



# SHAKER HEIGHTS

## Sustainability Committee Minutes

Thursday, January 12, 2023

8:00 A.M.

### VIA ZOOM PURSUANT TO CHAPTERS 113 AND 115 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES (AS AMENDED IN ORDINANCE 22-28), AND RESOLUTION 22-29, ENACTED ON MARCH 22, 2022

Members Present: Nancy Moore, Council Member  
Sean P. Malone, Council Member  
Anne Williams, Council Member  
Shanna Keown, Citizen Member  
Julia Larouche, Citizen Member  
Norman Robbins, Citizen Member

Others Present: Jeri E. Chaikin, Chief Administrative Officer  
Patricia Speese, Director of Public Works  
Vince Crawford, Waste Management  
Jeff Isaacs, Shaker Heights School District Board Member  
Michael Peters, Sustainability Coordinator

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Nancy Moore at 8:01 A.M.

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#### Approval of the December 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Norman Robbins and seconded by Anne Williams that the minutes of the December 8, 2022 meeting be approved as recorded; unanimously passed.

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#### Review of the Cuyahoga County Sustainability Toolkit: Focus Area Solid Waste

The Toolkit focus area for review this month was solid waste. Unlike landfill waste, what can be recycled fluctuates with the market for those materials. While coordinated by the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, each community contracts independent for its recycling program. This impacts what can be collected and processed. The toolkit also emphasizes that recycling should be the last option after reducing and re-using resources. It also highlights opportunities to “upcycle” materials and divert food to programs that can use it rather than send it to landfill or compost.

In the Leadership & Education section, four recommendations from the Toolkit were shared. These included: 1) “empty, clean and dry” is how recyclables should be put into the bin to reduce contamination, 2) marketing the requirements and recycling overall is encouraged and resources are available, 3) backyard composting is another option for households, and 4) businesses and organizations should also be encouraged to recycle.

#### **CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS**

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For the Municipal Operations section, suggested actions included: 1) updating waste hauling operations (Shaker Heights uses “scooters” and are researching electric options for these), 2) add recycling and drop off locations (each weekend the Service Center is available along with other drop off sites for compost and glass), and 3) support recycling at multi-family properties.

Recommended Policies & Ordinances included: 1) the Solid Waste District has a model ordinance for multi-family recycling, 2) encourage facilities for recycling and composting during the design review process, and 3) develop plans to reduce waste generation and increase landfill diversion rates (such as the Circular Cleveland program).

Lastly, in the Regional Collaboration section, suggestions included: 1) consider group purchasing for contracts (which the City did for its most recent recycling contract), 2) support specialized recycling infrastructure, and 3) support clean water initiatives and the reduction of plastic water bottles (such as Drink Local, Drink Tap program).

Director Speese added insight on the recent recycling contract process, including the importance that the City benefitted by not including communities that collect recycling in blue plastic bags. This resulted in lower costs and a lower contamination rate. She also noted that it is important that residents know how to recycle properly, and this messaging must be consistently broadcast. The rationale for using the small recycling bins (lower contamination) and the importance of the weekend recycling was noted.

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**Presentation on Recycling Contract, Vince Crawford of Waste Management**

Mr. Crawford from Waste Management was introduced and shared a presentation describing how his company recently completed a waste audit of the City’s collected recycling material. He reiterated that the messaging around recycling is never-ending and gave the example of Christmas lights (which are not accepted through the general recycling program). He also noted that the reason why they don’t recycle Styrofoam is because there isn’t enough volume of it and it is very difficult to clean and separate out. The new material recovery facility (MRF) they are completing in Oakwood Village will allow them to process more materials.

The recycling waste audit was conducted in November. They visited the City’s transfer station to watch the process and knew prior to bidding that the City contamination rate was not 38 percent as it had been set in the prior contract. The method the City uses, which involves two sets of personnel reviewing the collection, is what results in the City’s much better contamination rate.

Three loads were evaluated in the Waste Management facility – roughly 39.6 tons. These materials were sorted and processed and then baled. Fiber (cardboard and paper) was the largest component (64%), followed by glass (12%), and then the other materials such as plastic and aluminum. This verified the lower contamination rate and the City shares in the reward of better pricing due to the lower contamination rates. The result was a rate of 17.84% (the Waste Management goal is a rate of 10% or less). These results were similar to that of Cleveland Heights that also contracted with Waste Management and had a similar audit conducted.

Questions that followed included a request for the model ordinance from the Solid Waste District, where and how much capacity do landfills in the region have (there are landfills in numerous northern

Ohio counties that have an estimated 80 year life span; this capacity is what keeps landfill costs low and makes recycling more challenging), a future tour of a landfill and the new MRF was suggested, and a discussion of how the City maintaining its own transfer station (at the Service Center) and collecting through the scooters results in lower costs for the City. The last question was about what makes multi-family recycling successful, and the answer was that it is very challenging with much higher contamination rates. This is because typically the recyclables are collected in a dumpster similar to the landfill dumpster, and there is no policing of tenants depositing items, so there is considerable cross contamination.

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### **Subcommittee Updates**

#### Stormwater & Greenspace (Julia Larouche)

- The electric lawn mower rebate program is progressing with a target date of April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> to coincide with the hazardous waste roundup weekend. There are 40 rebates for \$100 each available when residents bring in a working gasoline-powered mower and provides proof of purchase of a new electric lawn mower (including the serial number).
- A Grow Not Mow maintenance plan was drafted for the continuity of care at the Grow Not Mow sites. A motion to accept the plan and send it to Public Works for review was made by Sean Malone and seconded by Norman Robbins; it was passed unanimously and will be forwarded to Public Works for review and final approval.
- A proposed pesticide/herbicide policy is expected to be presented next month. This is planned to be a suggested and updated public lands policy that would be routed through the Administration, which would then be discussed more broadly. It is not intended to be an imposition but a discussion of best practices.
- The food composting programs at Fernway School and Onaway School have demonstrated the viability of the programs and the next step is to determine how to institutionalize them across the Schools, especially with regard to costs. The support of the Shaker Heights Schools Foundation is greatly appreciated. It was noted that the discussion with the Schools Administration has been much warmer given the experience of Fernway and Onaway.

#### Renewable Energy (Norman Robbins)

- Rooftop solar applications have increases year-over-year and is very encouraging. The locations are also well distributed throughout the City, with the areas south of Van Aken Boulevard tripling, including the first installations in Ludlow and Sussex.
- The Dominion energy assessment program, which included a home assessment and optional smart thermostat installation, was ended at the end of the year. Some of the incentives are included in the Inflation Reduction Act. In 2022, 54 houses had the assessment done and 15 elected to have the smart thermostat installed. Assessments like these are important to identify potential air leaks that can be fixed prior to installing upgrades like heat pumps or solar panels so the homeowner is not compensating for wasted heat through a leaky house.
- A discussion is continuing on a brief introduction to the Inflation Reduction Act to make residents aware of the programs and tax credits available. The rebates will be coming later through the state but federal tax credits are in place now. This is intended to include how to select the appropriate contractor and how modern heat pumps, as an

example, are now appropriate for our climate. A collaborative effort on this is underway.

- A member of the subcommittee is contacting local developer RMS regarding solar at The Van Aken District.
- The subcommittee had a discussion of time variable electricity rates, which are now available from the electric utility as an opt-in program.
- An update on the City's Community Choice Aggregation program indicated that a contract with a supplier had recently been signed at an attractive rate that will begin in June. It is a two-year supply contract that includes renewable energy credits (national wind) for all electricity consumed under the contract. This is expected to be a considerable savings to the utility Standard Service Offering at that time.

Shaker Youth LEEDs / High School Advisory Group (Shanna Keown)

- The second semester project for the group is the EcoChallenge; incorporating City initiatives like the lawn mower rebate and energy efficiency will provide content for the program.
- Over the summer they are planning to do recruitment for the group and more awareness of the EcoChallenge.
- A connection to the Shaker Schools and Shaker Heights Public Library will be followed up on.
- A presentation by the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes will be made to discuss pollinator pods.

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**Chair's Remarks/Old Business/New Business**

- No additional remarks or business but a thank you to everyone for all of the hard work.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2023 at 8:00am.



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Michael Peters  
Sustainability Coordinator