

Town of Brunswick, Maine

Recycling & Sustainability Committee

Minutes for Meeting on Thursday, June 27, 2019

Present – Mike Wilson (Chair), Punnie Edgerton, Holly Green, Marianne Haughwout, Jen Hicks, Jay Astle (Town staff liaison), Steve Walker (Town Council liaison).

The discussion centered around the Town Council's recent request that the Committee prepare an analysis and recommendations for alternatives to the Town's recycling program. The current program has become substantially more expensive for the Town because of sharp declines in demand for recyclable material on global markets.

The group agreed that any changes to the recycling program should be made in the context of a general waste reduction plan. The following points were made concerning the plan:

- It should emphasize the reduce and reuse steps of the waste reduction hierarchy;
- It should have a strong public information/education component to ensure that people understand the various options for disposing of unwanted items;
- The possibility of a regional approach to waste management should be explored as a way of improving program effectiveness while keeping costs down;
- The State of Maine should be encouraged to expand its product stewardship programs in order to encourage companies to package their products in an environmentally friendly way and to assume responsibility for disposing of these products at the end of their life spans.

Jay advised not to let cost considerations prevent us from looking at specific approaches. It is better to develop the suggestions and then work with the Town's Finance Director and with the Finance Committee to assess their financial feasibility.

Jay reported that the Town is negotiating a one-year extension of its trash and recycling collection contract with Pine Tree/Casella and may be requesting competitive bids for a long-term contract to meet the Town's needs after the Graham Road Landfill closes in early 2021.

There was a brief discussion of a new program in Bangor by which residents put all of their recycling and trash in one container for curbside pickup. The material is then sent to a facility in Hampden where it is sorted by an automated system into trash and various categories of recyclables. The program may have some potential but it is still in the experimental stage. Also,

the costs of transporting trash and recyclables from Brunswick to Hampden would likely be prohibitive.

Next steps:

- Holly will contact Greg Williams from Agricycle about setting up a compost drop off at Public Works;
- Jenn and Punnie will look into municipal recycling programs around the country;
- Mike will revise an earlier Waste Reduction Plan draft to serve as a framework for developing the Committee's report to the Town Council.
- Marianne will research various reduce and reuse options as well as the Natural Resources Council of Maine's work in the areas of recycling and product stewardship;
- Jay will provide cost information concerning Pine Tree's curbside trash and recycling pickup services.