

Solid Waste Advisory Committee Meeting

12/3/24

4:30 PM

Members:

Chair: Councilor Brent Todd	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Jeff Foote	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Judith Kurtz	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Jim Schlosser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Karen McNamara	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Kris Schultz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Eric Steinhauser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reagan Bissonnette	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carol Foss	<input type="checkbox"/>
Linda Zollo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Chip Chesley – General Services Director

Jeff Hoadley – General Services Deputy Director

Adam Clark – General Services Administration Division Manager

Angelina Zulkic – General Services Communications Coordinator

Sam Dietrich – CEO – Prairie Robotics (Remote)

Michael Paine – Belmont Region Manager – Casella (Not scheduled to speak, intends on joining us as we move forward)

At 4:30PM Chairman Brent Todd called the meeting to order.

He welcomed everyone in attendance, acknowledging the presence of new member Linda Zollo, and welcoming her to the group.

The first order of business was the approval of the October 2024 SWAC minutes. Councilor Schlosser made a motion and Councilor McNamara seconded. They were approved unanimously.

Chairman Todd then turned the floor over to Staff for an introduction of the evening's topic. Adam Clark noted the presence of Mike Paine from Casella whom will be attending SWAC meetings going forward. He is not scheduled to present this evening but his experience with automated collection rollouts in Laconia and Belmont will be valuable to the group.

The only formal agenda item for the evening is a presentation from Sam Dietrich, CEO of Prairie Robotics. Prairie Robotics is the manufacturer of hardware and software that the City intends to use in its PAYT compliance program to ensure PAYT bags are used when the transition to automated collection commences. By way of background, the SWAC had previously watched a webinar dedicated to using AI to monitor PAYT compliance in town's that are transitioning.

Mr. Clark shared that Mr. Dietrich will discuss;

- The technology
- Present pilot projects using AI technology in automated collection environments
- Testing with Concord PAYT bags with the cameras and software
- The City will need to adopt an enforcement protocol to reinforce compliance

Mr. Dietrich then began his presentation. He provided background that the firm is presently working with 20+ towns on recyclable compliance and the transition to using the technology in PAYT programs is in some ways simpler and logical.

There are presently two pilot programs ongoing with PAYT communities. One is in Middletown, CT and one in North Yarmouth, Maine. He discussed the various ways by which towns can see non-compliance on maps within the software. He then detailed that residents receive a postcard and a protocol is engaged.

This data then feeds into and informs "ground audits" to ensure future compliance. In the event, there are multiple infractions, the City will need to decide how enforcement will work.

Eric Steinhauser asked about issues related to privacy. Mr. Dietrich indicated that essentially the technology is automating what is already occurring which is an employee verifying that a PAYT bag is used when they collect.

Chairman Todd noted that it is his understanding that the cameras are focused on the material and not interested in anything beyond ensuring compliance of the program.

Mike Paine asked Mr. Dietrich about material in the hopper. Mr. Dietrich noted that the system tracks material that is already within the hopper so that it only flags new, non-compliant, bags.

Councilor Foote indicated in a future presentation he would like to see video footage showing what the cameras see.

Mr. Dietrich then pivoted to briefly laying out potential enforcement strategies. He indicated that the first offense is often mailed a postcard, indicating that non-compliance was observed. If that happens again, a follow up postcard is mailed. In the event of a 3rd occurrence, a "3-strike" letter is recommended to be mailed and the City will need to decide on its enforcement strategy. Options may include fines or non-collection. Fines are far more difficult to administer so non-collection is recommended.

In instances where there may have been tenant or resident turnover, it is recommended that a “reset” is in place and that compliance is observed in a rolling timeline.

With that the presentation largely wrapped up. Mr. Dietrich appreciated the committee’s work in prepping for the roll out and the committee indicated they may request another meeting to follow up.

Mr. Clark shared that he anticipates the committee having another meeting on enforcement strategy with Prairie Robotics and WasteZero (the City’s bag vendor) whom will be part of a boots on the ground surge, to address non-compliant hot spots if non-compliance is observed.

Mr. Clark then noted a few items on other business, asking Angelina Zulkic to provide updates on a recent poster contest to observe America Recycles Day and a recent video she had worked to put together with Concord TV and WIN Waste Innovations about the Waste to Energy (WtE) plant where Concord’s refuse ends up.

The winning poster artist was Leen from Evan Tanzer’s class at Beaver Meadow School and the poster is attached at the end of the minutes. The student’s class will be getting a pizza party in December.

The link to the video is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84m3M2Z6k-M>.

Next Chairman Todd spoke to what is anticipated for the February meeting. He indicated that he thought there would be value in the whole group getting a presentation on the economics of PAYT to underscore the importance of continuing the program including how it relates to compliance. He has asked Staff to look at the issue and looks forward to what is found.

Mr. Clark indicated Pilot Routes may be discussed further in February but may be pushed out to April.

Chairman Todd asked for an update on the SWAC endorsed textile proposal. Staff shared that after some research it was found it would not be allowed on the arena or Memorial Field properties due to some deed restrictions. The next step will be a presentation at the Recreation Policy Advisory Committee regarding the community centers. More to come on this.

Councilor Kris Schultz would like information on spearheading efforts to promote recycling in Alton Woods. Mr. Clark advised that Jaime Gaier would be a good place to start within the Hodge’s Companies and is happy to help facilitate contact if needed.

Mr. Steinhauer shared the State’s Solid Waste Working Group which Reagan Bissonnette and Adam Clark sit on as well is doing a lot of work which residents may be interested in.

With that, a motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Todd and seconded by Ms. Bissonnette.

America Recycles Day 2024 Recycling Poster Contest Winner:

