

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
June 8, 2020
Online Broadcast Meeting

Present: Councilmembers Rader, Bullock, & Shachner

Also Present: Councilmembers Bullock, Kepple, Litten, & Neff, Director Ducu, Jill Haley from the Refuse Department, Executive Director Diane Bickett of the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, Dan Brown of Rustbelt Riders, Chief Dunphy, a couple members of the public, Clerk Bach, & Deputy Clerk Lascu taking minutes

Start time: 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

Communication from Councilmember Rader regarding recycling.

Chairman Rader framed the conversation and noted Lakewood's intent to be a leader in the region in recycling and composting. He highlighted the importance of communication to positively affect the proper sorting of waste/recycling materials. He stated that the committee was present to learn from city staff, the County Solid Waste District, and from Dan Brown of Rustbelt Riders.

Director Ducu stated how recycling has changed over the years, highlighting how clean recycling can reduce costs. He noted that getting information on recycling cans could promote continuity of good recycling practices. Jill Haley, a recycling driver in the Refuse Department for 20 years and city employee for 31 years, gave an overview of the various categories of people who recycle and to what degree they do it. She stated that in her opinion about 50% of residents recycle correctly. She noted that a recycling education program was implemented for a short time 10 years ago and believes one could be valuable today, especially with visual representations. Her department is looking to implement better signage that explains recycling.

Councilmember Neff thanked Ms. Haley for her service and commitment and agreed with the need for visual representations of how to properly recycle.

Councilmember Bullock stated Council's role in the matter could be opening up financial capacity for recycling education.

Diane Bickett of the County Solid Waste District gave a brief presentation on the resources that the Waste District can provide. Residents can call or email the District with any questions that they might have about recycling. The District also offers educational webinars and a compost bin sale. The District can also help set up recycling services for multi-family properties and for businesses. Ms. Bickett noted that the best way to educate people is at the curb. Tagging carts with improper recycling is an effective way to educate. Lakewood already does this practice. Community education recycling grants are offered

through the District for up to \$7,000. She noted that Lakewood has not applied for one this year, however the city received one in 2019. The District is open to discussing grants outside of its normal cycle.

Chairman Rader asked how programs Ms. Bickett spoke about would look from an administrative side. Director Ducu proposed a mailer including magnets that would be sent out annually, along with placing decals on the lids.

Councilmember Shachner inquired about county efforts to encourage people to reduce their use of single use plastic materials. Ms. Bickett suggested contacting the City of Cleveland Office of Sustainability, as it has started a campaign. The county also participates in the Plastic Reduction Work Group.

Councilmember Bullock asked if curbside-recycling rules would be changing annually. Ms. Bickett indicated that the rules do not change as often as one would think, and spoke to minor changes that occurred recently.

Dan Brown of Rustbelt Riders gave an overview of his company and how it can work with Lakewood to positively affect composting, recycling, and climate change. He noted that the current food system is the single largest contributor to climate change, with the main contributor being food waste. 40% of food produced in the country will be thrown away or put into landfills. He stated that through a partnership with Keep Lakewood Beautiful, his company was able to establish a fifth drop off location in the city for food waste. He also shared other opportunities and resources his company provides for further or future partnerships with the city.

Chairman Rader asked Mr. Brown what the city's next steps could be to further promote recycling and composting. Mr. Brown expressed a desire to partner with the city on messaging and improving accessibility of drop off locations all over town.

Chairman Rader asked Director Ducu how his department could work with a program like Rustbelt's and whether the city does any composting. Director Ducu stated that he saw the value in the program, especially taking tonnage out of landfills, and that the Refuse Department has not had the capacity for composting services.

Councilmember Bullock stated that Rustbelt Riders could help run a Zero Waste Event, which could provide a large-scale way to reach residents. Mr. Brown noted past efforts that his company has undertaken at past regional community events.

Director Ducu proposed implementing a drop off site at the city's Berea Rd. facility. Mr. Brown stated that his company would look at implementing one there.

Councilmember Kepple discussed aspects of composting accessibility. Mr. Brown noted that his company was moving towards online webinars to provide technical know how to people, as it is best to compost where one lives.

Councilmember Shachner asked whether Mr. Brown was aware of any other cities that have successfully encourages their business, restaurants, etc. to reduce single use plastic items. Mr. Brown stated that San Francisco's Office of Sustainability is in a league of its own. San Francisco passed legislation that requires durables be used whenever possible and requires compostable materials in other circumstances. He highlighted the need to increase regional composting capacity before any steps are made toward that end. He also noted that Athens, Ohio passed legislation that implemented citywide composting for households.

Approval of the minutes of the May 11, 2020 Public Works & Sustainability Committee.

Chairman Rader made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Bullock to approve the minutes from the committee's last meeting.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yeas – Bullock, Litten, Rader

Nays – None

Motion passed. The minutes were approved.