

Geneva Green Committee Meeting Minutes, Nov. 17, 2020

Present: Richard Cox (co-chair), Sara Britting, Anne Hoyt (co-chair), Dan Belliveau, Jan Regan (council liaison), Michael Amadori (Hobart & William Smith Sustainability Manager), Jacob Fox, Jennifer Grant (Town of Geneva Sustainability Committee chair), Larry Campbell

After discussion of the city's licensing contract with waste haulers, last revised in 2018, with a focus on encouraging recycling and composting and reducing the city's contribution of trash going to the Ontario County Landfill, the following items were given to Councilor Regan to take before City Council:

- The City of Geneva shares the County and State goals of reducing that part of the waste stream that must go to a landfill, and increasing that part of the waste stream that can be composted in the city composting facility, re-used and/or recycled.
- To that end, the city encourages haulers to create fee schedules that reduce the cost to their clients the more they compost, recycle and the less they send to the landfill. Fees should only be charged when a tote is set out for pickup, and there should be higher fees for trash pickup than for recyclables pickup.
- The NYS Solid Waste Management Act of 1988 requires that all State residents follow the following steps in reducing and diverting solid waste from landfills: compost, reduce, reuse, and recycle. Given this important mandate to reduce and divert solid waste from landfills, it is required that trash haulers licensed in the City of Geneva will perform the recycling function as part of State law.
- As the city's new composting operation will open this spring, questions remain should the city provide the means for compost collection or should this be a mandated part of the waste haulers' contract or should the city contract with an outside group such as Blueprint's Growing Cycle for compost pick-up?
- The previous contract calls for all City of Geneva trash haulers to ensure that every customer has a clearly marked, covered recycling container. Can we include the mandate that haulers should provide a flyer to each of its existing residential and commercial customers containing a list of the materials that are approved for recycling by Ontario County and New York State, and update that list if and when recyclable materials change.
- Further questions to explore: is there a way to reduce the number of trash trucks on city streets, for example, by dividing the city into quadrants with each hauler "leasing" a quadrant, so that competing companies are not running trucks five days a week on the same streets?

Recycling old mattresses – Jacob suggested a joint city/town pickup of old mattresses to be taken to a recycling facility in Buffalo. The city could either have a drop-off site for collection and/or do a pick-up service. It would require advance publicity and perhaps fees for pick-up and disposal. May when H&WS students move out of their apartments and leave for the summer would be a good time.

Community Choice Aggregation proposal, a means to purchase electricity for everyone in the city from the same provider, similar to the arrangement the Town of Geneva has with Rocktricity. Jacob suggested their representative, Sue Smith, do a presentation for the committee or city council. Previously, a problem with NYSEG meant the program would have to be opt-in, but that issue is now resolved, so the program could be opt-out. (In an opt-out program, all city residents would be automatically enrolled unless they choose to opt-out, thereby increasing the number of participants and thus the potential savings.) Electricity is purchased in from “green” infrastructure.

Joint Town Sustainability Committee/City of Geneva Green Committee meeting February 4th.

Proposed that the two groups meet twice a year to put together some joint projects. Jacob is our liaison to the Town. The town committee meets every other month at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month. A joint meeting is tentatively planned for Feb. 4. Sara suggested reviewing the county’s Strategic Plan together.

Meeting with Carla Jordan (Director, Ontario County’s Office for Sustainability and Waste Management), Regina Sousa (Ontario County Senior Planner), Sara Britting and Anne Hoyt (both of the Geneva Green Committee) in December, 2020, regarding using county funds to promote lake-friendly practices in the City of Geneva

- \$35,000 was budgeted in 2020 to help municipalities meet sustainability goals through waste diversion; 2021 budget is \$42,000
- Maximum grant size per municipality is \$5,000. Each municipality is allowed only one request per grant year.
- The City of Canandaigua used the money for mailers to residents that included refrigerator magnets with the county sustainability program’s website. East Bloomfield used the funds to purchase recycling containers and composting buckets which are available for all residents. East Bloomfield’s grant was for \$800 for 1600 residences.
- Whatever we ask for, it would have to relate in some way to reducing wastes. For example, urging residents to adopt lake friendly practices by planting native species would not qualify, but urging residents to not use synthetic pesticides would if the campaign includes information on how to dispose of unused pesticides.
- Carla and Regina would provide design services and research on costs
- Applying for the grant would require a letter from a city official (city manager or mayor). Carla would present the request to the county’s Planning and Environmental Quality Committee

Meeting with Jacob Fox (CEO of Closed Loop Systems, LLC, which has built and will operate the city’s Resource Recovery Facility), Sara Britting, and Anne Hoyt (both of the Geneva Green Committee) 12/31/2020, with regard to the Resource Recovery Facility on Doran Avenue that Jacob will be operating on the city’s behalf

- Need for a public education campaign on waste diversion over the next 3-5 years
- 54% of the waste stream is biodegradable and could be composted
- Ontario County has funds for this purpose, diverted from landfill profits

- A Waste Audit sampling businesses, institutions, and residences would help ensure the Resource Recovery Facility's success. Jacob suggests Impact Earth doing the waste audit.
- An audit would find (Jacob predicts) a savings in the waste-hauling bills of as much as \$100,000/year for Geneva's waste hauling customers when their biodegradable "trash" is diverted to the RRF. The savings would be more for customers who bring their biodegradables themselves to the RRF rather than have them picked up by a hauler.
- Ways to encourage participation: require waste haulers to distribute and pick up "green" bins for composting (provided with county money).
- Other plans for the RRF for later implementation: include recycling bins (they would need to be monitored to ensure that folks only drop off items that are recyclable) and Jacob's plan to acquire a hammer-mill to process glass (currently not a viable recycling material) to sell to pavers as road aggregate.