if the biosolids were considered Class A or Class B. McBurnie stated that they were Class B. Volino stated Class B contain toxins. Volino stated that Elizabeth Dondewetz will take names of Thurston residents wishing to get their water tested. Free testing kits are available.

Tim Hargrave stated that between 2005 and 2010 he could prove soil test levels. Hargrave asked if Casella was going to do their own soil testing. Leslie stated yes. McGarvey asked how the 2700 acres of land were going to be utilized. Bret Dickson stated that he was a crop farmer and he preferred using the organic based material over chemical fertilizers. Dickson stated he was going to grow crops on the land and planned to continue until he could pass it on to the next generation.

Michael Volino stated that Holly Chase has had communications with NYSDEC. Chase stated that NYSDEC stated when minor modifications are made to applications no public hearing is needed. Leslie

stated Casella would be operating under Dickson's permit and the permit has not changed. Leslie stated Casella is going to set a policy of obtaining appropriate levels and continue to follow NYS and Federal regulations.

The very last thing that the Casella representative asked for was for the Thurston Town Board to change the moratorium language from Solid Waste Management to a Landfill ban.

Wendy Lozo suggested if the Thurston residents wanted Casella to continue with a follow up question and answer they should request it, schedule a larger forum, and invite residents from Cameron, Bath, and other municipalities.

With no further comments motion was made by Noel Sylvester seconded by Holly Chase to close the Casella Presentation at 7:08 p.m. Put to vote: Noel Sylvester, aye; Paul Peck, aye; Wendy Lozo, aye; Michael Volino, aye; Holly Chase, aye. Carried.

Minutes Respectfully submitted by Dolores Crooker, Thurston Town Clerk