

Meeting Minutes
Solid Waste Task Force

March 25, 2010

4:00 PM

Room 24, City Hall

City Councilor: John Anton

City Councilor: Cheryl Leeman

Staff:

Troy Moon

Mike Bobinsky

Determine schedule for upcoming meetings

Councilor Anton proposed a standing meeting time.

The 2nd Thursday of every month at 5:00 pm **except** next month:

April 22, 2010 (4th Thursday in April)

Presentation on current solid waste management programs and policies (state, regional, & city levels)

Mike Bobinsky and Troy Moon presented existing Solid Waste Management policies and infrastructure.

Powerpoint will be posted online.

Troy went into detail on Portland's Waste Management Strategies:

- **History:** Started in 1989 - established waste management hierarchy and goals for waste reduction (50% recycling goal for 2009, currently at 35%)
- **Existing Responsibilities and Policies:** Producer responsibility (Maine is viewed as a leader in this area) and Climate Goals related to reducing GHG emissions.
- **Existing Infrastructure:** Landfills across the state have replaced town dumps – they are more environmentally friendly & better managed because they deal with a lot more waste
Facilities (owned by the City): ecomaine, Riverside Recycling
City Disposal: Trash barrels, PED trash cans & City-owned trash cans (50/50), NO recycling barrels in city at this point, “Silver Bullets” (on Somerset Street) used heavily for recycling and available for any community member – emptied daily
- **Future Disposal:** State banned new commercial landfills so they can be the sole owner of all new future landfills.
- **Data:** Waste generation is going up, Recycling rate is going down (because more waste) but the act of recycling is going up, Little effort going towards dealing with food waste (200,000 tons generated but none recycled), No large-scale compost facility for downtown, Recycling has continued to increase citywide with single stream curbside program, 4% of recycling waste can't be recycled which is a very low % for single stream system, Portland has higher recycling rate (3-46% range in state, Portland is 32%)
- **Waste disposal comparison:** compared various city's system in the Greater Portland area (***It will be posted online***)

Questions:

What happens to the electronic recycling?

The state authorizes certain consolidators that are very effective in this area. The City gets certificates from these consolidators so they know they have been recycled. They are working on developing an on-going policy for additional products. Prescription drugs/materials are the next wastes to be considered.

What are the difficult-to-manage wastes for recycling?

Hazardous wastes, pesticides, large items (mattresses, etc)

What policies in the Recycling Advisory Committee relate to the city policies related to waste management?

Increase targets for recycling. The report focuses on the analysis of different recycling options out there (strategies from other cities). The curbside recycling program was implemented in this policy. The pay-as-you-go waste program was established which increased the amount of recycling citywide.

How much of the waste in the 150 trash barrels is recyclable?

Most of the waste probably could be recycled. Lots of cans and bottles! Councilor Leeman thinks recycling trash barrels should be highly considered; a kind of barrel that allows you to separate trash and recycling right there on the sidewalk.

Can Ecomaine collect the unclaimed bottle deposit?

Ecomaine doesn't touch any deposit bottles that go through facility. It doesn't separate the deposit bottles from the other recycling items that go through and recycles the content automatically. Hand sorting would have to happen. Otherwise unclaimed bottle deposit goes back to the bottlers which is actually a good thing.

What happens to the unclaimed deposit?

It goes back to the bottlers.

Could the unclaimed deposit money go elsewhere?

There may have to be a change in legislature for the bottle deposit to be used for other resources. Using the unclaimed money for recycling strategies could be a strategy.

What happens to the compost??

Some schools are dealing with, but most places don't have enough space to deal with it (Restaurants, Maine Med...)

Do we have any data about home composting systems?

In the past 2 years, 4-500 have been sold but it isn't a huge number city-wide. Space is definitely an issue!!

Is there anything in the Recycling Process that could make it more efficient?

Ecomaine will turn up or down process when market fluctuates.

Comments:

- Finding a better location for the “**Silver Bullets**” seems like a good idea. People don't know where they are and some people think they are no longer available.
- Interview people to figure out who are using the “**Silver Bullets**”
- Councilor Leeman had a few negative comments about the current status of the location and look of the “**Silver Bullets.**” The place is dirty and had to navigate which might deter community members. She said it might be something to think about at new location.
- Councilor Anston said that we need to think about **deposits** and the unclaimed bottle deposit.
- On the commercial side: **compost** is being dealt with (i.e. Whole Foods)
- Old Port – We need a common place for recycling downtown that is convenient and easy for people to use. It's a good thing to think about for the Task Force but it's hard to find a place to do it.
- Committee should look at range state wide and figure out the best strategies to **increase recycling** in the City.
- Councilor Leeman gets the most **complaints about Leaf Collection**: needs to be an issue for the Task Force to deal with.
- Councilor Leeman: **Demo waste** needs to be dealt with and could be something the Task Force can help with.

Topics that weren't covered:

What happens to the incinerator over the long haul – Is there a time limit?

Councilor Anston said there should be state policies that advocate for that.

Have we identified areas that are not working now?

What does work now?

Where's the most forward looking idea right now in terms of how people are managing waste?

Discussion about Riverside. How can we change policies?

What happens now with recycling to continue to be progressive? How can continue to progress rather than plateau at 30%?

How can the city of Portland lead by example? (encourage businesses and residents, etc)

How can we integrate commercial into the strategies more?

What changes can be made in the state laws? In Portland, if there are building codes that are hindering?

What education efforts can be initiated to help?

What does all this cost?

We need to figure out the barriers: codes, costs, etc.

Develop work plan for upcoming meetings (Councilor Anton)

We need to identify what are goals are in order to complete these tasks.

Staff needs to create policy goals for our solid waste.

Identify barriers, and strategies to overcoming the barriers and what costs are.

Agenda earlier for next meeting

Adjourn