

## Solid Waste Advisory Committee

October 10, 2019

### In attendance;

#### Members:

Chair: Councilor Keith Nyhan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Marc Coen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Gail Matson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Amanda Grady-Sexton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Robert Werner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Zandra Rice Hawkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Arthur Aznev	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matt Cashman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Russell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Eric Steinhauser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Michael Nork	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 with Chairman Nyhan noting that a quorum was present. He welcomed a guest, Gail Page, who had initially contacted her City Counselor Kenison, about the single – use plastics referral that had been referred to the Committee.

Chairman Nyhan then asked Adam Clark, Administration Division Manager, for a brief overview.

Adam Clark shared that the referral requests the City look into what the City of Portsmouth is contemplating regarding the restriction of single-use plastics distributed on City properties. They are also contemplating a city-wide ban on Styrofoam. Mr. Clark explained that there are differing opinions about the legality of such bans in the state.

Chairman Nyhan then asked Ms. Gail Page if that accurately reflected the intent of her referral. Ms. Page said yes, that it is her hope that this would start the conversation around single-use plastics use within the City.

Discussion ensued around various materials and issues surrounding plastic bags and straws in particular. Councilor Warner asked how the City can support the State in their efforts to encourage a composting industry within New Hampshire. Mike Nork detailed State efforts that are ongoing in that regard.

Eric Steinhauser said in his mind there are three points to the matter. What does one buy? What does one do with it in terms of disposal? And where does it eventually go?

Amanda Grady Sexton questioned if the City has purchasing guidelines to encourage environmentally responsible purchasing which the City currently does not.

Chairman Nyhan thinks the question is framed as; Do we as a City want to take it upon ourselves to say we are not going to use Styrofoam and plastic straws at City enterprises.

Councilor Rice-Hawkins said we should consider this a starting point to look at our own (City) practices in this regard.

GSD Director Chip Chesley indicated he had the Arena look at that exact question and reported he would share the information with the Committee.

Mayor Bouley recounted that he has found some State legislative hearings he has been attending interesting as it relates to various materials. He discussed encouraging people to make better decisions and education.

Counselor Grady-Sexton thought it prudent the City look at its purchasing.

Chairman Nyhan asked that the Department look at its own purchasing of single use plastics including the financial implications of making a switch and report back. He also asked for Staff to encourage other Departments in that regard.

Tom Aspell noted that the conversation is a multi-faceted one and look how many different directions it can lead.

Councilor Rob Werner volunteered that the Energy and Environment Committee may be a good next step for the referral as they can try to get a handle on what other municipalities are doing including pending State legislation.

Chairman Nyhan thanked Councilor Warner and the Committee.

Councilor Nyhan then welcomed David Allen of Casella Waste to give a brief presentation on challenges in the solid waste and recycling markets.

Mr. Allen stated part of his role with Casella is to provide insight and perspective to into the industry for contracted customers.

He started by detailing the recycling market collapse that the committee has discussed before.

He included a discussion on contamination and what that means in efforts to resolve the problems in the markets. Regardless of that he stated, the long term prospectus is not good because even if China were to come back into the market, they have learned that they will get material at the current depressed prices because the US is dependent on moving material overseas.

Mr. Allen then turned to the solid waste side of things, specifically disposal capacity issues in the state of NH. He reported that Bethlehem landfill, where Concord's material goes to, is coming to an end as a disposal destination. They are currently looking for other locations and wanted the committee to simply be aware that this is an important multiyear process that needs to be undertaken today in order to not be beholden on out of state disposal destinations in the future because rates will surely rise as we

become more reliant on them. Currently disposal options include Bethlehem, Penacook and Rochester. Massachusetts has been decreasing its own disposal capacity significantly adding pressure to the situation.

Chairman Nyhan appreciated the comments and understood the need for capacity.

Eric Steinhauer commented that other states are starting to look at anaerobic digesting.

Tom Aspell discussed how important he thinks the discussion is to have because the reality of costs is about to become an issue for the City as the current contract expires in a not-too-distant 2024. The current contract insulated the City thus far but it is going to be challenging at contract expiration.

Chairman Nyhan then opened the meeting to other business. GSD Director Chip Chesley shared that with the start of fall leaf collection on October 28<sup>th</sup>; all three crews that perform bulk leaf collection will be altering their starting position every other year. This would be a change for one of the crews. He showed this switch on a map. He indicated all residents served by the programs will receive a postcard with details on the programs and those in the affected area will receive it twice. Word will also be put out via the web and social media.

He explained how the program works and reminded the committee about the parallel bagged collection program the Committee put in place last year.

Discussion ensued as to how GSD can better predict crew's locations.

The Committee passed on appreciation of the Department's work.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20.