



APPROVED 5/30/19

**City of Cleveland Heights
Refuse & Recycling Task Force**

**5/16/19 Meeting Minutes
Cleveland Heights City Hall – Council Chambers – 6:00 p.m.**

Ms. Constance Johnson greeted the group and asked if there were any questions or concerns, and did everyone have a chance to look at the minutes.

Ms. Susan Efroymsen brought up that she had thanked Mr. Tony Torres and his staff for all that they do, and asked if the minutes could be amended to represent her sentiment.

Mr. Tony Torres said Thank you.

Ms. Johnson agreed, and asked members of the task force who were unable to attend to coordinate with others and the city staff to check out the facility.

Mr. Jordan Davis asked about coordinating with Mr. Torres.

Mr. Torres said absolutely.

Ms. Johnson asked Mr. Joe Kickel if the minutes could be amended.

Mr. Joe Kickel said it will be in the minutes for this week.

Ms. Johnson asked if someone would make a motion to accept the minutes.

Ms. Susan Clement said I make a motion to accept the minutes.

Ms. Johnson said is there a second?

Ms. Efroymsen said I second.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. [Ms. Johnson waived the formality of a vote and accepted the minutes] then said let's move forward.

Ms. Johnson introduced Ms. Davida Russell, and asked her to introduce herself to the group.

Ms. Davida Russell introduced herself to the group.

Ms. Johnson asked the group to work together to share notes and information, and asked Ms. Carin Miller if she could assist in checking on meeting availability with the task force members as we approach the summer/vacation season.

Ms. Carin Miller said sure.

Ms. Johnson spoke about planning ahead and knowing which days people are available.

Ms. Miller said yep I'll take care of that.

Ms. Johnson complemented Mr. Torres and the staff at the Service Garage facility for all that they do, and expressed how impressed she was.

Mr. John Blackwell echoed the sentiment, but stated that there does appear to be a sense of urgency with state of the equipment.

Ms. Johnson agreed, and asked Ms. Cathi Lehn if she had anything to say.

Ms. Cathi Lehn said I don't have anything.

Ms. Johnson asked if anyone else wanted to share their impression of the visit.

Ms. Efroymsen agreed that she was impressed, and asked if the city could provide her with a list of the current refuse equipment, and a wish list of replacement vehicles and costs.

Ms. Johnson asked for clarification.

Ms. Efroymsen said like a chart.

Ms. Johnson confirmed that Ms. Efroymsen was looking for a vehicle inventory, and replacement costs.

Ms. Efroymsen explained that she wanted to see the dollars and cents of the equipment costs.

Ms. Johnson said spoke about the fact that there are a lot of options, and asked Mr. Kickel if he could provide a list.

Mr. Kickel said that he can put a list together.

Ms. Johnson asked how soon.

Mr. Kickel said probably by the end of next week.

Ms. Johnson said that'll be soon enough.

Ms. Efroymsen asked about if the city switched to automated collection would the workers compensation rates go down?

Mr. Torres said yes.

Mr. Kickel said it can be hard to know an actual number.

Ms. Efroymsen said she would like to see what the workers comp savings would be compared to the costs of switching to automation.

Ms. Johnson said were talking about one option, but there are other options on the table.

Ms. Collette Clinkscale spoke about how the current method has a lot of injuries related to physical work, and with automation we would expect for those numbers to decrease significantly based on removing physical work from the equation.

Ms. Miller asked if we have any cities that could provide data on how much their workers comp rates decreased.

Ms. Diane Bickett said there are a number of municipal haulers that have made the switch, and that information should be available.

Mr. Kickel informed the group that one of the guest speakers will be Mr. Joe Beno, Public Works Director for the City of Lakewood, and that he can probably speak to the decrease in their workers comp claims.

Ms. Johnson asked if there was any other old business.

Ms. Efroymsen talked about the Transfer Station, and how valuable is it to the city, and can we attach a value to it.

Mr. Torres said that without having the transfer station it would cost significantly more, and all of the trucks would have to haul directly to the landfill or another transfer station facility.

Ms. Kelly Menaker asked for clarification about what the city pays to dump refuse through the transfer station, and what it would cost without the transfer station.

Mr. Torres confirmed that it would be about double the cost.

Ms. Menaker clarified the rates with the transfer station it would be \$22 to \$25 dollars per ton, without \$40 per ton.

Ms. Efroymson asked how many tons does the city process.

Mr. Torres said about 14,000 tons per year, and about 55 to 75 tons per day.

Ms. Clinkscale commented about the fact that we do not have to drive all of our vehicles to the landfill.

Mr. Blackwell asked if the figures include the landfill charge.

Mr. Torres said yes.

Mr. Kickel introduced Ms. Diane Bickett the Executive Director of the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District.

Ms. Bickett gave a presentation on the State of Refuse and Recycling in Cuyahoga County. [Power point slides available on Refuse & Recycling Task Force webpage][Audio recording available on RRTF webpage (time:19:35-49:35)]

Mr. Davis asked about the new paper mills and what they'll be consuming and producing.

Ms. Bickett said they'll be consuming recycled paper pulp for new recycled paper.

Mr. Blackwell asked about the countywide ban on plastic bags.

Ms. Bickett said if all goes according to plan the County Council will approve the ban by the end of May and it will go into effect by October 1, and once in effect you will not be able to get carry-out plastic bags at any retailers in Cuyahoga County.

Mr. Blackwell asked about plastic garbage and recycling bags.

Ms. Bickett said that store bought bags will still be legal to use, just not carry-out bags.

Ms. Clement brought her recyclables and asked if an item was able to be recycled. She also brought up bagging recyclables versus trash, and how recycling worked when she lived in Toledo.

Ms. Bickett was not familiar with how they recycle in Toledo.

Ms. Menaker asked about yardwaste.

Ms. Bickett said that most communities do that in house.

Mr. Blackwell asked about effectively communicating recycling requirements.

Ms. Bickett spoke about the different information outlets and marketing tools that the county utilizes.

Mr. Blackwell said that we all need to work together with the county to get the message to our residents.

Ms. Bickett responded that the best way to deliver the message is at the curb by leaving materials that are improperly placed at the curb.

Ms. Menaker asked about how does education work when a community changes its collection operations.

Ms. Bickett explained how most private haulers work.

[Resident Question] how do cities address improper recycling and refuse placement with regards to rental properties.

Ms. Bickett said changing your operation is always a challenge.

[Resident Question] what about apartment buildings.

Ms. Bickett said that is a different challenge and they probably would not have carts. Typically most cities do not empty trash for apartment buildings since they are commercial businesses.

Ms. Johnson talked about how the task force is going to have to make a recommendation, and how the task force can also play a role in recommending an education program.

Ms. Efroymsen asked about anticipating a change in costs based on the current market and future trends.

Ms. Bickett said yes, and spoke about how the cost has gone from not having to pay to take material to Kimble to now paying to take material to Kimble, and now they're asking for \$45 per ton.

Ms. Efroymsen asked if Ms. Bickett feels that the price will increase or decrease as the market opens up.

Ms. Bickett said that for at least 3 years or more cities will have to pay to recycle.

Ms. Russell asked Mr. Torres how many trucks does he have?

Mr. Torres responded that he has 5 front load trucks for trash, 2 front load trucks for yardwaste, 2 side load and 1 front load for recycling.

Ms. Russell asked Mr. Torres how many employees does he have?

Mr. Torres said that he has 26 employees.

Ms. Bickett talked about how the city is at a critical juncture based on state of the city's equipment, and that there is low interest loans available to government entities, and that she recently used a loan from the Ohio Water Development Authority for the new Solid Waste District office building. She also talked about how she believes the most recent cost for Cleveland Heights to convert to automation is about \$5 Million.

Ms. Russell talked about comparing the costs for new equipment versus privatization.

Ms. Bickett said I'm sure the city has those numbers and will share them with you.

Ms. Miller confirmed that it is a topic for a later date.

Mr. Davis said the minutes from the last meeting will have many of the numbers that you are looking for.

Ms. Menaker asked about the \$5 Million for the current number of households being serviced, and not including apartments.

Mr. Torres said yes, we service about 15,000 units, and about 110 of 220 apartments.

[Resident Question] with regards to carts and how do cities handle people who have a lot of trash, can additional carts be purchased.

Ms. Bickett said that most cities provide one cart for trash and one for recycling, and another option would be a pay as you throw process where people are charged based on volume (e.g. single person might have a 64 gallon refuse cart and pay a certain price for it, and a family of eight might have two 96 gallon refuse carts and pay a different price for them).

Mr. Kickel made request to move to the public comments section to include public questions.

Ms. Johnson agreed.

Ms. Efroymsen asked if the residents would please give their names.

[Resident Question] why are nos. 3-7 plastics are not recyclable, and why make products with those types of plastic if they're not recyclable.

Ms. Bickett agreed, and said that it is an issue of manufacturers not communicating with the recycling processors to make products that can be recycled.

Mr. Blackwell commented that the reason they use 3-7 is because they have specific properties and do things that 1 and 2 plastics cannot.

[Resident Question] are there any communities in the county that charge fines for improper recycling.

Ms. Bickett said that the only community that did fine residents was the City of Cleveland.

Ms. Clement talked about Toledo and a point system that they had in place.

Ms. Bickett said that there was a non-profit doing that for a while but they're no longer around.

Ms. Clement talked about the volume of recycling for a single person home versus a larger family home.

Ms. Efroymsen asked about how the carts work during Holiday's when people have large family gatherings.

Ms. Bickett said usually people will place additional bags around the carts and the operator usually has to get out and pick-up the bags.

Ms. Efroymsen expressed concern about pay as you go with large families.

[Resident Question] what's the cost of recycling being rejected at the municipal recycling facility (MRF) and material being sent to the landfill.

Ms. Bickett said that the cost of disposal is built into the price per ton at the MRF.

[Resident Question] can Ms. Bickett's presentation be posted on the RRTF webpage.

Ms. Johnson said yes.

[Resident Question] is the city considering switching to automated collection, and how close is the city to making such a change.

Ms. Johnson commented that we are in the very early stages of looking at this, and looking at other options as well.

[Resident Question] how are we advertising how to recycle correctly.

Ms. Clinkscale said that it is on the City's website, it's in the focus magazine, and promotional materials are placed throughout the city.

Ms. Miller commented that part of any recommendation is the need for an educational program, including town halls.

Ms. Clinkscale commented that there's also a Refuse & Recycling Task Force webpage on the city's website and all of the information is posted on there.

[Resident Question] how will the city charge for this.

Ms. Clinkscale commented that residents are currently billed on their utility bills, and that it has been the easiest and cost effective way to bill.

[Resident Question] comparing the charter review commission's use of online surveys, and public meetings at the community center and inquiring if the RRTF will do the same.

Ms. Johnson commented on behalf of herself, that she's still learning about the different processes out there, and that yes it will be important for the public to be involved.

[Resident Question] commenting about making a decision and not including the public and that the resident would not have known about the meeting if their neighbor did not tell them about it.

Ms. Menaker commented that task force is making a recommendation to City Council and that she heard about the task force through an email that was sent to all of the residents, and that she is not involved in politics but felt passionate about this matter.

Ms. Johnson commented that the task force needs to be fully informed and fully educated on the matter before going before council and the public with a recommendation, and that's what the members are doing right now. She also stated that it is important for residents to put the word out about the task force and to share with their neighbors about the website.

Mr. Kickel commented that the city will start having a section in the bi-weekly newsletter about checking out the latest news from the RRTF.

Ms. Efroymsen commented about a letter from a resident and how it addressed some of the pros and cons of utilizing carts. She also commented that it's important to not only have a discussion, but that it should be an informed discussion.

Mr. Davis commented that the task force is not only about dollars and cents and utilizing the least expensive option, there are multiple factors involved when making a decision in our community, and sometimes it might not be the least expensive option but that's why we are here having this conversation.

Ms. Russell asked that we should also engage the employees to solicit their input.

Ms. Johnson commented that Ms. Clinkscale and Mr. Torres are a valuable resource to the task force, and how important it is that everyone have an opportunity to take the tour of the service garage facility.

Ms. Russell commented that if we are fact finding we want to get into the nitty gritty of the work that people do.

Ms. Miller said that we are near 7:30 p.m. and asked if there was one more question.

[Resident Question] did you say that wax milk cartons are recyclable.

Ms. Bickett answered yes, they are on our approved list.

[Resident Question] when was that approved?

Ms. Bickett said for about three years now.

Ms. Bickett promoted the Cuyahoga Recycles website.

Ms. Johnson thanked Ms. Bickett for her presentation and for her time presenting to the task force.

Councilman Craig Cobb addressed the public informing them that before any decisions are made by council that public meetings will be held, and that the task force still has a great deal of work ahead of itself.

Ms. Miller asked about the next meeting.

Ms. Johnson asked is the group bringing materials, or is Joe providing the materials.

Mr. Kickel commented that if everyone brings something to the meeting about some challenges, solutions, etc. it can make for an interesting meeting.

Ms. Johnson encouraged the group to ask questions, and to bring their questions to the meetings.

Ms. Efroymsen made a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Miller seconded the motion.

Ms. Johnson waived the formality of a vote and adjourned the meeting.

