

Beverly Waste Reduction Committee
MINUTES: Monthly Meeting, Thursday, June 3, 2021
6:30 PM, virtual

CITY OF BEVERLY
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2021 JUL -6 A 7:56

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 pm

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Higgins (Chair), Sandy Burgess, Nancy Dillon, Toni Musante, Lisa Willwerth

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Joyce Herman, John Swain

INVITED PARTICIPANTS AND GUESTS: Erina Keefe, Gail Garron Bernard, Mary Barthelmes, Amy Henderson, Dean Berg (Green Beverly), Ben Hacker

Housekeeping

Committee Chair Higgins opened the meeting and reminded members and participants about protocol for remotely conducted meetings.

Minutes

April 2021 minutes were not available for review and will be considered at the next meeting. The May 2021 meeting was cancelled.

Treasurer's Report

Burgess reported that the current account balance is \$24,820.54 (as reported by Karen Milo, Engineering Department, in February 2021).

Committee Business

Higgins provided the following updates:

- Higgins is continuing to work to secure a clerk that can record the minutes for the Waste Reduction Committee. Names provided by the City Clerk have not been successful (i.e., not available). We are waiting for one more response.
- Options were discussed about returning to in-person meetings. A hybrid option was discussed, noting the challenges of running an in-person meeting while allowing open participation virtually. If a hybrid meeting is necessary, Dillon indicated she would be willing to monitor and manage virtual participation. No Committee members expressed concern with in-person meetings, so the Committee will tentatively plan to return to in-person meetings pending guidance from the City.

City Updates

Erina Keefe provided an update on various City activities:

- Erina thanked the Committee for review/comment on the Draft Resilient Together plan. The full plan is scheduled to be released for public comment soon. Erina will share the link with the Committee when it is available. Any ideas or assistance in sharing the plan would be appreciated. The review period will be limited, due to the need to finalize the plan before June 30th (deadline imposed by grant funding).
- The City is still negotiating contract terms and conditions with JRM, and has been doing a lot of independent research to ensure the contract pricing and other elements are consistent with other communities in the region. Contract negotiations have included discussions about city-wide composting in year 3 (or a future year) of the contract. The City is also challenging JRM to consider electrifying their fleet of vehicles used for the City. Lastly, the City is focusing on enforcement elements of the contract. More information should be available at a future meeting.
- Musante raised an issue that JRM is not meeting their contract obligations regarding yard waste collection, with collections frequently delayed or even missed. There have also been complaints that yard waste is occasionally being picked up with trash for disposal. Other Committee members noted collection appears on-schedule (or just delayed by one day) in their neighborhoods. Erina will follow-up on these issues. She noted that it is helpful if problems such as these are documented with photographs and shared with the City. Musante noted that she reported the issue to both JRM and the Engineering Department. The City has been discussing customer service options with JRM to facilitate service questions and feedback/complaints.
- Erina talked about the need to expand information about composting on the City's website. They will be adding information on other vendors that also serve the area (e.g., City Compost, Bootstrap Compost). Erina asked about the process for providing bins to new subscribers. Higgins provided an overview of how bins are currently distributed, and there was a discussion about the need to transition to an alternate distribution method that is more manageable. Erina talked about the need for a dedicated person that could handle distribution. This could perhaps be a role for an enforcement/education staff person. The City is continuing to explore the potential for creating and staffing a position such as this.
- The City is continuing to explore a compost drop-off option, similar to the program put in place by Salem. The City is currently exploring locations that might be suitable options, and may pilot one location and track usage and other data to consider the potential for additional locations.
- The City is considering a marketing blast, e.g., a water bill insert, to share key information on recycling/composting. It would be a 1/3 sheet, and would take three months (three mailings) to reach the entire City. Composting and textile recycling are two key topics that they are interested in highlighting. They would like to include a QR code and link to drive people to the City's website for additional information. Mary Barthelmes suggested keeping

the message catchy and short, and highlighting money savings opportunities. Erina asked about if there is a way to “brand” waste recycling in Beverly, or perhaps develop a catchy tag line. We talked a bit about our efforts to create a logo and purchase promotional materials for the Committee. Lisa Willwerth, Joyce Herman, and Mary Barthelmes agreed to work on some ideas to bring back to Erina and the rest of the Committee for review and consideration.

- Erina noted that the Google meeting link is not “live” in the way it is presented on the agenda and the City’s website. She suggested we coordinate with the City Clerk’s office to ensure the link is readily available, if not in the agenda then in the description of the agenda. Higgins agreed.

Food Waste Composting – Promotional Activities

Amy Henderson of the local chapter of Mothers Out Front, and Dean Berg of the non-profit organization Green Beverly, joined the meeting to talk about ways to work together to promote and advance backyard and curbside composting by Beverly households.

Dean Berg introduced himself and updated the Committee on Green Beverly’s recent efforts to formalize operations as a non-profit organization, spurred on in part by recently-donated space at the Cummings Center. Green Beverly is a communication vehicle to collaborate with others and find ways to enable residents to proactively be involved with sustainability initiatives within their individual control (food supply, goods and services, waste, transportation, energy conservation, etc.). Over the summer, Green Beverly will be tabling and communicating sustainability messaging at the Beverly farmer’s market. They plan to rotate through topics, one of which will be composting. One opportunity for collaboration would be providing display information (e.g., sample bins). They are working to go paperless as much as possible. Erina has met with Green Beverly once already and will meet with them again to discuss other green initiatives that should be highlighted.

Amy Henderson shared information on a composting toolkit that she is developing in collaboration with Mothers Out Front. They are focusing on healthy soil and regenerative agriculture; the toolkit is designed to guide and educate cities and residents about composting alternatives to start or increase municipal composting. It includes example surveys, contests, literature, and other information, and is a data-driven initiative. There might also be the potential for raffles/give-aways that help to encourage participation in composting. Amy suggested several ideas, including a compost subscription, composting or gardening supplies, a raised bed, etc.

Joyce, Lisa and Mary may be able to assist with these partnering opportunities as they work to develop an educational insert for the water bill.

Homecoming 2021

Higgins and Dillon met with the Homecoming Committee (virtually) on May 18th. Lobsterfest will take place this year as part of a limited Homecoming celebration (August 4-8, 2021). The biggest logistical changes will be a cost incurred for composting services, and perhaps de-coupling

composting services for Lobsterfest and Senior Day in the Park. Literature indicates Senior Day will take place, but the Council on Aging has not reached out to us seeking assistance.

Costs for composting services include tote delivery and removal (\$100 for each tote shuttling), per-tote cost for collection (\$12.50 per tote per pickup), and a surcharge (\$100) for the 8 pm collection since it's after normal collection hours. The total estimated cost is as high as \$750 (assuming three collections of 12 totes each; 2 pm, 5 pm and 8 pm). Cost savings are possible if volunteers are available to shuttle the totes to/from Black Earth and if the 8 pm collection can be delayed until the next morning.

The Committee discussed options of our involvement, including options for financial assistance to pay for composting. It was agreed that the Homecoming committee is responsible for costs associated with managing event waste, and this is not a cost our Committee can or should be absorbing. However, the Waste Reduction Committee does have an interest in continuing to organize and coordinate activities to enable this to be a zero-waste event. Higgins will provide an update to the Homecoming committee on the cost and logistics of composting, will connect them directly with Black Earth, and will seek input from the Homecoming committee regarding how they want to proceed.

The Committee agreed that for Senior Day in the Park, we should wait to hear from the Council on Aging regarding their plans and any request for assistance.

There was a brief discussion about options for recycling chip bags. Dillon agreed to stop in to Unpacked Living to see if they host this recycling program.

Old Business and Miscellaneous Items

No discussion.

Upcoming Events

- June 9, 2021 – MADEP Municipal Recycling Coordinator meeting on composting

Other Updates and Discussion Items by Committee Members

Erina asked about the BeverlyCAN website. This is not a City or Waste Reduction Committee website. However, the City website has some links to this non-City website. Higgins will provide Erina with contact information for past committee members that were involved with creating this website, to explore options to take the website down.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.