

MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2019
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
7:00 P.M.

Council Members in Attendance: Samuel Crowl
Chris Fahl
Sarah Grace
Peter Kotses
Patrick McGee
Jeff Risner

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson

Item Discussed:

- Residential Curbside Compost Program (pilot extension)
 - Risner – provided an overview of the program and requested the Mayor provide data on the program to date

 - Mayor – the following data was compiled by the Athens Hocking Recycling Center (AHRC) and Rural Action – the pilot has been successful – 260 residents participating in the program diverted 22.9 tons from the landfill and it was turned into reusable compost – average bucket weight was 3.9 pounds – set out rate by participants was 65.9% each week – only 2 participants left the program, one moved away and the other just didn't like composting – survey of participants indicated they really like this service – a couple of negative comments were with regard to lack of cleanliness and odor of the buckets – City has an opportunity to extend the service for another 6 months to include 35-40 additional residents – interest by 20+ residents has already been received – cost per month to the City was 7,660 and will drop to 6,177 with increased participation – continuing the program beyond the pilot through AHRC, would likely be an opt-in program

 - McGee – cost of pilot for 6 months is approximately \$45,600 – understands that the cost expectation for the program, if approved Citywide, is in the range of \$200,000 - \$300,000 annually
 - Mayor – under an opt-in program there would be a rate increase for those wanting to participate – the cost will be determined by the number of participants – cost to City would be neutral

-McGee – he does backyard composting – suggested an educational program to teach residents how to compost in their backyard might be helpful – would be fulfilling the purpose more, and would have some really positive results – asked how apartment complexes might be handled – possibly more suitable for centralized collection – would like other composting alternatives from Rural Action – could be done better at a more reasonable cost

-Mayor – doesn't dispute McGee's line of thought on backyard composting – some residents are not into backyard composting, but would like to repurpose these organic materials for the greater good – some residents don't use the compost at home that they are generating – an educational element would be helpful – he looks at what is being removed from the landfill – again, keeping in mind that this is an opt-in program

-Risner – educational aspect is a good point – maybe could dovetail into the YEAH Kids Program

-Mayor – agrees, should be explored in multi-use complexes

-Fahl – reemphasized carbon reduction – it is a serious priority

-Butler – supports extending the pilot program

-Heady – encouraged composting with closed containers – some problems with rodents

-Grace – encourages composting educational programs – personally, has no use for the compost – the curbside composting service makes it easier and convenient for residents to divert this organic waste from the landfill – makes a significant difference from each participating household – hopes the program continues

-Beth Clodfelter, Shannon Avenue resident and Member of the Athens Hocking Recycling Center Board – has participated in the program, and has significantly reduced her trash through recycling and composting – hopes this program will continue and expanded to the whole community, including students at Ohio University – appreciates that the pilot is free to encourage participation – has talked with participants who are willing to pay a fee for this service – as an AHRC Board Member she is aware that there is not enough compost to meet requests for purchase – this is a progressive program offering – important for the environment and climate

-Mayor – administration will be looking forward beyond the pilot to what the cost would be for an opt-in program

-Leslie Flemming, Kent Drive – encourages extending the program beyond the pilot – residents need to experience the benefits of home composting

- Municipal Refuse and Recycling (contract)
 - Mayor – 2019 rfp outline has been forwarded to the Council – this rfp has been streamlined, has fewer alternatives
 - President – July 1st is the renewal date
 - Crowl – asked about changing the fee structure to a pay as you throw system, and wondered whether this concept was being incorporated into this rfp
 - Mayor – does not believe that is part of this rfp – reduction in landfill trash lends itself to pay as you throw, and encourages diversion, whether through recycling or compostable materials – will check with the Deputy Service-Safety Director to see if pay as you throw can be included in this rfp
 - Crowl – City currently has a modified pay as you throw system with a set rate for 1 or 2 containers
- Big Belly Solar Recycling/Waste Bins (review of collection and cost data)
 - President – (see attached summary)
 - Mayor – Big Belly allowed the City to draw down 54 open-bin containers to 24 solar recycling/waste bins – these bins allow the City to monitor how full the bins are, and has reduced the number of trips to empty due to trash compaction – some are emptied daily, while others are less used – what used to be 50 gallons of trash is now being compacted into 150 gallons
 - McGee – acknowledged that this is a 5-year contract – selling point to Big Belly was to reduce the number of containers, and avoid daily pickup – expressed concern that the recycling material is being contaminated, as well as the high cost of the Big Belly system – other high quality trash/recycling units are available – would like other alternatives considered when this contract ends in two years
 - Mayor – on the plus side, the refuse is landing inside the container instead of on the sidewalk – contaminated recycling happens industry-wide – plans to explore alternatives to drive down the cost, but by and large Big Belly has been a successful endeavor – can be tweaked in the future – does not want to go back to open top containers
 - Crowl – gallons are an odd metric for this, should be pounds
 - Mayor – it is based on container size
 - Crowl – so, not being weighed
 - Fahl – questioned how much money the City is actually saving in tipping fees

- Kotses – recalls that reduced tipping fees was a selling point – asked whether that has happened
- Mayor – can ask AHRC to produce that information

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Compost Pilot Program
2. RFP

MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 11, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Peter Kotses, Chair
Patrick McGee, Vice-Chair
Sam Crowl, Member

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Director of EPW Heady

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Bounty on the Bricks (street closure)
 - Sydney Webber, Director of Marketing and Communications for Ohio Health – requested closing Court Street between Union and Washington from approximately 8:00 a.m. to midnight on August 3rd – this will be the 7th annual event – this fundraiser is organized by a group of community members, and since 2012 has raised \$510,000, with the aid of matching partners, for the local foodbank to support the health and wellness of our community

 - David Keller, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Southeast Ohio Foodbank – donated funds from this event are used for hunger relief across Southeast Ohio – last year the network distributed over 6 million pounds of food through 70 member agencies – the importance of this event in meeting our community needs cannot be overstated – in 2018 Bounty on the Bricks was directly responsible for helping secure \$65,000, and serving people in 8 counties throughout our area – this program supports mixed-generational families – over 80% of the households served had a child and/or senior living in the household – 1 out of 6 people in Athens County are considered to be food insecure, and 1 out of 4 children – an average of 13,000 households was served each month – Bounty on the Bricks ensures high quality nourishing foods for a healthy and active lifestyle, no matter what their circumstance

 - Kotses – noted that this is the same street closure as previous years

 - McGee – supports this event – is a great endeavor – asked about the number of diners, and whether consideration has been given to other ways for community engagement – possibly an indoor event

-Weber – about 300 people dine at this event, with capacity for 400 – other fundraising idea to bring the community together is a good idea

- Richland Pedestrian Passageway (update)

-Bob Heady, EPW Director – (see attached project summary) requested increasing appropriations by \$400,000 to \$500,000 due to a shortened construction window needing a 6-day work week and some double shifts, and ODOT's completion deadline of September 30 to receive federal funds – next bid opening is February 21st

-Kotses – increasing the appropriation would be in the Street Rehabilitation Fund

-Heady – may impact 2019 paving

-McGee – clarified that the City's contribution would be \$1,022,934 plus the additional \$400,000 to \$500,000

-Heady – that is correct, adding that Ohio University is currently reviewing whether they can offer additional funding, and Council should have that information prior to the final vote

-McGee – asked about the impact to Richland traffic during construction

-Heady – it will be closed from West Green Drive to Bobcat Lane from May 6 through September 18 – will impact two football games – Bobcat Lane will remain open

-McGee – asked about traffic coming from the uptown area

-Heady – it will be detoured down Union Street and back to Shafer Street

-Crowl – asked how the pedestrian traffic will be handled crossing from West Green

-Heady – during the summer there is an ADA approved route, and the passageway will be open before Ohio University classes begin

-McGee – asked about the impact of multiple projects underway at the same time

-Heady – Stimson is a 2020 project

-Mayor – the Coates Run project on Richland will be signalized one-lane traffic

-President – since there will likely be fewer paving and repairs, questioned whether there is a general plan since there may be a carryover list of streets from last year that will need to be completed

-Heady – a paving list is not currently available for this year – is aware that Hooper definitely needs some attention – believes City can sacrifice and do a little less 2019 paving – there are rehabilitation alternatives to overlays to extend

the life of a street, i.e. sealants – doesn't see it as a real step backwards, just a leaner paving program this year

-Mayor – 2016 (paved 9 miles); 2017, same; 2018 (paved 18 miles) – prior to that it was typically 4 ½ - 5 miles annually

-Kotses – asked to clarify that this does not impact completion of paving on East State

-Heady – it does not, that is separate funding and will be completed this year

-Parker Smith, West State Street, and representative for Off-Campus Student Senate at Ohio University – asked if there is a specific formula for the contribution from Ohio University, or if the University simply offered \$400,000 toward this project

-Mayor – construction will impact Ohio University's land use during and after construction, and permanent easements were granted by the University for this project

- Towing and Storage (fees)

-Kotses – is aware of a lawsuit that has been filed against a local towing company citing fee differences between the State and City vehicle towing fees – since 2002 the Athens City Code towing fee has been set at a maximum of \$50 (he has been told that this fee is not enough to maintain a viable business) – the State charges for a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of less than 10,001 pounds, the maximum towing and storage fees are \$129 and \$17 per day – for a gross vehicle weight of more than 10,001 pounds the maximum towing and storage fees are \$216 and \$29 per day – proposes the Athens City Code conform to rates set by the State

-McGee – in some ways, this is another issue of State preemption, i.e. the City not able to set its own towing fees – if City towing fees are increasing to the State level, he questioned whether the City will also be adjusting the show up fee – the reasonable cost of a show up fee should be considerably less than the \$129 towing fee – not sure what is enforceable

-Kotses – not aware of a show up fee in OAC

-Crowl – questioned whether the Athens Code is required to reflect the same maximum fee as the State Code

-McGee – not sure whether City can set a lower rate – the Court will clarify that as part of the lawsuit

-Zach Reizes, West Washington Street – is concerned about the financial burden a higher fee cap adjusted to meet that of the State will have on low-income residents in our community – would appreciate any effort to keep those costs lower – the City knows what is best for our low-income populace

-Jeff Risner, Council Member – questioned if the City is simply going to bring our City Code in line with the State Code, and if so, then why not simply repeal that section of our Code

-McGee – need to first find out whether the State Code controls

-Risner – if the City is allowed to charge a fee less than the State's maximum, then why bother to change it

-Kotses – the City's fee has not been changed in 17 years and is likely no longer viable for towing services

-Risner – asked whether the City gets any part of the towing fee

-Mayor – any City violation would have an accompanying fine that would come to the City, but not the towing fee

-President – requested a review of other cities, and discussing our options with the Law Director

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Bounty
2. Richland Passageway
3. Towing Fees