

CITY OF BATH, MAINE

450 Oak Grove Avenue
Bath, ME 04530

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Lee Leiner, P.E., Director

lleiner@cityofbath.com

207.443.8357

fax 207.443.8352

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

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

Members Absent: Peter Owen

Guests: Megan Pryor

Agenda:

- Discuss education ideas for MDEP Waste Diversion Grant opportunity

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as written.

Discussion moved to the grant opportunity and how to best use it for educating the community about composting in particular and recycling in general. George shared his screen view of the MDEP RFP, focusing on the proposed services and costs. He suggested that costs might be attributed to various subcontractors such as graphic designers or printers.

All still agree the best direction is a campaign around composting. Components would include mass mailings and social media.

Another idea is to create a compost bin at Waterfront Park and staff it during the farmers market operating hours. This would be a way to educate market customers about collecting and composting the scraps of the items they just purchased at the market. This would require volunteers to staff on Saturday mornings through the summer. The location would need to be both visible and discrete and not present any odor issues. Arrows could be placed on the sidewalk to direct people to the bin.

Further discussion on the use of Garbage to Garden. Questions asked – what will happen if the costs of the City-paid kiosks start to exceed the acceptable budget. Can we prepare for this to happen by coming up with alternative solutions? What is the upper limit of the budget?

Basic question related to the grant – how will the money from the grant be used to educate people about composting?

A suggestion was offered to modify the paper insert in PAYT bag packages to include composting information.

Another suggestion is to create neighborhood compost experts and site bins on various parcels around town to serve those who may not be able to have their own backyard bins or afford the Garbage to Garden service. There may be some pushback on this idea in the south end due to the presence of rabid animals. Someone advised some members of the public to not have food out that would attract wild animals. Mark King at MDEP may have some information to offer on this topic. The lobster trap wire bins can be secured against animals getting into the bins and proper operation of a compost pile should not attract animals.

Another suggestion to have posters within the grocery stores in the produce area to get information on composting to customers.

Some discussion of the program under way in Kennebunk/Kennebunkport. The towns received a grant to subsidize, in part or completely, the cost of backyard bins and will distribute them to interested residents. Educational materials were created for distribution as well.

Another suggestion was to have restaurants and local businesses sign on to pledge to reduce waste. This based on the Climate to Thrive program and would be a baby step toward waste bans. The pledge might include reducing use and distribution of plastic utensils and straws to take out customers or to compost all food waste. South Portland has created a menu of options for restaurants to pledge. Aaron indicated this was not a good time to ask small businesses to take on another burden while dealing with the challenge of COVID-19. And that the post-COVID-19 period will require reminding all customers to be conscious of their role in waste generation.

Lou suggested including some information on the tax impacts of the public not composting.

Suggested to have a council resolution supporting the education campaign and composting in general.

Suggestion to review whether composting was considered in the most current update of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The committee agrees to concentrate on modeling a program after the Kennebunk program of using the lobster trap wire backyard compost bins to educate Bath residents about composting. Lee will start to complete the application as best he can.

Next meeting: 4:00 PM Monday March 29 via Zoom