

Community Gardens, Organic Composting and Bio-Fuels  
Minutes of the April 20, 2012 Meeting

Present: Pete Robbins, Jens Verbaegh, Tyler, and Laura Petit

**BIO-FUELS:** Meeting began at 10:30am at the New Paltz Town Hall. Mr Robbins has a background in permaculture and opened the discussion with ethanol produced from food waste. He understands there is some resistance from “green” people because they feel food should not be grown to produce ethanol but blames the increase cost of grains, meat, and other products on the commodity traders. He explained that ethanol can be produced with relatively easy technologies on farms and used by farm vehicles. Mixes up to 50% can be used in vehicles; amounts over that need an E85 flex converter. By products can be used in animal feed or for fertilizer. He also said that one of the byproducts is CO<sub>2</sub> which can be piped into greenhouses producing healthy plants.

Mr. Robbins distributed literature about ethanol production and suggested several other resources:

- Jeff Lawton, King Corn
- Neal Selman, Local Self Reliance
- Joanna Underwood, Anarogic digestion to convert garbage trucks to methane

There was discussion of biofuel and ethanol co-ops. The concern with ethanol production was that it would be NYSDEC Part 364 regulated since the process required building a still. There would be glycerine and waste water by-products to manage as well. Mr. Robbins thought the waste water could be managed with permaculture.

Mr. Verbaegh was interested in collecting vegetable oil from local stores and restaurants so it could be filtered and made available to converted diesel engines. Tyler said that a large vendor had contracts with some local businesses, and the practice of siphoning oil for use in their vehicles had been restricted. The oil was being collected and shipped out of the Country to produce cosmetics and other products. So there are concerns about availability. Vehicles and heating systems could be run on vegetable oil though. Ms. Petit had contacted NYSDEC about permitting. No permitting was required to pick up organic food waste or oil as it was considered a solid waste. DOT regulations would have to be adhered to so collection vehicles would have to be sealed units so no liquids could spill onto public roadways, and a Health department permit from the environmental sanitation division would be needed. She had spoken to Perry Mehta, NYSDEC region III Part 364 person for liquid waste. He said a letter of intent for collection and storage of vegetable oil should be sent into his office and should include method of collection and distribution. The Town already has bulk storage permits for waste oil containment.

**QUESTIONS:** If Town vehicles were run on bio-fuel or vegetable oils, would it void the warranties; would there be DOT/State fuel taxes?

**ORGANICS:** Tyler said that a farm in Pawling (Cornelius Rainbow) produced worm tea and bio-char (an organic combination of worm castings and charcoal that created a micro-environment perfect to host growing plants.)

There was discussion about developing several compost areas and what permitting would be needed. A registration form has to be filed with NYSDEC for a food waste composting facility receiving up to 1,000 cubic yards a year.

**HOMEWORK:** List of businesses from the assessor's office for evaluation of recycling, food waste/waste oil needs. This information will be beneficial to analyze how much organic waste is being produced and what the needs are for storage or composting.

**OTHER DISCUSSION:**

- Creating an epicenter where there is no traffic and pedestrian/bike access only;
- Monoculture: i.e. South African tomato farmer;
- Building a glass bottle "stained glass" wall;
- Children's day at recycling center with garden planting and mural painting