

EARTH ENERGY ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES SEPTEMBER 8, 2009

The Earth Energy Environment Committee meeting was held on September 8, 2009, at North Royalton City Hall, 13834 Ridge Road. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Committee: Chair Vince Gentile, Dan Kasaris, Mike Farrell; Council: Larry Antoskiewicz, Gary Petrusky, John Nickell; Administration: Service Director Kris Kamps, City Engineer Mark Schmitzer, Rubbish/Recycling Supervisor Nick Suhodolsky; Other Attendees: Don Harris, Anne Reinkober, Ivan Hack, Jr.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Kasaris **to approve the July 6, 2009 Minutes**. Yeas: 3. Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Recycling Program

Mr. Gentile announced that Mr. Kamps has the results from the survey he took during the North Royalton Home Days. Mr. Kamps said he had a good response to the survey however he did not receive a lot of surveys back in the mail from those residents who took them home with them. Mr. Kamps said residents were 50/50 on whether or not they wanted the bins for recycling. He said most residents were okay with using the bins as long as they are still able to use the blue bags for recycling if they choose. He also stated that residents did not seem happy with the city purchasing the bins. He said it appears that residents would prefer to purchase the bins themselves. Mr. Kamps said he spoke to the company who provided him with the cost to purchase bins for the entire city and said they are willing to give us the same price even if we purchase only 1,000 rather than 40,000 all at once. Mr. Kamps said he spoke with Mayor Stefanik and they have discussed approaching local vendors to see if they are interested in helping the city as far as selling these bins at a reduced city price. He said most residents would prefer that the city continue to focus city dollars on stormwater issues and the road program rather than purchasing bins for recycling.

Mr. Gentile said he spoke to Mr. Suhodolsky to ask what part of the 4,306 tons of our waystream is curbside recycle pickup. Mr. Suhodolsky said he cannot separate those items. Mr. Gentile said there are only 790 tons of the recyclable items that we are collecting curbside or are being dropped off. Mr. Suhodolsky said in most cities, yard waste can amount to 20 percent of the total.

Mr. Antoskiewicz asked if the amount of recyclables collected have increased. He said we need to keep residents educated and informed on recycling so that our recycling numbers continue to climb. Mr. Gentile said that he feels if we can get residents to support this program we can cut the cost of this program in half. Mr. Farrell asked what the current tip fee is that we pay for the landfill. Mr. Kamps said it is \$47.50. He said we just had an increase from the state. Mr. Farrell asked what the ballpark number is that we are spending on the recycling program. Mr. Gentile is said it is approximately \$600,000 per year. Mr. Gentile said if we were to set a goal to increase our recycling by 20 percent, we would cut our cost in half. Mr. Nickell suggested placing an ad in the paper to remind residents of when their pick up is scheduled. Mr. Kamps said he discussed this with Mr. Gentile and he worked with Mayor Stefanik and they came to the conclusion that although recycling information is contained in the bulletin that the city distributes, most residents do not retain that bulletin. Mr. Kamps said the Service Department is working on a calendar that will have specific dates on it including recycling pick up, Christmas tree pickup and other pertinent information. Mr. Kamps said his office is working hard on getting this information together so they can get it to a printer by the end of the month and then out to the residents. He said this is a friendly way to remind residents of recycling pick up dates and may improve the chances of higher participation.

Mr. Kamps said the nice thing about this calendar is that it will contain clips and pictures of different nostalgic events that took place in North Royalton as well as buildings and other items in the city.

Mr. Kasaris asked what the estimated cost will be for the calendars. Mr. Kamps said the cost will be approximately \$16,000 which includes everything from design work to mailing costs.

Mr. Farrell said we desperately want to improve our recycling numbers and asked if we have thought about trying to get fiber from the apartments and other places where there is a private trash hauler. Mr. Kamps said the apartment complexes in town are under contract with Waste Management for a certain amount of money. He said that adding more newspaper and fiber from the local businesses will show more tonnage from us, but what we are not taking to the landfill is what we are picking up at the curbside residentially. He said to just take their paper to make our fiber numbers go up, does not give a true depiction of what we are not putting in the landfill because their rubbish is still not in our stream. Mr. Farrell asked Mr. Kamps if he has talked to any of these apartment complexes. Mr. Kamps said he has talked to a couple of the complexes and they are currently under contract with private trash haulers. Mr. Kasaris asked if Royal Redeemer and St. Albert are with a private hauler as well. Mr. Kamps said he believes they are.

Mr. Farrell said he would like to talk to the apartment complexes and businesses that use private haulers prior to them signing their next contract. Mr. Kamps said he does not know if the city could handle this type of increase. He said he would rather go after the residential participation for recycling rather than picking up commercial recycling.

Mr. Gentile said if we want to attract recycling for the opportunity of its residual value, he feels we should have convenient drop off points that are available 24 hours a day such as a paper bin then hopefully expand from there.

Mr. Antoskiewicz asked if we would need another truck if we started to pick up from businesses in the area. Mr. Gentile said his point is that if we make bins available in strategic areas for volunteer drop off, it would allow residents who live in apartments to drop off fiber, aluminum cans, etc. He said if we purchase bins we are only going to cater to people who already recycle instead of reaching out to those who are not currently recycling.

Mr. Farrell said he feels we should not be recycling glass or plastic because it is costing the city money. He said if we increase the number of residents who recycle plastic and continue to maintain handling it the way we currently do, it will end up costing the city more money. Mr. Kamps said the more we take out of the waystream the less the tipping fees are. Mr. Suhodolsky said if we start discouraging residents from recycling certain items, they may stop recycling altogether. Mr. Antoskiewicz asked if we can make a follow up phone call to a resident who has been red tagged just so they understand why they were red tagged and what they can do to avoid it in the future. Mr. Antoskiewicz asked how many residents are red tagged per week. Mr. Suhodolsky said the number varies, but it does not happen that often.

Mr. Kamps said we deal with some local centers who do not take plastics. Mr. Farrell said there is a state of the art center in Akron that takes all recyclables. He said he would like to tour this facility.

Mr. Gentile said he feels we need to concentrate on what we need to do as a local government and a school district to encourage our residents to remove those items from their waystream and segregate them for a coordinated pickup in our recycling program. He said it is clear that if we want to cut the cost of the program, we need to increase the program participation. Mr. Farrell said we need to let the residents know how much this program is costing the city.

Mr. Farrell asked if a letter from Mayor Stefanik will accompany the calendar when it is mailed to residents. Mr. Kamps said they are probably going to put an article in the local newspapers to let residents know that this calendar will be mailed to their homes and will replace the bulletin that was mailed in the past and also that it contains information on recycling and other pertinent information. Mr. Farrell feels if a letter from Mayor Stefanik accompanies the calendar which states that this is the direction in which we are trying to move the city, the information in the calendar may have a bigger impact. Mr. Nickell suggested having a

couple of annual awareness campaigns beginning with the time the calendar is distributed and possibly one when school lets out.

Mr. Gentile said he would like to bring some closure to this subject and come back in October to look at the container upstart program for resident purchase and the calendar as both of these projects will have to be funded by the city. He said we will also have to come up with a type of plan for a container that works for the vehicles. Mr. Kamps will let Council know what type of container he thinks will work best. Mr. Farrell asked if we are purchasing these containers, or if we will sell these containers at local vendors. Mr. Kamps said we will probably purchase these containers then look to a local vendor to help the city sell these containers to residents. Mr. Farrell said he likes this plan because he feels if residents purchase these containers they are more likely to use them as opposed to just giving these containers to residents. Mr. Farrell said sale of these containers will be an indicator we can follow as far as the amount of participation we have in the recycling program.

Mr. Gentile said we need to make it clear to residents that they can use either the blue bags for recycling or purchase these containers for recycling, and that these are not co-mingling containers.

Mr. Kasaris asked Mr. Kamps when the calendars will be mailed. Mr. Kamps said he is hoping to have everything to the printer the end of the month.

Mr. Gentile said he is hopeful that we can get everything together so we can begin the public awareness campaign by January 1, 2010. He feels once this is in place and if we start seeing significant increase in numbers that is when we will have more reason to look a little deeper into the recycling program.

Mr. Kamps said he feels that by adding the bin program and educating the community we will increase participation and at some point may have to take a look at the program to see if a weekly pickup is sufficient.

Mr. Kasaris asked Mr. Kamps if the recycling bins were used during Home Days. Mr. Kamps said people were using them, but there were not a ton of recyclables placed in the bins.

Mr. Kasaris asked if the young man who is doing the recycling project for Eagle Scouts, is finished with that project. Mr. Gentile said he received an email from him which stated that he is going to be assembling these containers and staining them this weekend. Mr. Gentile said the project may be finished by the end of the month and the containers will be ready for use.

Mr. Gentile asked Ms. Reinkober if the schools have worked on anything for this program. Ms. Reinkober said a committee has been put together with representatives from each school building. She said they will be meeting within the next couple of weeks. Ms. Reinkober said she needs some direction from Council as far as what their expectations are as far as the schools distributing information, etc. Mr. Gentile asked if the schools can work to get the children to recycle and in turn encourage their parents to recycle. Mr. Kamps said that the city is planning to have some conversation with the school regarding the recycling program. Mr. Farrell suggested that we get some information to the schools as far as what the city would like to target.

Mr. Gentile said he received an email from a company called TerraCycle that has a program wherein they will pay schools for recyclables. He said they will pay them 2 cents for every 20 ounce plastic pop bottle, bleach bottles and even Capri juice bags. He said some of these items are not recyclable, but this company re-manufactures these items.

Mr. Kamps said the problem that the city has with what the school is looking at for a recycling container is that the city does not have a piece of equipment to transfer that container into anything that we presently own. He said it is not cost effective for the city to unload those materials by hand. He said we have to look at the container issue as far as what the school is using and what the city is using.

Mr. Antoskiewicz said he would like to see the schools make the students aware in their household when it is a recycle week so they can go home and let their parents know. Ms. Reinkober said we would have to see how this would fit into the students' curriculum. Mr. Petrusky suggested having parents sign a note for the students to bring into the teacher stating that their child recycled that week. Ms. Reinkober asked what the benefit would be to the child. Mr. Gentile said he feels we can tell the schools what we are looking for, but we will leave it up to them to decide how they want to promote that.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Material Purchases.

Mr. Gentile discussed how governments mandate purchases. He said part of the problem with recycling is demand in the market. He said governments have mandated a required post consumer recyclable content in certain purchases. He said if we look at requiring the city to go after recycled content on certain purchases, we will share this with not only the school district, but also surrounding communities, the state, and federal government.

Mr. Gentile said this will be discussed at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Kasaris to **adjourn the meeting**. Yeas: 3. Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.