

C C A B

March 14, 2011 Meeting

Brookline Town Hall, 333 Washington Street

MINUTES

The meeting began with a ten-minute video depicting the dangers of reaching the "tipping point," at which synergistic changes related to global warming will be irreversible.

Paul Harris introduced David Peter Stroh, a partner in Bridgeway Associates and a founder of Innovation Associates. His field is systems thinking, leadership development, and change management. He made a presentation on "Recontextualizing Climate Change: Uncovering the Dynamics Beneath the Trends." He discussed the need—in bringing about change—to work below the surface of events and even trends, and instead think about purpose and the perspectives, procedures, processes, and policies that influence events. Better predictions can be made by analyzing structure than trends. Working at the deepest level can be make it possible to get "leverage." The most important question he asks groups like ours in his work is, "Why, despite our best efforts, are we unable to accomplish what we want to?" As positive note is that trend lines—not only negative ones, but also positive ones—are often exponential. Thus, all the work we are doing may well be at the beginning of an exponential trend, and climate change activists could well see their ideas "catch fire" at some point in the future.

Paul introduced John Dempsey, a member of the Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) and past principal of Devotion School, who described four major initiatives undertaken by SWAC. First, the new single-stream municipal recycling system is working well. An increase of 8% in recycling has been observed. Second, despite two failed attempts, the town will continue to investigate a "pay-as-you-throw" trash collection system, which is used widely around the country with well recognized success. Use of 35-gallon carts, similar to the single-stream recycling carts, but smaller, is being considered. Third, a resolution is likely to be put before Town Meeting—perhaps next fall—for Brookline to adopt a goal of Zero Waste. Fourth, since about 30% of the waste stream is "organics"—food waste and yard waste—thought is being given to municipal collection and composting of these materials, perhaps using a third, and yet smaller cart.

Paul Harris announced that 60 people have been recruited to canvass on two dates: Sundays April 3 and April 10. There will be a pilot canvass on March 27.

David Lowe made presentation concerning a project he has been working on: Energy Points Brookline. It is difficult for most people to assess their own energy use or compare it to others since units of energy—kilowatt-hours, BTU, therms, calories—are difficult to visualize. A unit that he believes would be more accessible to the public is the Energy Point (EP). An EP is the energy contained in one gallon of gasoline. David has worked with about two dozen households in Brookline to begin to record their energy use in EPs. He would appreciate being contacted by others who are interested in participating in his study.

Paul Harris led a short discussion to solicit ideas to make the training planned for new canvassers as effective as possible. The group generated many ideas.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm

Attendees: David Stroh, Susan Martin, Marcia Hnatowich, David Lowe, Bob Miller, Bob Labaree, Don Weitzman, David Pantalone, Werner Lohe, John Dempsey, Alan Leviton, Stanley Eskin, Barbara Eskin, Mary Dewart, Fred Pinches, Paul Harris

Our next meeting will be on Monday, April 11, as usual, in Room 103, Town Hall, 333 Washington Street, Brookline, beginning at 7:00 p.m.