



Bath Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Meeting of February 1, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Elizabeth Dingley, Lee Leiner, Peter Owen, Aaron Park, Paul Perkins, George Sprague, Brook Vail

Members Absent: Lou Ricciardone

Guests:

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Meeting to discuss education ideas for MDEP Waste Diversion Grant opportunity

Councilor Dingley has replaced Councilor Bauer on the committee, so introductions were made.

Discussion moved to the grant opportunity and how the City can best take advantage of it. George gave a summary of why increasing waste diversions from the landfill helped extend the life of the facility and helped the City defer future costs of disposal outside Bath. The MDEP grant is for municipalities to expand waste diversion efforts. The committee is generally supportive of applying for a grant to fund an education campaign to help Bath residents understand how to avoid generating wastes and how to divert their waste from disposal to recycling options.

One of the requirements of the grant application is to provide an estimate of the amount of waste that would be diverted because of the grant project. This is a difficult number to estimate and will require keeping data on recycling and disposal.

George presented some slides showing the who, what, where, when, why, and how of our recycling program to try to understand the target audiences and forms of diversion (reduce, repair, recycle, compost). Question – should schools be the focus of an education effort as kids are accepting of the message and bring the information home? Or should the effort be broader to encompass other age groups in the community?

Strategies might include community events, national “days” (Compost Day, etc.), and partnerships.

The discussion included surveying recycling bins placed curbside and leaving information for residents about inappropriate recycling. It will be difficult to get data on how much of the material collected curbside in Bath is eventually not recycled as that material is commingled with other municipal recycling. We do have accurate data on how much material is buried in the landfill and how much tonnage is collected for recycling in various ways.

There was some debate as to whether efforts should be concentrated on improving the quantity and quality of material collected through the single stream recycling program or on material collected for composting. And further if the composting focus should be on backyard composting or Garbage to Garden type services. Data on backyard efforts would be difficult to generate compared to the numbers provided by G2G. The long-term goal is to get the public in the habit of composting (in any way) in preparation for landfill closure when costs for disposal will increase dramatically. There is no current plan to eliminate the city-paid Garbage to Garden drop off kiosks, however, eventually costs of that program will increase beyond the budget tolerance. An alternative plan will be required at that time.

The committee recognizes that some members of the community are accepting of the environmental aspects of recycling/composting, but others are perhaps more interested in the economic arguments. Those in the environmental camp may already be avid recyclers/composters who don't need to be educated. Both can still be utilized in an education campaign. The messaging for school kids would be different.

Should a ban on landfilling organic wastes be implemented as part of an effort to increase diversion to composting? Paul provided some resources via email on bans in other cities. Portland has recently done so with a goal of diverting 70% of the organic waste by 2030.

There seems to be a consensus among the committee to concentrate on composting.

Lee will email the MDEP grant application materials to the committee members.

Next meeting: 4:00 PM Monday March 1 via Zoom

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