

City of Ann Arbor Commercial Recycling Implementation Committee

Meeting #1 Minutes
January 24, 2008
City of Ann Arbor Council Chambers
City Hall, 2nd Floor
7:30 am – 9:30 am

Committee Member Attendance: Tracy Artley, Steve Bean, Wendi Felgner, Maggie Ladd, Doug McClure, Rachel Murphy, Kristie Profit Martin, Nancy Rucker, Tim Stark, John Teeter, David Stead, Jay Uzoigwe

City of Ann Arbor Staff: Bryan Weinert, Nancy Stone, Tom McMurtrie, Emily Hlavarty and Katie Dennis

Consultant: Jim Frey and Anna Collinson, Resource Recycling Systems

- 1. Welcome and Introductions-David Stead, Chair, Solid Waste Committee, City of Ann Arbor Environmental Commission**
- 2. Presentation of Materials-Jim Frey, RRS**

Binders of committee materials were distributed, along with an additional informational sheet on current commercial recycling prepared by City staff.

a. Committee Materials

- i. Review of agendas and timeline of committee work.

b. Overview of Commercial Recycling

- i. Review of materials to provide summary of previous commercial recycling committee work. These materials and reports are available online at www.recycle.com/AAcommercial.html

c. Overview of City Services

- i. The summary focused on current commercial recycling efforts being conducted. Staff has conducted a survey and site visit approach to adding more commercial recycling accounts. Beginning last fall, about half of city businesses were mailed a survey about commercial recycling. The 2nd survey is intended to go out in the next 30 days. Since last summer, 77 new sites have been added to the program.

The City continues to work on the program concurrently with this committee process. Updates to the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) equipment are planned that will allow for greater recovery of commercial sector cardboard and paper at the MRF. The program continues to expand with an increase from 3 days to 5 days a week for paper and corrugated cardboard collection in the Downtown Development Authority (DDA); another route has been added for recycling dumpster service; organics collection would be launched in the DDA this spring for the collection of food prep waste; 10-12 locations are ready to start. Clarifying questions were asked about pick-up times (downtown typically begins in early morning to avoid traffic) and when collection starts each day (DDA is 6:00 am; outside DDA is 7:00 am).

d. Ordinance/Rules and Regulations

- i. Development of the ordinance will be important and a key step involving City Council. The ordinance will provide the framework for future commercial recycling efforts.

e. Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI)

- i. An RFEI process is designed to bring the top solid waste service providers to the City with full information on their skills, experience, capacity and capability along with their initial input on key technical, organizational and business elements of the proposed commercial solid waste franchise. This is a market-informed decision making process that will validate assumptions that through a franchise approach, prices can be lowered for trash services, and increase recycling services with minimal change to net system costs. The RFEI information will be refined into a "Request for Proposal" for a recycling friendly solid waste service provider.

Question asked about what franchise will mean to small haulers currently operating in the City? The market share of dumpsters tracked throughout the City currently shows that one or two large haulers dominate services.

Question asked about a potential decrease in the millage? This will be reviewed as options are evaluated.

Questions asked about reducing costs for businesses? Will not be visible for those who get "free" City service, but should reduce overall costs to the city which would affect those who pay for services.

f. Branding and Outreach

- i. This will be an important part of the process once the program is determined. Must be packaged and communicated effectively to maximize participation and diversion. A focus group was held last week to gauge perceptions about what it means to be green, commercial recycling successes and obstacles, and how to market/package the program. The summary of the focus group is provided in the binders. Key results from the group: 90% of businesses are renters; 75% of the workforce live outside the City; partnerships are key, and events to enhance visibility of efforts.

Question asked about how waste reduction fits into education and service offerings? It is intended to be included with the packaging of the program.

Question asked about how any City efforts may tie in with County's Waste Knot Program? There will be collaboration between the two and potential ideas have been discussed, including a green certification process for custodial service providers.

g. Information System, Web, On-line Enforcement, and Technical Assistance

- i. The flow chart in the binder relating to Information Systems was discussed. The goal of the implemented system is to make it easy for business and employee participation, providing strong communications, response time, and customer satisfaction to build ownership and insure success.

h. Commercial Data and Maps

- i. Maps of five main business areas were provided in the binder. This data was collected by City interns using a GPS device to identify where public and private

dumpsters are located and determine service providers by location. This information is not complete and is being updated when new information is made available. Key comments included that many private haulers do not offer recycling services and many private hauler dumpsters are located right next to a city dumpster.

3. Questions

Q: How does this procurement process relate to the city's residential services—if the city franchises for commercial solid waste services, will residential services be impacted?

A: No, the city will continue to provide residential refuse and yard waste services, and Recycle Ann Arbor will continue to collect residential recyclables.

Q: If franchising occurs, how does this effect City staff—how many existing employees would be affected and would displaced employees be absorbed into other areas of city operations?

A: The city has only 3-4 full-time equivalents involved in commercial refuse collection operations currently, and those staff would likely be reassigned to recycling or other refuse services, or moved to other public works activities within the city.

Q: The City currently has rather strict requirements on the placement and screening of solid waste containers. Might these regulations displace any savings that the new recycling system might otherwise produce?

A: This is a valid concern and something that the committee will need to address for both existing properties and new construction.

Q: What about national retail chains that coordinate for waste services on a national or regional level for services? Could recycling requirements have a negative effect on businesses (chain or independent) wishing to establish themselves in Ann Arbor?

A: This will be addressed in ordinance language and allow for exemptions in situations where pre-existing solid waste contracts exist, but also require national chains to establish recycling services through such contracts. It is critical that the city's recycling requirements be developed for ease of implementation and use by businesses of all sizes and types.

Q: What about possible energy savings and use of alternative fuels and hybrids for refuse and recycling collection vehicles to align with the City's energy and environmental goals?

A: This is an important consideration and will be included in discussions with private haulers as part of the Request for Expressions of Interest.

4. Next Steps/Next Meeting

- a. Confirm next meeting date/time/location
 - i. Next meeting—Thursday, February 7th, 7:30-9:30 a.m.
- b. Review binder materials provided at today's meeting
- c. Bring questions and comments to next meeting

5. Adjourn-9:10 am.