

**Sierra Vista Environmental Stewardship Commission (ESC)
Recycling Work Group Minutes**

**Thursday, April 4, 2024 (3:30-5:20pm)
Sierra Vista Library Conference Room**

Attendees: Joelle Buffa, ESC Commissioner and Recycling Work Group Coordinator
Steve Spearman, ESC Chair, Commissioner
Bob Poynter (non-voting ESC member)
Betty Poynter (non-voting ESC member)
William Indelicato (non-voting ESC member)
Tom Runyon (interested community member)
Janis (interested community member)
Karen LeMay (non-voting ESC member and Work Group Secretary)

Introductions: Each attendee introduced themselves and shared what they would do to encourage recycling if they were Mayor of Sierra Vista for one day. Responses were:

- ban Styrofoam
- encourage recycling through publicity
- bring back roll-off bins to collect glass (and transport to Bisbee's glass crusher)
- make local businesses show their circular economy business model
- increase recycling participation with a 70% household target
- ban plastic bags
- declare one week per year for recycling education

Let's Recycle ESC Presentation & Next Steps: Bob continued his discussion of the "Let's Recycle" concept, with more details about reducing transportation costs, corporate partner recycling hubs and where to locate drop-off stations. Bob handed out a draft flow chart of the concept for our discussion, showing possible next steps:

- (1) Bisbee case study (presented to ESC at 3/27/2024 meeting).
- (2) Diagrams, modeling, recycle binders (partially presented to ESC at 3/27/2024 meeting).
- (3) Finish ESC presentation (to be done at 4/24/2024 meeting).
- (4) Discuss at 4/24/2024 ESC meeting whether to move forward with the Let's Recycle concept as presented or with modifications, table it, or develop an alternative strategy.
- (5) Vote at 4/24/2024 ESC meeting on whether or not to move forward with Let's Recycle. If so, discuss the sequence of next steps which include market demand studies, engaging potential partners, and presenting any form of this concept to the Sierra Vista City Council.

Bob thought he would need 15 minutes to finish his presentation to the ESC. After that, a discussion of the concept is encouraged among the City Council Liaison, Staff Liaison, Commissioners and non-voting ESC members. Then, a vote could be held among the Commissioners for how to move forward and how/when to involve City Council.

Strategies to Engage Potential Partners, Residents, Businesses: This agenda item was discussed throughout the meeting, with ideas of:

- partnering with Fort Huachuca,
- partnering with businesses that already own bailing equipment, and/or have sustainability as a mission statement or core value,
- obtaining ADEQ and other available grants.

Ideas from Successful Recycling Programs: Tom presented a handout and overview of [Sedona Recycles, Inc.](#) (SRI), a nonprofit organization that currently runs a successful recycling program in the Sedona, Arizona area since 1989 with eight full-time employees, 11 part-time employees, city support, volunteers and grant money.

Currently, SRI maintains six free-to-the-public 24/7 drop-off sites and processes 9 tons of recyclable materials per day. The recyclable items they accept are paper, cardboard, aluminum, steel, glass, batteries, plastics, and items such as bubble wrap, padded mailers, Styrofoam, packing peanuts, egg cartons, and eyeglasses. SRI offers dumpster-style bins to local area businesses for recycling cardboard, paper, or mixed plastic and cans. SRI's excellent website educates the public about recycling, and they offer free educational programs for schools, businesses, and other groups. The City of Sedona contracts with SRI for some recycling services.

SRI loses money processing nearly every material they accept. However, they say "nonprofits don't have programs to make money, nonprofits make money to have programs". "We are here to educate, answer questions, and help people ... it takes people, equipment, energy, and passion to make our work successful." Grants and passionate volunteers subsidize their business operations.

SRI is one of the few recyclers that accepts Styrofoam, even though they lose over \$700 for every pallet they process. They continue this collection because Styrofoam breaks down into ever-smaller pieces, clogs waterways, is ingested by animals, and takes up a huge amount of landfill space. SRI is proud to provide this service because no one else does.

Other Ideas for Promoting Reduce, Reuse, Refuse, Repair, and Refurbish: Joelle was interviewed by the Sierra Vista Herald on April 1st for an article on the ESC and the Recycling Work Group. She gave written talking points (previously reviewed by the City's PAO) to the interviewer afterwards so they would have website links and material she may have forgotten to say during the interview. A photo shoot was done on April 2nd and was included with the article published in the April 5th Herald edition (lead story on the digital circulated version). The Herald may follow-up with their weekly survey question asking readers about their personal opinion(s) of having more recycling services in Sierra Vista.

William suggested partnering with the SV library to provide space and equipment to repair and refurbish items. A model for this exists involving the Bisbee Library that has a tool lending "library" at the Bisbee Science Lab.

Sierra Vista 2040 General Plan Stewardship/Conservation Goals: This Work Group would like feedback on how our Work Group's consolidated comments (submitted to Matt and Jeff at the March ESC meeting) were integrated into the Vista 2040 Draft plan out for public review.

Wrap-up/Set Next Meeting Date: Joelle will send out possible dates for the May Work Group meeting, sometime in the first half of the month being preferred.