

Brunswick Recycling & Sustainability Committee

Tuesday, April 29, 2020 On Zoom®

4:00pm - 6:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Agendas and minutes for all town committees can be found here:
www.brunswickme.org/agendacenter

Members present: Chrissy Adamowicz, Jamie Ecker, Jennifer Hicks, Harry Hopcroft, Kay Mann, Steve Weems, Stephen Wood, Juka Zolas

Staff present: Jay Astle, Director of Public Works

Meeting Called to Order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from February, 2020:

Steve Wood moved and Jamie seconded approval of minutes.

Discussion: Majority of members determined that the minutes were not ready for approval. Recommended that the approval of minutes tabled for May meeting.

Steve Weems motioned that the minutes approval is tabled. Jamie seconded the **motion. Motion approved** by majority vote.

Update on the FY 20-21 Town Budget - Jay Astle

Town Manager submitted proposed budget to Town Council which reflects substantial decline in revenues because of the virus-related lockdown. Property taxes delayed, no excise taxes are being paid. Only a 1% tax increase has been recommended.

Public Works budget: Jay had put a request in for funding for an intern and that has been left IN the budget. **Town manager has recommended that recycling be taken to landfill if recycling processing costs are over \$80/ton.** Recycling processing is currently \$132/ton and landfilling costs \$80/ton at Graham Road (Town charges ourselves this amount).

Committee discussion:

- Budget does not consider options to reduce waste. Is only a financial proposal by the town manager.
- Stopping recycling for a year will incur a cost when the value of commodities increases and recycling resumes.

- Regarding whether the town manager proposed not to let the public know that recyclables are being landfilled - Jay Astle responded: there will be public hearings and it would be reported.
- Regarding the future of the pay-per-bag (blue bag) program. How might this play into the town manager's plan? Jay Astle responded: those questions have not been answered. This is one of many proposed budget cuts. Bag fees bring in close to \$300,000 a year towards the landfill closure fund (\$292,841 in 2018).

Jenn Hicks recommends that the committee develop a strategy to communicate its position about maintaining the recycling program as it currently exists.

Steve Weems proposes that the committee publicly oppose the town manager's recycling change proposal and look to the Short Term Waste Management Plan it has developed. Both tipping fee rates need to be looked at in context of next year's budget.

Solid Waste Reduction and Management Plan Update - Jenn Hicks, Jamie Ecker, Steve Weems

Status of the Solid Waste Reduction and Management Plan.

- March 2 sub committee made up of Jamie Ecker and Steve Weems presented the Plan Framework to Town Council which resulted in approval and direction from the to develop short term management plan by April.
- Subcommittee met March 12 to start developing short term plan. Work stopped when town went in lockdown. Subcommittee reconvened and has drafted a plan for committee review.
- Town manager budget reflects committee's recommendation to extend current contract with Pine Tree for 1 year. Jay Astle clarifies that manager has been given direction to explore the idea of bringing trash to West Bath as of April 2021 when landfill closes.

Short Term Solid Waste Management Plan details

- Stay the course for the next year as planned
- Tweak the performance of recycling by using an intern
- Emphasis on getting better data, both on costs and on the potential costs of both MSW and recyclables.
- Use an RFI for bidders to give us the cost options that we would need to make informed decisions.
- Provides greenhouse gas reduction impacts for each of the different disposal methods.
- Decisions are made through three lenses; solid waste hierarchy, cost, and carbon footprint.

Committee discussion:

- Jamie Ecker explains that anything we do is better than landfilling at Graham Road. It has the highest environmental impact of any option. It is the largest source of municipal greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Steve Weems points out that the GHG impacts have nothing to do with the short term plan that the council needs from us now.
- Chrissy Adamowitz offers to help write an explanation of how the GHG emissions are determined on the town website.

The draft plan needs committee approval so it can submit it to the town council.

Short Term Waste Management Plan Approval

Committee discussion

- Discussion about the elements of the plan including the emphasis of maintaining the recycling program and focus on improving it, the importance that composting is included, how to provide education without creating a double message.
- Discussion about the cost of continuing the recycling program for a year and how diverting some of the funds from the landfill closure budget would merely be shifting costs around.
- Discussion on RFI and RFP and that there aren't many service providers who will respond to either (probably 2) and only 5 potential disposal options and 2 potential recycling options. EcoMaine is one good option - but hauling costs/carbon emissions are a limitation.
- Discussion about the need to present cost effective options while emphasising the importance of making good choices now that will not pass the environmental costs to the next generation.
- Discussion about how to build in economy of scale concept in plan: ie: Brunswick joining up with Brunswick Landing and Bowdoin College to save and be more efficient.

Juka Zolas made a Motion to: Accept the Short Term Waste Management Plan document in principle with the plan to make updates to address all the issues brought up today.

Steve Weems seconded the motion

Discussion:

We accept it as a group in principle and we like all the comments made. These can be woven in by a subcommittee and then submitted to the council as soon as possible.

Jenn has captured notes on all the comments and asks the committee members to email any that were not included to HER. Kay will send minutes to Jenn and Harry.

Vote: passed unanimously.

The committee agreed that the plan be submitted to the Council by April 30. Sub committee will be meeting April 30 to finalize the proposal document. There was interest by the committee to include justification for maintaining the recycling program in FY 20-21.

Other Business

Chrissy reported that the **waste reduction public hearing went well**; it was 8 hours long, with many comments made. The process is on hold right now waiting for another special session.

Next meeting will be May 26 6:00 via zoom.

Adjourned at 6:08 pm.