

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
UTILITIES & SEWERS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
JUNE 24, 2020 4:30 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

Present: Chairman James Trakas
Councilperson Kenn Synek
Councilperson Dale Veverka

Also Present: Councilperson Kathleen Kapusta
Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Finance Director Vern Blaze
Procurement Coordinator Dennis Zdolshek
Service Department Director Leon Karas

Chairman Trakas called the Utilities & Sewers Committee virtual meeting of June 24, 2020 to order at 4:32 p.m.

Chairman Trakas said we are a full committee, thank you very much. Do we have to approve Minutes or not?

The Clerk said they didn't have to approve the previous Minutes as they were done already at the Council meeting.

Chairman Trakas said I appreciate everybody being on board today. I intended today to be a little bit of an informational and perhaps a brainstorming session. I know that our colleague Councilperson Kapusta has raised some questions about the ability for the community's recycling program to go forward; and obviously I think we have all seen some of the rather substantial cost changes if we followed recycling over the course of the past several years. We know that some of the marketplaces have dried up for recycled goods. So, we are pretty fortunate to have Mayor Kurtz who understands a little bit about recycling in a lot of areas. Perhaps you can provide us with some edification as well Mayor.

We are particularly pleased to have Cuyahoga's Recycling guru and lady that makes it all happen and somebody who can help enlighten us and perhaps help us shape some policy along these areas. I think the goal is to try to get information out there about the current market conditions, about different options that we have for our programs, and I think we all saw the conditions in Brecksville a few weeks ago when they signed their new recycling contract and how to avoid an 1,800% increase in our recycling costs while trying to protect our environment and do the right thing by our community. It's kind of a free-wheeling discussion. I don't have a particular agenda nor a decision-making; obviously I just wanted to kind of kick this conversation off. If that's okay for everybody, and as a way to proceed, do any of the committee members have anything before we start?

Chairman Trakas said I thought we would start out with Diane. Diane, if you might be able to introduce yourself and talk a little bit about what you do and how you do it and maybe give us a little bit of a presentation about Cuyahoga Recycles. We would be happy to hear what you have to say.

Diane Bickett of Cuyahoga Recycles said I did prepare some slides so should I just go ahead and start into that? I will share my screen.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak with you. I have been speaking with a number of community Councils right now just because of the concern about pricing and where things are headed. My name is Diane Bickett. I am the Executive Director for the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, and I have been here at the District for 30 years. I have seen a lot of market shifts and things change over time. It's been a privilege to be here and help keep Cuyahoga County moving forward with recycling.

So, the district itself, I was just mentioning we are not too far from you. We moved to this facility here in Garfield Heights about 10 years ago from downtown; and we actually purchased our building a year ago. So, we are very small staffed. We have 7 of us including myself, and we are really here to help implement House Bill 592 which is Ohio's Solid Waste Law. Our solid waste management brand requires us to provide programs and services that help reduce reliance on landfills and increase waste production and recycling. Because we are small, we don't pick up the trash. We don't operate recycling facilities; but we do provide residents and communities and businesses with our information, expertise and programs that support sustainable materials management. Our website is CuyahogaRecycle.org, and our main number you see there is our recycling hotline. So, we are here to answer residents' questions, businesses questions, whatever about waste reduction and recycling.

To provide you with a recycling update, things have changed over the last couple of years, and the recent impacts are the China Sword policy and Covid-19. Starting with the China Sword, that's when China started restricting its imports of scrap materials from around the globe. They were a maker and user of many of our materials for decades, and overnight they put these restrictions in place that had a ripple effect all the way here in Cuyahoga County. Also Covid-19 has had some impact. I will just go through those.

The challenges with recycling, really free to jump in if you have any questions as I go along; but to understand the challenges, you have to understand sort of the impacts of what is going on with material recovery facilities. Those are the processing plants that handle all the curbside materials out of Ohio essentially. The four facilities that serve us here in Cuyahoga County would be the Kimble MRF in Twinsburg, Republic in Oberlin, Waste Management in Akron and then Rumpke is the other service provider. They have a MRF in Columbus and Cincinnati.

Your material goes to Twinsburg through our consortium contract that the district has arranged. We are taking that out to bid. We are actually opening bids on Friday for recycling processing services. So, it will be interesting to see where the numbers come in. Independence is part of our 10 community consortium. So, we combine that volume into one contract to get a better deal for

you. We anticipate pricing will be around the \$55 range for the best bid, which will probably be Kimble.

Chairman Trakas asked how does that compare to our current pricing?

Ms. Bickett said good question. So, you are currently not paying for recycling processing services. The equation you see on the screen, let me walk you through that to explain why you are going to see a charge. So, the current equation for recycling processing, because we have that co-mingled stream that you collect through your carts that we call single stream. You have to take it to a place to be sorted before it could then be sold. So, the current equation is we have the export limitations, mainly China and other overseas markets which are not taking the quantity of materials that they used to. That resulted in a supply glut which then lowered prices for the commodities like paper and scrap and plastic. Coupled with that, you have the recyclers themselves who are sorting and processing and baling this material; they have to meet a higher quality standard. They have to clean that material to a higher level so they could sell it, and that's increased their processing costs.

What you see here in the red is we track the blended value of that curbside mix, and that blended value of that curbside mix, after you deduct the cost of processing, meaning the cost to run it through the sortation line at Kimble, it means that the value of that material is now in the negative.

I will just go on to the next slide. That blended commodity value, 2 years ago before China, after you deducted the cost of processing which is about \$80 a ton to run it through the plant, it had value. That value, the \$27 or \$30 a ton value oftentimes like under our consortium contract the value of that net profit was split 50/50 between the City and the processor. Now that blended value in 2019, a year ago, went to a negative, \$53.72 a ton. That was around of September of last year. This is the reason why the MRF's have to now charge what is essentially a tip fee for you to take your materials there because they are losing money on everything that they run through their plant.

Things have changed somewhat. Because of Covid, actually a positive outcome of Covid is that the paper markets have started to rebound and because that's the biggest component of that curbside mix, we are seeing that the pricing is actually a little better. They are losing a little less money than they were just a few months ago. The reason for that is the mills have more demand for paper and cardboard. They are starting to pay more because they really can't get enough material to feed their mills to make boxes for Amazon and all the toilet paper and everything. They are starting to pay more to be able to draw that material.

Are there any questions about this? I know it's a little confusing if you are not used to looking at it.

Ms. Bickett asked so what does the future hold? As I mentioned, we see a brighter picture for fiber. Domestic markets for paper and cardboard are growing since the China Sword. We have seen many billions of dollars in investment in existing mills or new mills. PRATT Ohio has just last fall opened up a mill in Wapakoneta, Ohio; and that's consuming 1,000 tons of paper a day.

As a result of the China Sword we are seeing more domestic investment in paper and plastic markets specifically. So, that's good. Things won't be bad for hopefully too much longer. I think we will always still have to continue to pay a tip fee. I don't see the rebates coming back because you still have to sort and process that material; but things will not be as dire as they were just 6 months ago.

Secondly, recycling isn't going away. Recycling's importance to the economy and the environment has always been and will continue to grow. The chart on the right, I am not sure if you can see it with your view screen, but I got these numbers from the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries; and it shows some of the stats for just Ohio, the economic impacts of recycling to the economy in Ohio. Recycling employs 28,000 people with over \$20 in wages; and there are tax implications for your communities. The overall economic impact for recycling in Ohio is over \$5,000,000,000. That's why I think recycling is here to stay. It's not going anywhere, but we have to adjust and (inaudible) our thinking around recycling to take into the account the current economic situation.

Finally, recycling will always be popular with residents. The Recycling Partnership which is a national organization that tracks a lot of recycling data, they found through national surveys that 80% or more of the public nationwide supports recycling and curbside recycling.

What can communities do? We are kind of communicating to communities and officials. We all need to challenge the current narrative; and the current narrative in the media would be that recycling is collapsing and is in crisis and there are no markets. It's not worth doing if it costs more than landfilling. We challenge all of those statements. Recycling is not collapsing. We have an infrastructure here in the U.S. and globally to recover our scrap materials and put them back into the economy. The commodities that fluctuate, and I have seen many market dips and recoveries in the 30 years that I have been here. The markets exist and are growing here domestically; so most of the material that we collect through Kimble never went overseas. I don't think Kimble ever sent anything overseas. We have Midwestern markets that they sell into, and it's more cost effective because you don't have to pay to ship it somewhere far, far away.

I don't believe the narrative that recycling isn't worth doing if it costs more than landfill. There will always be a cost for waste management services. We pay to landfill material, and now we just have to adjust our thinking that we will probably be paying to recycle as well when it comes to curbside recycling.

As for cost saving opportunities, some of this may or may not apply to your community; but we are encouraging people for a shorter term, more flexible contracts when it comes to recycling. So, for instance, our consortium contract that we will be letting will be shorter. It's a 2 year contract with 2 one year options. So, not knowing where the market is going, it made sense to just contract for a shorter term. It reduces the risk for everybody.

Councilperson Veverka said question. This is related to cost. What I understand is depending on the quality of the recycled material, that could relate to the rate that you end up paying? True or

not? In other words, what you have to pay, if your material is cleaner and more properly sorted and cleaned, it makes the cost that you have to pay is less?

Ms. Bickett said it definitely does factor into the equation. The cleaner the material, the less the MRF has to pay to sort out all of the crap and stuff they can't sell. So, yes that does translate into lower costs. Generally speaking, the suburban communities like Independence might have a contamination rate of about 17% as opposed to Cleveland whose contamination rate was 65%. So, Cleveland's bids were unaffordable for the City. They got a price of \$150 per ton. You won't be paying anywhere near that because your material is cleaner.

What we don't have is a city-by-city waste composition study which makes it a little challenging to determine what the breakdown is for Independence as far as contamination, but it does factor in.

Councilperson Veverka said so the next question goes to the consortium then as far as the value to the consortium. If Independence does a better job of having clean recycled materials, could that possibly be an advantage for us not to be part of the consortium?

Ms. Bickett said not necessarily because the MRF's that will bid on our contract; they don't do city-by-city waste sorts. They kind of just do an average for Cuyahoga County minus the City of Cleveland. So, you probably won't be getting a better price if you go out to bid, and you might be getting a better price by joining the consortium because it's a bigger contract that we are letting, if that makes sense.

Councilperson Veverka asked now which communities are in our consortium?

Ms. Bickett said mainly the east side cities. So, those are the cities that are self-collectors like you are, meaning you pick up your own waste. So, Beachwood, University Heights, Moreland Hills, Pepper Pike; and of course, I can't think of them all. The cities that are still in the collection business, which are most of the cities on the east side are part of our consortium.

Councilperson Veverka said thank you.

Ms. Bickett said so other things you can do is just to educate, educate, educate. We have a lot of resources at the district to help you do that. We would hope that, we drive everybody to our website, CuyahogaRecycles.org. We haven't checked to see if your recycling information matches our list of materials; but it should match because we are trying to reduce confusion around recycling by having every city putting out the same information we are putting out which is the information here on the right about what should go in the cart and the proper way to prepare your materials for recycling. So, basically loose, not bagged in the cart, empty and rinsed containers and flattened boxes. When it comes to plastic, bottles and jugs only, not fast food containers and Styrofoam and everything else.

We have a toolkit on our website that I think Independence has taken advantage of before. We have customizable brochures and magnets and posters and things that you can use to educate your residents. We also encourage you to follow us and share our social media on Facebook,

Twitter and Instagram. We have speakers for schools and businesses. We have our Recycling Awareness Grant, and really our Communications Department which is Christie Snyder, your hometown resident, can help you with any kind of messaging you want. So, she can prepare green tips for you, help you put your calendars together, help with your web content and stuff.

I wanted to put this slide in here because you have the opportunity, and maybe you are doing this already, is to do some cart tagging which is cleaning it up at the curb. So, we have cart tags available in our toolkit which you can produce and have your crews tag any carts that don't have the right materials in them. So, educating people at the curb by saying you put scrap metal in your bin, and it shouldn't be there. Or you put your garden hose or clothing or you bagged your materials; that's really effective education. You have the benefit of being able to do since you do collect your own waste.

Some other district resources, Chairman Trakas wanted me to talk a little bit about business recycling services. Doreen Schreiber on our staff is our Business Recycling Specialist. She has worked with a few businesses in Independence already. A company called CSA, she has worked with them a lot. They are a near zero waste company, meaning they have a very effective composting and recycling program. C.B. Richard Ellis is another one she has worked with. So, happy to help you come up with a strategy to increase your businesses and make them aware of what we offer. We have a lot of upcoming webinars and things on waste reduction, including our workplace recycling seminar. We have a couple of bin sales coming up where we are trying to help people buy low cost compost bins.

Chairman Trakas asked Diane, have you ever worked with our local Chamber of Commerce, the Cuyahoga Valley Chamber by chance?

Ms. Bickett said I don't know if we have or not. I don't think so. We do a lot of mailings and stuff to chambers; but it's hard to gain their interest. So, I think if you were to put in a good word, they could maybe host Doreen on a Zoom for your businesses. That is the best way. We would love to partner with people like that.

Chairman Trakas said excellent. We will definitely follow up on that. Thank you.

Councilperson Veverka asked has there been any thought given to Kimble or one of the organizations taking a truckload and giving the community a score as far as the quality to find out which communities might need to focus on a clearer message to their people?

Ms. Bickett said possibly. We are including in our consortium contract the requirements to do an annual waste composition recycling sort. So, I think we can work with the successful vendor to try to figure out how we could do that. With 10 communities, it would have to be more of a visual sort; but I think we could come up with some kind of a way to do that. I think it would be valuable information to have to get more information about each community's recycling stream to see who has lower levels of contamination and how they are doing their education.

Councilperson Veverka said I know our Service Department has stickers on all of our bins pointing out what they need. I know we have gotten magnets along the way. So, in other words, there has been a strong effort here to try to provide the best, cleanest recyclable material.

Ms. Bickett said one great way to do that would just be to do a curbside audit. I know Akron did that with their local Keep America Beautiful affiliate. They had volunteers going and just kind of looking in the carts and doing a visual audit to kind of assess how they are doing with education.

Chairman Trakas said Leon, in terms of education I think Councilperson Veverka mentioned a few. Do you currently have any plans to have new information out there? Should we talk to our new Communications person about using social media and that type of thing? What are your thoughts?

Service Director Karas said so we haven't done any social media, but I think that would be a good idea. We talked about it here. Like I said what Councilperson Veverka stated earlier, we do put out the stickers on all the carts to kind of let everybody know what should go in the carts; and then we also a couple of years back we sent out a magnet that the residents have received. I think hitting the social media aspect of it might be a positive way to encourage the recycling and knowledge for the recycling. It's something we can look at.

Chairman Trakas said please do, and I thought last year or the year before there was probably an article about this in the Independence Post, maybe refreshing that a little bit and talking a little bit about how maybe current conditions, the importance of the cleanliness of the product. I was kind of surprised about the pizza box situation and how that contaminates as well as one lousy jar of mayonnaise could contaminate an entire facility and just maybe keep pushing that so that people have that appreciation. I know I was guilty of, we eat a lot of pasta around our Greek house; and I was just throwing away the spaghetti containers, but sometimes all that sauce gets all over the place and it's not good for the rest of the recycling. Maybe pushing that a little bit more talking about how to clean recycling and making sure we are talking about how to clean each and every item; that might be something that might be beneficial for us.

Service Director Karas said I agree.

Councilperson Veverka said and the other thing might be worth emphasis would be the cost, the basic idea that when we are able to provide clean recyclable material that relates to the cost that we have.

Ms. Bickett said Christie can help work with your Communications person coming up with those posts and also simply sharing. She posts twice a week to social media; so at least Facebook. Even just sharing the content that we put out would be one easy way to get that word out.

Chairman Trakas asked Mayor does that sound like something we would be willing to do?

Mayor Kurtz said absolutely. It's consistent with what our strategy is. So, Diane that was a very thorough presentation, and I thank you. I think it helps highlight some of the opportunities and also delineates some of our challenges that we are facing. I think the continued education is

going to be key because like the Chairman said, one little bad apple it messes up all of our programs. So, we should be a leader in that. I think Leon and his team did a nice job of being up front; but we can always do better.

Councilperson Veverka asked has anybody ever tried a spot check program of trying to provide some kind of a reward or recognition to people who are good recyclers?

Ms. Bickett said I think that's a great idea. You could be the first.

Chairman Trakas said I like that challenge. You want to lead right?

Councilperson Synek said Mr. Chairman, I have a question for Diane if I may.

If less materials are being recycled or finding a home in the aftermarket, more must be going into the landfill; but do you have any concerns about landfill space in Ohio? Maybe should we be concerned about if there's less recycling, the landfills are going to fill up sooner and rising costs because of that? Where exactly are we at in or around Cleveland? Where does the trash actually end up? Are those landfills likely approaching their end of life?

Ms. Bickett said that's a good question. So, when we updated our Solid Waste Plan a couple of years ago, we had to certify the availability of adequate disposal capacity. So, Ohio has on average 45 years of remaining capacity. Some have 70, some have 10; but all the landfills that we send the (inaudible) to, they have capacity. Recycling certainly does help. We divert about half of the waste that we generate in Cuyahoga County from landfills. So, that certainly has a big impact, and that includes organic debris; but most of the waste that, what Independence trash ends up is in the Kimble landfill in Dover. We also have the Republic landfill in Oberlin that takes most of the west side of the County. There are about 3 big landfills outside of the County that receive our waste.

Councilperson Synek said thank you.

Chairman Trakas said another question along those lines Diane, and we do really appreciate your time and all the work that you guys do over there. It is beneficial to everybody. What about product mix? In light of all that has been happening, some of the shifting markets, some of the costs associated with it. Do you have any advice on product mix? Would we be looking at changing our mix in any way, either adding or subtracting? Your thoughts?

Ms. Bickett said some communities, and when I say some communities, I am referring to Cuyahoga County. The whole situation is forcing some communities to revisit glass because there is a cost to sort that material, and it causes problems at the sortation plant. I don't want to see glass disappear. I would like to see that continue in our mix. I think that the list that we have, the 5 core items, cans, cartons, glass, paper, cardboard and then bottles and jugs, are the core list of things that could be marketed now, maybe not so much cartons. We will find out Friday when we open bids to see if anyone is proposing that we cut anything out. The list of plastics that we used to have has shrunk from ever since China Sword. We used to recycle that whole 1 through 7. We shortened the list to bottles and jugs to just capture what still has value.

That mixed plastic was going to China. We don't see a market for that now, so we took it off our list. I think we are pretty stable right now with the list that we have.

Councilperson Veverka asked so you are saying 3 and 7 are no longer worthwhile to deal with?

Ms. Bickett said yes, that's what we are saying. We tell people not to even look at the numbers on the containers anymore and just look at the shape of the container. So, we say when it comes to plastics, just put bottles and jugs in your container. Anything more than that is going to be contamination, and that's where most people are confused, what type of plastic is recyclable. We just talk about the shape of the container. If it has a neck, a bottle or a jug, it can go in. If it's the clamshell, no; if it's a berry container, no; if it's a plastic bag, no; so we are kind of steering people away from looking at those numbers because they never meant to convey recyclability. It was meant to convey the type of plastic the container was made from. People have gotten really confused over that coding system.

Councilperson Veverka said Leon, the current sticker that we have on the can, doesn't that specify 1 to 7?

Service Director Karas said currently it does because that's when we put them out; but our literature that we sent out has taken out the 1 through 7 and has gone specifically to the jugs. We follow the template that the County set forth. One of the things that we talked about is updating those stickers. I talked to Don Johnson over at Kimble, and he has visually looked at some of our loads that we brought in. He said for the most part we are very clean. We don't have a lot of issues with what we are putting out. The stickers came out, and the literature has come out since then. I know the stickers are still on the cans, but the plan is to update those. Currently, everything that we are putting out since the changes have been made is more focused on the template that the County has set forth for us.

Councilperson Veverka said maybe we need a magic marker, somebody to (inaudible) to the 1 and 2.

Service Director Karas said we have talked about just updating that portion of the sticker, but I think we are going to get a whole new sticker to put on those cans. That is what Tim and I have been talking about since last year.

Ms. Bickett said who knows. If your contractor is Kimble again, maybe they can accept the 1 through 7, some of the haulers say they can. We adjusted our list to be the things that every hauler can take. There are some company by company differences, depending on who they sell to. It does add to the confusion though.

Chairman Trakas said in the plastics area, is it PET & E and polyethylene are the 2 that we are recycling.

Ms. Bickett said PET would be the bottles and HDPE, the polyethylene which are like milk jugs and detergent containers.

Chairman Trakas said okay. That is a change, and that is a difference; and I think that is something we want to work on once this new bid comes in. Maybe then we will have a chance to get those stickers out sometime a little bit later on this summer because it's important to try to update that.

Diane, from your perspective, I was just kind of curious, does Kimble have local markets? How can we encourage the industry? When I worked in plastics and recycling first started in the early 1990's in earnest, it was big for me because my parents did it during the second World War. My mom took grease down from the butchers, and that turned into bombs that my dad got the benefit over in Germany. It was something that was very natural for that generation. This generation wants to recycle. I think maybe as things change, the product mix changes; but how about encouraging business to create recycle products? How do we help you? Do you lobby about that in Columbus, try to increase recycled opportunities or create better markets through Ohio based companies? I think this is a money maker eventually for Ohio businesses. I worked in plastics, and we sent polyethylene to a guy down in Dover, Ohio; and to replace concrete they made when you pull into a parking lot the little humps there and everything. They made that, and it was all based on recycled plastic. I was just curious, what is the ability to help nurture the marketplace and do we have an ability to help on that?

Ms. Bickett said you mentioned lobbying, and I think that's the best way. Leon and I are here managing this material after other people have made decisions, packaging decisions and things like that which don't support recycling or recyclability. There are some Federal pieces of legislation that have been introduced recently like this year that would support producer responsibility and using recycled content in packaging. So, those are things that have to change at the policy level to support recycling. Incentives that would encourage packaging, basically manufacturers and product designers, the Pepsico's of the world to use recycled content in their bottles and things would help drive everything at our end. Right now with oil being so low, and oil and gas being subsidized, recycling has a hard time competing because you have to pay to process it and get it back into the system.

Chairman Trakas said understood. What about participation? What is our participation rate, our residential participation rate in the recycling program and what can we be doing to increase that rate?

Ms. Bickett said I don't have that information. I think Leon would have a better handle on set out rates.

Service Director Karas said we anticipate that we are about 85% of our residents every week are setting out their recycling carts. Some residents are setting them out every week because we do have elderly, a portion of the population is elderly and live by themselves; but it's typically about 85%. We think it's a pretty fair estimate.

Ms. Bickett said that's terrific.

Chairman Trakas said that's pretty darn good, but obviously 100% is a better goal; but that's a pretty strong participation rate. Congratulations on that.

How do we get people who don't recycle to have an interest in it? What types of techniques have worked in the past, anybody?

Ms. Bickett said it's tough with a completely voluntary program. I think surveying those who are participating to understand why would be a good place to start. Maybe some kind of a survey through your City; and I think generally speaking people think it's just going to the landfill. You have to educate them that it's not true. Some people think it's too much work. You have to kind of speak to them where they are coming from to figure out what barriers they have to participating and try to address them that way. I think a survey might be the best way to try to do that.

Chairman Trakas said very good. Thank you.

Councilperson Kapusta said I think in my conversation with residents, and of course this would predominantly be seniors, perhaps one of the biggest barriers is just the confusion. Are they taking this now, are they not taking that? Old habits die hard, so for so many years we engrained appropriately so a certain pattern of recycling certain products, and now as that's changing people kind of get helter skelter on that.

Ms. Bickett said well we would love to come present to your seniors once things are back open. I think there is the feeling that things have changed a lot, but confusion is certainly there. The list hasn't changed all that much. I think once people realize that it's just 5 core items; and it doesn't have to be complicated, we are good at communicating that.

Councilperson Veverka said I think that one of the things that complicated things is we started our program very early. I remember Dottie Ornas and I driving around with the 6 gallon plastic pails that said "Glass." We had green glass, and we went through and got a grant and had a trailer. We had green glass and colored glass and clear glass and hoppers. My son rode on the recycle trailer. He was in charge of that for a summer; and I know that now we went to the combined materials together and then the numbers changed. So, going along with what Kathleen said, anything that we can do to make things simple and clear should be helpful.

Ms. Bickett said I remember Dottie.

Mayor Kurtz said I hired her as the first female Service Director.

Ms. Bickett said well done.

Chairman Trakas said we worked on a grant. We were one of the first recipients to get the recycling trucks in the State of Ohio when the Recycling Commission first got put together. So, Mayor Kurtz was always very pro-active on that. I can't tell you how many times Dottie called to change that, and everybody had to sign off on it. It was really good.

Well this has been a really good conversation. As a takeaway, obviously we have some issues with respect to communication that we have to do; and I think we have the tools necessary to put that together. On the simplicity of the program, I think that's part of communication as well just

to articulate what the program actually is and how people can participate in it. Maybe Mayor we can put some plugs on the Swift call on a periodic basis to talk a little bit about that and how it relates to Covid, keeping clean materials going into your trash helps to keep the spread of germs down as well. It's a stretch but maybe we can get a little bit going for our recycling program on there.

Is there anything else? Diane, we really appreciate your time, and Leon obviously as well. Is there anything else for Diane before we ramp off?

Ms. Bickett said if you go to our website under the Events page, we have a number of webinars coming up, including our Education Specialist Karen Miller is doing some Recycling 101 webinars. If you would like to host her for your community, I am sure she would love to; and it's easy for people to get on a Zoom meeting so she could do the presentation for your residents somehow if you want to host it.

Mayor Kurtz said that would be great. Diane, I am going to have our Communications Director who just came on board reach out to you. You can help her navigate the different opportunities so that we can communicate with our public, our residents and also make sure that we are helping them with this as they navigate some of these challenges. I will have her call you, and then when things start opening up, we would love to have your team out, members of your team out to help us with the educational process.

Ms. Bickett said great.

Chairman Trakas said that would be very, very beneficial.

The other thing I am thinking is we probably know the addresses where there is not recycling going on, right. Is that something we can note Mayor and perhaps be in contact with those residents to educate them on the program so we can further increase our numbers?

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, we are looking at software right now that would enhance our capacity, our capabilities and the goal would be to be in a position to monitor who is participating, who is not and have a very clear understanding of that through some of this technology. It's down the road, but the Service Director and his team has already asked about tying some software to an overall IT strategy.

Chairman Trakas said excellent. Anything else on the recycling topic which is the main topic for today?

Councilperson Synek said I would just add that I think Independence by and large is ahead of the game when it comes to recycling yard waste as far as we have yard waste containers and special pick up for yard waste; and I know the City does charge \$75 to buy one of those big cans. I think you provided the trash and recycle ones for free; so maybe implementation of the yard waste has been a bit slower because of that cost factor of those recycling garbage cans. Maybe we can run a 30 days special to sell more of those or something. We want to promote yard waste

recycle and perhaps running a sale if you will on the yard waste containers might be a way to do that.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman if I may, Councilperson Synek you know I agree we are trying to implement something that you suggested sharing costs on a variety of different public/private opportunities to engage the public to participate and also to have skin in the game. So, this may be something we will look, and we will present to Council the cost, the level of participation and then the cost if we were to do some type of sale because if you can get one for half price or something for a certain time period, that's seems to be the bell that we are ringing right now on a variety of different public/private partnership opportunities.

Chairman Trakas said great suggestion. Mayor, yard materials, are there materials that we don't recycle or don't compost that we may have a market for or an opportunity to, anyone have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Bickett said if I may. Food waste is sort of a new frontier. You are probably familiar with Rust Belt Riders. I know Mayor Kurtz is. They are offering a unique program where they will provide drop boxes for food waste on a subscription basis. They are working with Shaker right now. They have collection points for food scraps in 95 gallon totes. People subscribe to this service. They get a key to the lock on it, and then they able to take their food scraps to these drop off locations. I think it costs \$3 or \$5 a month to subscribe. That might be a way to encourage diversion of food waste and offer a new program without having any cost on your part. Maybe they could place some of these containers at your community center or something.

Chairman Trakas said that's an interesting idea. Our restaurants could obviously participate in that, and maybe that helps cut down on the garbage stream quite a bit for solid waste. Any thoughts on that Leon or Mayor.

Mayor Kurtz asked Diane is the fat cell in grease is that still being handled by most of the private restaurants, etc?

Ms. Bickett said I believe so, yes.

Mayor Kurtz said I know it's challenging for us. Periodically the Service Department has to manage some of the sewer lines that leave the restaurants. So, it becomes our headache over time. Leon I think there's some opportunities that we can look into.

Service Director Karas said we can examine them a little bit further and kind of research them a little bit. The other one I know. We have gotten solicited by a company called Simple Recycling. So, they pick up clothing items. So, it's like a once a week or once a month. They give you a bag, and you put your clothes that you want to get rid of in there. They recycle the clothing. We spoke with them a little bit in the past, but it was still new when they spoke with us. I think it has gotten a little bit more traction over the last couple of years. So, maybe this is something else we can look at to reduce our waste footprint.

Councilperson Kapusta asked is that like a subscription program?

Service Director Karas said you know what, when it was presented to us, I think it was, and Diane correct me if I'm wrong, but I think they were dropping off clothing bags. You would call them and request a bag, and they would drop them off, these plastic bags that you put your clothes in. When they would pick up clothes, they would drop off new bags. It would run through your city on your rubbish day; and then they would pick up what they saw and leave new bags. They would pick it up and then leave new bags. Then you would refill them whenever you wanted to. It was something that you had to call them for. They would just come to your neighborhood on a regular basis.

Councilperson Kapusta asked is there a cost though associated with it?

Service Director Karas said no there wasn't. I think at the time they were looking to offer us rebates as well based on the poundage or the tonnage of the material that they received.

Ms. Bickett said I think the rebate when away, but several cities in the county signed up for that. It is a citywide type program. It's curbside pickup. So, you give them access to your city, and they do the rest. There is no cost to the city.

Councilperson Veverka asked does the program take the material to recycle it or do they merely rag it out?

Ms. Bickett said Simple Recycling operates like a, they grade it like any textile recycler. So, they will ship overseas stuff they can't sell here; and then stuff they can't that's too dirty to sell, they will be like wiping rags and stuff.

Chairman Trakas said one constituent brought up an issue, I got an anonymous letter so I don't know who this person was; but they did ask a question that I thought might be worth talking about. We have our special pickups of furniture and couches and that type of thing. Is there any, I presume those get all put into the landfill at some point and time, is there any value to looking at those to give to Salvation Army or somebody who might be able to re-purpose these items? Have we ever talked about or thought about that? Is there any value to thinking about that?

Mayor Kurtz said it depends on the condition. Most of the appliances and those types of things, they have diminished by the time we get them. That goes to a metal scrapping recycling bin, and I believe that Leon had some sale of scrap metal recycling \$14,018 in revenue in 2019. We go through the exercise and the cost of putting that together, but we do offset some of the costs.

Chairman Trakas said okay, that's good.

Does anyone else have anything on this topic?

Councilperson Veverka said well I just have a question on the other end. This is related to reduce. Is there any way that when Dennis solicits bids for anything that the amount of packaging or related trash that is involved with getting certain products brought to us could be reduced?

Mayor Kurtz said most of those suppliers that we use are pretty efficient in terms, depending on size or weight of what we are buying. We recycle. A lot of that is already being recycled after we remove whatever we are purchasing.

Chairman Trakas said and I think Diane mentioned earlier the advent of Amazon being a much larger presence in everybody's community, particularly Independence. I know in my own life. I had to order a larger recycling container just due to Amazon and all the cardboard that we have. So, that is an issue, and it's going to be a bigger issue. I presume our cardboard participation has been way up over the past 3 or 4 years since Amazon has gotten more popular. There will be more of that for sure.

Diane, thank you so much for being with us today. We will follow up on all of these things. Terrific conversation.

So, that's kind of on the recycling. Leon, did you have anything else on recycling that you wanted us to be aware of or any ideas that you wanted to float by us?

Service Director Karas said I think we have covered everything today. If there is anything from Council for me, just let me know.

Chairman Trakas asked are there any other topics for the good of the order?

That being the case, I really appreciate everyone's participation. It has been a healthy discussion. Mayor, thank you for your ideas and energy. I look forward to seeing some of these ideas come to fruition here in our community and see what we can do to follow up on some of these very good suggestions that everybody had.

Mayor Kurtz said we always try to take advantage of some of the knowledge from the private sector and steal business from them, and our residents benefit from it. Whether it be recycle containers or roll off trucks or compost, it's fun to be able to share the private sector and find something that we can roll with. It's been good over the years. That's a good thing.

Chairman Trakas said if there's no other business to come before the committee, I would be happy to entertain a motion to adjourn.

Mayor Kurtz said Mr. Chairman, before you adjourn. Just by way of future meetings, we do have a few things. We are putting together some data relative to some of these common areas, the easements. You know we had a microburst come through a section of the community the other day, and we have been looking at trying to factor in some of these challenges the residents are experiencing with trees that are falling from the conservation areas into their yards. So, we are trying to determine a strategy and a policy that is fair. I have a meeting next week with Derek Schaefer. Some of the properties are still in Perry Homes' name, and so we are trying to sort this out.

That microburst that came through, I talked to the Mayor of Seven Hills today, and I told him I was driving on I-77 and it looked like a landscape trailer opened up their debris on their trailers

on I-77 when I went through, only to find out that when I started driving around the community, I saw these trees down. He highlighted to me that they had a number of the same microbursts that really took advantage of Seven Hills. They had a real challenge with the trees and downed power lines. I think the program that we put in place years ago where we took care of a number of trees, spent a lot of money. Fortunately, knock on wood, we don't have the power outages that they experienced in Seven Hills where these trees are close to houses and have decayed. Starting that process up again is still going to be a safeguard for the community going forward.

We will meet with you and go over an agenda item with respect to some of the drainage work that we are working on. We are looking at policies, and we are playing off of some of your colleagues' suggestions to see if we can come up something that there's a public participation. That's for the next agenda.

Chairman Trakas said we will try to put together a meeting sometime maybe this time in July if that's an appropriate time for you. I know we also want to follow up with Don on some of the projects and see how that was going. We were going to look at the financial situation if there was an opportunity to have other participation. I know a few residents have contacted a few of us about where we are on some of the projects. If that's okay Mayor, we will try to schedule that for July.

Mayor Kurtz said we will also update next week at the Streets & Sidewalks meeting. We will be updating on projects so maybe it will morph into a little bit of overlap.

Chairman Trakas said great, that sounds good. Thank you so much. Anybody else?

Well Vern you are going to have to put together a little plan to pay for all of this recycling here it sounds like pretty soon. I am not letting you off the hook either.

Mayor Kurtz said he unmuted himself.

Finance Director Blaze said that's why I do a lot of listening and very little talking.

Chairman Trakas said wise man.

Is there a motion to adjourn?

Moved by Councilperson Veverka, seconded by Councilperson Synek, to adjourn the Utilities Committee meeting of June 24, 2020. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business, the Utilities Committee meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

