

MINUTES RECYCLING & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE 22 FEB 22

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Jamie Ecker at 5:05 PM. Personal introduction provided by each person in attendance.

Members present: Jamie Ecker (chairman), Steve Weems (vice chairman), Harry Hopcroft, Stephen Wood, Jennifer Hicks (secretary), Chrissy Adamowicz, Thomas Rumpf

Town personnel present: Kathy Wilson (Town Councilor), Steve Walker (Town Councilor), Jay Astle (Public Works Director), Eliza Blood (Organics Recycling Intern), John Eldridge (Town Manager)

Public present: Bill Good, Juka Zolas, Rep. Poppy Arford

Minutes from January 25, 2022: Harry Hopcroft asks for clarification about action steps for the Education Committee. Jennifer Hicks will finish writing the action step. Acceptance with modification moved by Tom Rumpf, seconded by Stephen Wood, approved unanimously.

Follow-Up, Memo to Council on Committee Charge & 2022 Goals:

Jamie said that the memo to Council on committee charge and 2022 Goals was submitted February 2.

Action: Jamie will put the submitted version in the Committee Google Drive folder.

Tom Rumpf asked about the towns grant request for funding with the Maine Won't Wait funding ME Community Climate Action (Grant Opportunity Informational Link) Due date is March 22 and there are prerequisite steps (coordination and deciding on use for money). The grant is \$50,000.

Town staff has identified projects. May not make it in time for that first batch because of the necessary council resolution before submitting the grant.

Action: Jamie Ecker will follow up with John Eldridge about a greenhouse gas inventory project for the town.

Action: Jennifer Hicks will contact Brian Ambrette from the Governor's Office to find out for sure that towns can submit grants in September and inform the Committee and Town Staff of his response.

Organics Recycling Subcommittee Update:

Chrissy Adamowicz reports that Eliza Blood has been hired as town intern to focus on organics recycling. The Subcommittee had an initial planning meeting with Blood about her work with a three-prong approach to further the town's work reducing waste through diversion. Will meet monthly for updates and guidance.

Jay Astle also reported that Eliza will work with other Public Works Dept projects in addition to organics.

Jay Astle also reported he is working to set up 2nd organics recycling drop off at the Recreation Center at the Landing. Targeting to have it set up by mid-March.

Stephen Wood asks what kind of outreach will be conducted once the new drop off site is open. Chrissy Adamowicz answers that Eliza will come up with a plan for outreach and education and will consider all channels of communication in the town.

Solid Waste & Recycling Update & Recommendations

Steve Weems introduced to the Committee a draft memo from the Solid Waste Options Subcommittee with recommendation for the Town Council to enter a long term agreement with ecomaine as the Town's trash (MSW) and recycling (SSR) processor, and to enter some form of hauling arrangement with Casella to transport the material there.

Weems reviewed the past activities including the previous recommendation from the Committee to the Council (January 4, 2021), which ultimately led to a vote by the Town Council in April 2021 directing staff to pursue a MSW and SSR contract with ecomaine, and Casella to continue to do the collection and transport the materials to ecomaine..

Since that time, new hauling challenges and costs developed making it hard to complete the original plan at the cost presented to the Council last April. This led to the Solid Waste Options Subcommittee and Town Staff working to explore a wide range of other possible options to transport the Town's trash and recycling to ecomaine at a cost that might be more reasonable.

Under the proposed new recommendation, Casella would still collect Brunswicks materials, but would deliver them to their West Bath transfer station. They would then "swap" an equal amount tonnage of material (trash and recycling) from either their Westbrook Transfer Station or from direct commercial routes to Ecomaine.

Jay Astle clarified that the origins of Swap material may be from Casella's commercial routes – both recycling and waste - from a number of entities in Portland. He further clarified that ecomaine is fine with this approach to meet Brunswick's needs..

Harry Hopcroft asks about how to keep contamination low if we are swapping materials with commercial entities. Steve Weems and Jamie Ecker responded that the contract will include a guarantee that there will be an maximum acceptable contamination rate or a penalty is paid by Casella. The last information we have from ecomaine is that, as an average of all communities served, the contamination rate is ~10-11%.

Harry Hopcroft emphasizes the need for education and information about how the Swap works and why it's still important to reduce waste, recycle properly.

Jamie restated that the draft Recommendation includes annual check ins on tonnage, quality and other factors, and that there be a clear 3 year check in/review Casella's performance in meeting the terms and goals of the agreement and Swap.

Jay asked that the Committee's Recommendation provide staff lee-way to negotiate terms with Casella, given that we need to gain their concurrence on these terms, but added that he thought the draft recommendation appeared to do that. He also noted that commercial recycling, based on feedback from casella as well as ecomaine, tends to be much cleaner than residential recycling.

Chrissy asked that the Town be informed exactly what the materials are made up of as not all commercial waste is the same, and how do we prevent excess contamination. Jamie Ecker and Steve Weems reiterated that the recommendation strongly urges the Town to set clear standards for what can be substituted, the maximum contamination amounts, and the Town should be informed of the program's effectiveness through annual checks on tonnage, quality, etc. And that ecomaine will be doing their normal auditing of loads, which provides us another data point on the quality of what they are delivering.

Note: Tom Rumpf moved that the Subcommittee memo with MSW/SSR recommendation with the Swap be submitted to Town Council with edits on swap materials origins. Stephen Wood 2nds. Voted for unanimously.

Action: Steve Weems will make corrections on the origins of the swap materials and send the memo to the Town Council, and Jamie Ecker will finalize the memo and send it in to the Town Council.

Public Comment:

Juka Zolas asked how long the contract with Casella will be. Jamie explains that our Recommendation leaves it open for the Town staff/Council to ultimately determine the exact term of the hauling agreement with Casella. .

Poppy Arford asked if that Town might return to “tagging” recycling if it's not the proper materials or obviously contaminated. Stephen Wood points out that once the Town goes to ecomaine, ecomaine will have periodic reviews and audits of routes and may tag non-conforming material. Jamie Ecker reminded all that the existing contract with Casella includes a provision for Casella to do so, in coordination with Town staff.

Bill Good congratulates the Committee for voting for the recommendations.

Tom Rumpf moves to adjourn meeting, Stephen Weems seconds. Meeting adjourns at 6:30pm.