

Draft Meeting Minutes
Albemarle County Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee
October 12, 2023

In attendance

Christine Hirsh-Putnam, Peggy Gilges, Margaret Eldridge, Betsey Soulsby, Adam Gendell, Mike Kruse, Joe Szakos

Absent: Teri Strother, Victoria Walsh, Kendall Dix, Annie White

Liaisons: Jim Andrews, Jamie Powers, Isabella O'Brien, David Rhoades

Guests: Jane Mills, Jacob Phillips (NBC29), John

Old Business/Follow up

The October 12 agenda was approved.

The September 14 meeting minutes were approved.

Christine is putting together a folder in the SWAAC Google drive with documents for new SWAAC members to review.

The Environmental Stewardship Chapter of the AC44 Draft Goals and Objectives is seeking input from the public. SWAAC members are asked to participate.

Letter to Chesapeake about all-in-one system to be discussed at next meeting.

Presentation and Q&A

Jane Colony Mills of Loaves and Fishes was with us to talk about their work rescuing and distributing food that would otherwise go to waste.

- L&F is the largest free food organization in Charlottesville, operating 4 days/week (Tues. by appointment, Weds. Thurs. and Sat., no appointment needed), and serving not just the City and Albemarle but surrounding counties as well.
- More than 9,000 people were served last month.
- L&F distributed 95,000 lbs. of food through community partners (Piedmont Housing Alliance, Salvation Army, The Haven, Emergency Food Network and other food pantries) in 2022.
- L&F was started in 2004 by the 1st Methodist Union church. In 2014, purchased the current location on Lambs Rd., which is a 5,900 square foot warehouse space built in 1968 and brought up to code by L&F.
- Started with an all volunteer work force; now employ 7 f/t and 8 p/t employees. Spanish and some Arabic languages are spoken.
- L&F provides 100 lbs. minimum/household, increased by the number of people in the household. They can accommodate special diets and twice monthly visits.
- Donations to L&F and other food banks are coordinated by Feeding America. L&F donations come from these local groceries: Wegmans, Costco, Giant, Kroger (2), Food Lion (2), Giant (2), and Aldi, as well as donations from the Blue Ridge Food Bank and occasional trucks from the Walmart distribution center in Zion's Crossroads. Walmart will not accept any loads that have exceeded 35 degrees. Generally specific depts. at the

groceries are directed by store management about what is sent. Donating grocers receive a Good Samaritan tax deduction based on weight.

- Harris-Teeter, though owned by Kroger, does not participate in food rescue, the reason given being corporate policy.
- Food not suitable for human consumption is provided to five pig farmers in the area (approx. 1.4% of annual total). Certain products such as canned goods are disposed of in the trash, as the time involved in depackaging them for pigs or compost is too great.
- L&F handles approximately 2 million lbs. of food/year. Of this, a very small amount (approx. 1.2%) is sent to landfill. L&F recycle what plastic they can at McIntire Recycling Center. L&F provides plastic bags to customers, some of which are reusable; however, few pantry visitors reuse bags.
- L&F purchase eggs and milk as little of these basics are donated. 70% of what they receive is perishable—vegetables, fruit, meat, bread, dairy, prepared meals. Their operation is Serve Safe Certified.
- Re ACPS food waste, L&F does not have the ability to collect from schools. Food donations from ACPS, if made, are generally made at the end of a term and brought to the school by a school staff member. Betsey noted that composting is optional in ACPS, though composting service is available to all schools.
- L&F is privately funded, and does not receive funds from the County. 8% corporate, 65% private individuals. City of Cville Vibrant Community Fund, foundation grants, the faith community and organizations such as Twice As Nice and the Earlysville Exchange also provide funds.
- Needs: currently no public transportation, other than Jaunt, is available to L&F location. Need is growing, L&F may need to buy more food to increase supply/match the need.
- Jamie asked if it would be helpful for the County to bring grocers and food banks together. Jane thought so.
- Opportunities: “Free Fridges” to dispel stigma, build relationships with smaller grocers: Hallal markets, Afghan markets, Foods of All Nations, raise awareness about smaller food pantries in the area.
- David reported that they receive a lot of grocery compactors at the Ivy MUC transfer station, destined for landfill.

County and working group reports deferred to next meeting.

Next SWAAC meeting: Thursday, November 9.

