

MINUTES

CITY OF FORT COLLINS • BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



AIR QUALITY ADVISORY BOARD

TYPE OF MEETING – REGULAR

August 20, 2018, 5:30 – 8:00 pm
Colorado River Room, 222 Laporte Ave.

1. CALL TO ORDER

5:32 pm

2. ROLL CALL

- List of Board Members Present

- Karen Artell
- Greg Clark
- Jim Dennison
- Harry Edwards
- Mark Houdashelt, Chair
- Matt Tribby
- Chris Wood
- Vara Vissa, Vice-Chair

List of Board Members Absent

- Arsineh Hecobian

- List of Staff Members Present

- Cassie Archuleta, Staff Liaison
- Caroline Mitchell, Lead Waste Reduction and Recycling Specialist

- List of Guests

- Mariah Wang, Student at CSU

3. AGENDA REVIEW

- In response to pre-meeting emails, the 100% Renewable Electricity Resolution will be pushed to the September meeting. Text for the Resolution will be released in early September so the AQAB will have the opportunity to vote on a recommendation before it goes before City Council. Instead, Board Chair elections will be held, as Mark Houdashelt is stepping down, effective today.

4. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- N/A

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5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Harry moved and Chris seconded a motion to approve the July 16, 2018 minutes as revised. Motion passed, 6-0-2.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- N/A

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Organic Waste

Caroline Mitchell, Lead Waste Reduction and Recycling Specialist, presented a summary of the City's current and planned strategies regarding organic waste.

Background

- Organic waste is anything that can break down in the landfill and primarily consists of food scraps and yard trimmings (paper scraps fall under food scraps). An enormous quantity of waste is compostable.
 - 2016 – 2017 *residential waste* characterization audits indicate that recyclables make up 35% of all waste, yard trimmings make up 21%, food scraps and wet paper make up 26% and trash makes up 18%. (Based on actual sorts of hauler trucks.)
 - 2016 – 2017 *restaurant waste* characterization audits indicate that food scraps and wet paper make up 68% of all waste, recyclables make up 21% and trash makes up 11%. (Based on actual waste sorts at local restaurants.)
- Organics were initially identified as having a high impact on 2020 CAP Goals, but they have fallen in priority due to the following:
 - Further analysis has shown that fewer food scraps are being generated in Fort Collins than initially thought. Originally, national statistics were used for food waste calculations and modeling, but local analysis has shown Fort Collins' numbers to be lower.
 - The timeline for implementation of community-wide organics diversion is likely to take place after 2020.
 - Market forces have been more favorable in renewable energy markets than in waste markets, which has shifted priorities slightly. Several valuable opportunities in the renewable energy sector emerged since the original CAP goals were set.

Timeline and Path Forward

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- In 2013, Fort Collins adopted the Road to Zero Waste Plan.
- In 2015, the CAP Framework was laid out.
- In 2016, the Community Recycling Ordinance was adopted:
 - Required large grocers to subscribe to food scrap collection by the end of 2017; this has been met with 100% compliance.
 - Required all haulers to offer opt-in seasonal curbside yard trimmings collection.
 - Required all haulers to offer recycling services to apartments and businesses by 2020.
 - Initially, the ordinance included organics collection from residents and restaurants, but this portion of the ordinance was delayed as a more in-depth analysis was required.
 - Based on this need, the City analyzed organics collection from single-family homes and restaurants to determine how much organic material was being collected. Staff also discovered that a key driver in successful waste management was universal and bundled service vs. opt-in services.
 - Research also showed that a key driver for cost of service was the distance to the end-processor. As of 2016, the only destination for organic waste was Keenesburg, which was not a cost-effective option.
 - City Staff also performed peer communities research, looking at 25 communities, and found that some form of organics collection was very common residentially.
 - Ultimately, organics recycling was put on hold because the distance to the end processor was so great.
- In 2017, the Community Organics Recycling Project was initiated.
- From 2015 - 2018, the Regional Wasteshed Planning Project, a collaboration between Larimer County, Loveland, Fort Collins and Estes Park, has been underway. The goals of the project include:
 - The accurate characterization and quantification of waste produced in this region,
 - Gaining an understanding of public opinion regarding waste/recycling issues,
 - Regional collaboration to achieve waste reduction goals and identification of common infrastructure needs,
 - Performing a thorough assessment of available options in preparation for the closing of Larimer County Landfill in 2025.

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- Draft recommendations for a new Regional Wasteshed Plan could be approved by the end of the year. The path forward will be centered on:
 - Infrastructure – including compost sites for yard trimmings and food scraps, a construction and demolition processing facility, recycling facility, central transfer station and landfill.
 - Policy – (at the County level) including a yard trimmings landfill ban and more rigorous flow control (single-stream recyclables, etc.).
 - Collection – options will be further considered by the community and City Council through the continuation of the Community Organics Recycling Project.
- In 2019- 2020, Community Organics Recycling Project v.2 will begin.

Other Ongoing Projects

- Fort Collins Environmental Services has implemented the Save Your Food campaign to prevent waste by educating citizens on smart shopping, storage and preparation of their food. The City also facilitated a compost bin sale at which 200 backyard compost bins were sold to citizens at discounted prices. The Environmental Services Department sponsors a year-round Leaf Exchange Program and provides backyard composting resources at www.fcgov.com.

Discussion

- Greg asked if the City knows the quantity of food scraps that are collected from grocery stores.
 - Caroline stated that the report for the first half of 2018 is not yet available but will be soon.
- Vara inquired if grocers participated in composting prior to the adoption of the Community Recycling Ordinance.
 - Caroline responded that a few grocers composted prior to the ordinance (King Soopers, Walmart) and acted as good models for other stores after the implementation of the ordinance. Alpine Waste from Denver collects from these stores.
- Mark asked if grocery waste ended up at the Larimer County landfill prior to the ordinance.
 - Caroline responded that it was either going to Larimer or the landfill in Ault.
- Mark stated that his primary motivation for generating a memo to City Council to accelerate the implementation of an organics recycling program was based on his understanding that the logistics of food scrap collection and recycling is very complicated. He expressed frustration for the lack of effort put into logistics planning.

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He noted that restaurant owners will need a concrete plan to efficiently recycle food waste and that understanding a time scale for implementation will be beneficial for them.

- Caroline replied that she understands Mark's concern regarding the gap in the organics recycling path and is working to strategize with her team to make sure composting is enacted as soon as possible in a way that is reasonable for the community. The next step is to discuss options with the community, but for now the City's priority is to ensure that the Regional Wasteshed Project Master Plan is completed.
- Greg stated that AQAB members feel strongly that there's a role for a pilot program and went on to note that CSU has facilities and a program in place for organics recycling. He asked if there is an opportunity to partner with CSU to aid in program implementation?
 - Caroline stated that collaborating with CSU would be a challenge due to the type of permit that they carry. Currently, they can only compost internally generated material, and the compost can then only be used internally. The license is issued by the state through CDPHE and does not provide the flexibility for such collaboration.
- Mark expressed concern that Fort Collins will have a facility for its waste but won't have the means to collect and transport it to the facility. He reiterated the fact that organics waste collection is a complicated process and will likely take a few years to implement effectively. He would like to see a coordinated system in place before the new landfill is ready.
- Jim asked if it would be feasible to build a small composting facility while waiting for the new landfill to be built, then increase its size when the organics program ramps up. He stated concern that Fort Collins might wait for the completion of the Regional Wasteshed only to find out that organics recycling will be made optional, leaving the City to implement stricter organics recycling regulations without regional support.
 - Caroline stated that an area would have to be zoned appropriately for an organics recycling facility and would likely cost millions of dollars to implement. She also noted that scalability would be difficult due to permitting issues that may arise; developing a site is expensive, and permit approval takes a long time.
- Vara asked for more information on the effectiveness of other organics programs (outside of the Regional Wasteshed Program). She expressed hesitation in putting all our efforts into the Regional Wasteshed Program without fully exploring other options. She asked what lessons City Staff have learned from researching peer programs and what factors caused them to identify the Regional Wasteshed as the best option.

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- Caroline noted that while other programs are currently operating (Save Your Food, backyard composting, etc.), their combined impact cannot match the potential that the Regional Wasteshed possesses. She cited an extensive campaign for backyard composting run by the City of Portland, which has a population of citizens very open to organics recycling. The campaign resulted in 9% of residents composting. While progress, this example demonstrates that backyard composting alone is not likely to be a community solution. Fort Collins has tools available for motivated citizens to participate in backyard composting, but not everyone chooses to do so. Larimer County has \$40 million available for facility replacement from the landfill (which is an enterprise fund), and Fort Collins has been given the opportunity to provide a lot of input in the planning process. The opportunity to have a compost facility 12 miles from Fort Collins is unprecedented and the City would not have the funds to build such a facility on its own.
- Vara asked what other cities are doing?
- Caroline replied that 5 communities in Colorado have bundled curbside organics collection; the waste is being deposited in Keenesburg. Pitkin County currently offers commercial collection and their landfill has started a voluntary composting program.
- Mark and Caroline discussed nearby biodigester operations and the recent closing of the Heartland facility. It seems likely that another operator may purchase and reopen the facility, but that is unclear at this time. Caroline noted a wind row composting facility near Ault that is permitted to take food scraps, but the operator, A1, does not want to take the risk of accepting post-consumer food scraps due to political and permitting changes that have made such practices riskier.
- Jim asked if all 4 local government agencies will need to approve the Master Plan once it is finalized, who will make follow-up decisions once it's approved, and how long will implementation take after?
 - Caroline stated that the master plan would be adopted by Larimer County Commissioners and their planning board, rather than by individual governments. The details surrounding follow-up decisions are still to be determined. Implementation can only occur after Fort Collins adopts an IGA.
- Mark asked if residential and restaurant waste will be managed by the City or County.
 - Caroline stated that the County will manage operations of the compost facility. Any regulations applying to residential or restaurant organics collection would be adopted by the City.
- Mark noted that while the County will build the facility, the materials deposited there will depend on City policies. He asked if the incorporation of food waste composting

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infrastructure in the Regional Wasteshed is dependent on Cities implementing policies to collect food waste.

- Caroline responded that food waste composting infrastructure is in the Master Plan, but building such infrastructure will be dependent on policy to feed it.
- Harry stated that he would like to see more emphasis on source reduction.
- Caroline stated that while source reduction is an important lever, it's very difficult to drive real change by these means alone. It has been incorporated in the work plan (Save Your Food campaign, pay-as-you-throw ordinance, etc.), and Honore Depew has been working closely with the City Purchasing Division to update policies with an eye toward source reduction. Research shows that programs that create financial incentives can be successful in reducing waste. Pay-as-you-throw has been found to reduce residential waste by 6%.
- Mark stated that he presented the organics pilot program draft recommendation to the NRAB and they expressed interest in supporting it. Some NRAB members would like to see a revised recommendation that requests an update from City Staff regarding a concrete plan for food waste, while others would like to see action. Mark asked AQAB members if they would like to move forward with his original draft recommendation or revise it to incorporate NRAB recommendations. He reiterated that his desire is for City staff to clarify a process and provide a timeline for implementing an organics recycling plan.
- Karen would also like to see a timeline and stressed that the earlier the Wasteshed is ready for organics, the better. She expressed support for a memo stating as such.
 - Caroline indicated that staff could respond to the request for a timeline without a Board recommendation to Council, although it will be somewhat vague at this point. If the Board would like to share its support for the Regional Wasteshed and advocate for the construction of composting as soon as possible, then a recommendation to Council may be appropriate.
- Vara expressed that the Regional Wasteshed plan might not be the only solution, and asked about decentralization and neighborhood size options for composting technology.
- Board members decided to review the Wasteshed Plan once it is approved.

Staff follow-up: Cassie will make arrangements with Honore Depew to present and discuss the Plan with the Board once it's finalized.

b. 2019 Work Plan

Mark Houdashelt, chair, led a discussion regarding a draft 2019 work plan. A final draft will be approved at the September meeting.

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- The workplan is very similar to 2018's with a few minor revisions and updates. *Staff follow-up:* Cassie will send a reminder to members including a deadline for comments.

c. Board Elections

Mark is stepping down as Chair. The Board will elect a new chair at the next meeting. Cassie will work with Vara on the agenda until the election is held.

8. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

- On 8/7/18, a steering committee meeting was held, which included members from several boards and City Staff members, to discuss the topic of the first TBL multi-board meeting. The meeting will be held during the first week in November and will focus on the Keep Fort Collins Great (KFCG) tax. Between now and then, there will be another steering committee meeting to flesh out the agenda and determine the process that will ensue at multi-board meetings of this type. Preparation for the meeting will be required and a quorum of the Board you represent is not required for attendance. Mark expressed some concern that City Staff is choosing the topic, rather than letting Board priorities drive this.
 - AQAB must decide who will attend and if this will replace a regular monthly meeting.
 - Cassie followed up by stating that the TBL board is not expected to be a decision-making board and that AQAB is not required to attend. A maximum of two members from each board is requested to attend the next steering committee meeting. Per the KFCG topic, she stated that the KFCG tax pays for some air quality-related activities (including some long-term monitoring).
 - Vara expressed interest in attending the steering committee meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- Board elections delayed until September meeting.
- City Council Calendar

8/21/18 Council will discuss oil and gas setbacks, including changes to their recommendations based on feedback from boards.

Council will also be discussing the Dust Prevention and Control Ordinance to potentially remove the extra written warning requirement for small scale sources less than 5 acres.

10. ADJOURNMENT

8:14 pm