

Sustainability Commission Meeting March 7, 2016

Meeting called to order at 5:39pm by Rick Hawksley

Roll Call: Rick Hawksley, Nadine Gomez, Ann Gilmore, and Theodore Newman.

ABSENT: Erik Zemljic

Staff: Suzanne Stemnock, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Guest: Mr. Bill Steiner, Portage County District Recycling Center

Mr. Hawksley made a motion to excuse Mr. Zemljic. The motion was seconded by Mr. Newman and was approved with a 4-0 vote.

Review of Meeting Summary Reports of December 14, 2015 and January 25, 2016:

No motion was made to approve the December summary since Mr. Newman and Mrs. Gilmore were not in attendance at this meeting, leaving less than a majority to vote for approval.

No motion was made to approve the January summary since Ms. Gomez and Mrs. Gilmore were not in attendance at this meeting, leaving less than a majority to vote for approval.

Public Comment

None

OLD BUSINESS

The Commission began the meeting by notifying Mr. Steiner that they have been discussing recycling by businesses in the downtown. Mr. Steiner explained the difficulties with bar and restaurant recycling due to large amounts of glass recyclables. Recycling glass can cause damage to the recycling equipment and the demand for glass has severely decreased. The possibility of a deposit for glass might need to be reinstated in Ohio. Cardboard is the most popular item that is currently being recycled downtown according to Mr. Steiner. Businesses downtown have the option for larger containers such as dumpsters for commercial purposes. With increased recycling downtown pick up days could become an issue based on higher usage during specific times of the week.

Mr. Hawksley explained to Mr. Steiner that the Commission was interested in surveying downtown restaurants and bars to get more information on their specific recycling habits. He further explained some of the Commission's ideas for questions on the survey. Mr. Steiner added that another area the Recycling Center would like to try to look into is increasing recycling at hotels in the County. It was agreed that in order to increase recycling downtown, buy in will be needed from the business owners and data would need to be analyzed after one year for efficiency. Mr. Steiner stated that The Recycling Center would be willing to assist the Commission to survey and educate the businesses.

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Next, the Commission asked Mr. Steiner about the sidewalk recycling containers downtown. They would like to increase the number of cans if possible. Mr. Steiner stated that a survey would need to be complete for locations of possible additional cans. The Commission had no further questions for Mr. Steiner.

The Commission briefly continued the discussion of glass recycling and the need for a resolution including a possible deposit. The Commission further discussed the survey and agreed that each member will come up with five direct questions to possibly be included on the survey for discussion at the next meeting.

Then the Commission began discussing the possibility of banning plastic bags. Mr. Newman shared information about Northampton, Massachusetts which recently placed a ban on plastic bags. Many items were considered by the Commission during their discussion, including the environmental impact of reusable bags and the recycling statistics of plastic bags. Mr. Newman agreed he would write a draft memo on the pros and cons of banning plastic bags for the Commission to review at the next meeting.

The Commission discussed the next possible Tree City Bulletin article and the topic of plastic bags. The members agreed that they could use information from Mr. Newman's memo to create an article at the next meeting.

Lastly, the Commission briefly discussed the current utica well reports and a map of injection wells in Ohio. The Commission confirmed that there had been no changes in Portage County since their last meeting. The Commission agreed there are still no real concerns at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING

April 4, 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hawksley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gomez and was approved by a 4-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 6:49pm.