November 20, 2019

Sustainability Commission

417 East Fayette Street, 8th Floor

Commissioners in attendance: Becca Bakre, Miriam Avins, Greg Sawtell, Inez Robb, Earl Johnson, Tracy Williams, John Quinn, Chris Ryer, Ben Zaitchek, Ryan Dorsey, Michael Furbish, Lisa Ferretto. Watching livestream: Avis Ransom and Donzell Brown

* Co-Chairs Becca Bakre and Miriam Avins opened the Meeting
* October minutes were approved
* 3 new Commissioners are in the process of being nominated. They have gone before the City Council nominating committee and will be sworn in during the month of December.
  + Nicolette Louissaint
  + Delegate Regina Boyce
  + Mia Blom
* Planning Department Holiday party – Thursday, December 12th 5-8PM Clifton Mansion
* Reading of Big Audacious Commitments (Tracy, Ben and Earl)

Speakers:

* Zero Waste Associates, Gary Liss, Consultant, United Workers
  + Create and adopt a definition of Zero Waste
  + Zero Waste Guiding Principles
    - Universality
    - Equity
    - Participation
    - Transparency
    - Accountability
* Recommends moving away from incineration in an urgent way
* Plan developed by community
* Baltimore Clean Air Act creates urgency as BRESCO faces near term closure
* Residents are already taking the lead on Zero Waste and are a strength to build upon
* Environmental Injustice: poor and black communities bear most of the burdens
* Reach Sustainability Plan Goals for 90% diversion from burning and burying
* Builds on Sustainability Plan
* 90% diversion from landfill and incinerator
* Legislation and policies to reduce wasting
* Stakeholders want Just and Equitable Transition away from BRESCO  Expand Waste to
* 6 strategies

1. Packaging & Product Ban

2. Recycling & Composting for All

3. City Lead by Example

4. Deconstruct & Recycle Buildings

5. Engage & Educate Community

6. Turn Waste into Resources

Ask of Commission: Review and adopt the Zero Waste Plan.

* Geosyntec, Jeremy Morris, Consultant, Department of Public Works

Reviewed options for Improving Diversion

1. Understand waste flows and materials
   1. Chart of waste flow
      1. 1.6M tons of waste annually 2/3’s commercial, 1/3 residential
      2. DPW reports very low recycling but citywide recycling is 50%
      3. Estimated 825,000 tons is burned/landfilled
         1. 163,000 tons organic
         2. 57,000 tones cardboard
         3. 62,000 tons of “easy to recycle” materials
         4. 22,000 tons of lumber
         5. 261,200 tons of other mixed C&D
2. Looked at options supported by residents and stakeholders
   1. Held meetings and gathered a list of stakeholders
   2. Survey results – 2,000 responses
   3. Benchmarking against other cities (Portland, Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Charleston)
   4. Look at existing City plans (Sustainability, Food Waste & Recovery & Climate Action)
3. Assess options against one another objectively
   1. How much can be diverted?
   2. What are the benefits? (ghg reduction, revenue)
   3. Costs? (capital/operational)
   4. Challenges? (permitted etc)
   5. Timeline? (short, mid, long term)
   6. Experience? (of those in the city)

<https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/Less-Waste-Better-Baltimore>

We currently recycle 738,500 tons, compost 78,700 tons, dispose of 824,600 tons and need to divert 656,000 tons.

* Office of Sustainability, Ava Richardson, Food Matters Technical Advisor
  1. [Food Waste & Recovery Strategy](https://www.baltimoresustainability.org/baltimore-food-waste-recovery-strategy/)
  2. 1/3 of our waste stream is compostable
  3. Food rescue – edible foods that could be brought to people in need
  4. Natural Resources Defense Council partnership with funding from the Rockefeller foundation has brought $500K to the City to fund capacity-building grants to local composting and food rescue programs and compost collection at farmer’s markets and hire a staff person at the Office of Sustainbility. RRS, consultant, conducted a financial analysis of siting a compost facility in the city.
  5. 6 city agencies are partners on the Food Matters team
* Trash Free Maryland, (outgoing) Executive Director, Ashley Van Stone
  + Bag Bill passed by City Council on Monday, November 18th
  + Strongest bag legislation in the State
  + Priority State piece of legislation - Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act
    1. Statewide plastic bag ban
       1. Bags less than 4 mils thick and compostable bags
       2. 10 cent fee/retailer would retain the fee
       3. Exemptions: non checkout bags (produce/bulk)
       4. Voucher holders not exempt
       5. Would take effect 2021
* Why a ban/fee structure?
  + Eliminated the worst polluters
  + The mechanism that drives behavior change
  + Consistency statewide
  + Not a tax – consumers can avoid it be bringing their own/declining
  + Recycling – very low value and only 1% are captured for recycling
  + Business friendly – they will be saving money on what they were previously purchasing
  + Single Use Packaging Work Group
    - Will examine beverage containers, straws, toiletries, snacks etc
    - Identify a comprehensive approach

Threat to the World’s Climate

* 420-570 billion tons Co2

Other Bills in the Works

* Ask Only Policy on Straws
* Hotel Toiletry Phase Out
* Ban on Mass Balloon Release
* Organic Waste Generator Bill
* Work group to holistically look at product

Incoming Executive Director: [Shane@trashfreemaryland.org](mailto:Shane@trashfreemaryland.org)

Commissioner Discussion

Councilman Ryan Dorsey

There is a real difference in what we can do and what the timeline is in doing it. City Council is unwavering in its support of Zero Waste. The 2nd two presentations discussed What We Are Doing Now. Sale of backyard composting bins can reduce number of trash truck trips.

Inez Robb

How are you communicating with those without internet?

*Cards and info at the libraries and sent out with DPW liaisons. DPW would like support in reaching out to people in the new year when they have their meetings.*

Greg Sawtell

Who is the Equity point person at DPW? *Linda Batts. She is developing DPW’s equity plan. Training by Dr. Lawrence Brown this morning. DPW will have an equity coordination team.*

How did the equity impact the input to the Less Waste Better Baltimore outreach?

Michael Furbish

The contract runs from Sept 2018-February 2020

*The objectives for the consultant are in the RFP. On Energy Justice website*

Do you have a position on BRESCO? Jeremy Morris: *No*. We have a range of tonnage that needs to be disposed of if it doesn’t go to BRESCO. Where can it go if it doesn’t go to BRESCO? *It will be in our report.*

Does DPW have a position on BRESCO?

Marcia Collins: *We are very aware of the fact that the incinerator will not be available. We need to look at the best possible ways of diverting our waste. We have looked at interim steps and it will require investment. Landfill is the stop gap measure and we are looking at alternatives. We are waiting for the report.*Where will we see the scenarios of what will happen if BRESCO closes in 2021?

*We are focused on diversion. In the short term, the waste will be trucked to existing facilities that have capacity. In a longer term, the city needs a new facility.*

Ryan Dorsey

Is there anything in the RFP about carbon impacts*?* Jeremy: *A key part of the analysis is to compare GHG emissions to the baseline. In the short term, there will be significant increases in ghg emissions in the transport of materials.* Will you calculate the waste emissions at the landfill over time. *Yes.*

Earl Johnson

What’s will this cost? Who is going to pay? How will this trickle down?

Jeremy: *Waste is generated by residents and businesses, they will bear the cost. These current disposal ways are cheap. Food waste recovery is expensive per ton. Diverting construction debris are less expensive on a per ton basis. Need to spend about $200 per ton to building out facilities or up to $500 per ton.*

Gary Liss: *$10-20 per household per month. This is currently borne by the tax base in Baltimore. Policy is the sweet spot on industrial and commercial and the they will incur costs and will reduce the waste they generate to reduce their costs.*

Marcia Collins: *Costs also include the health of our communities. And increase in local businesses and jobs. We will create public private partnerships. We need to totally Rethink what we do. We are concerned about funding but we are going to have to figure this out.*

Public Discussion

Costs of recidivism

Beyond 34 Campaign

What’s the plan for where the waste will go if the incinerator shuts down?

*We would need to find staging areas, The Quarantine Road Landfill would receive the largest share, other facilities and contracts would need to be put in place?*

What part of your plan are going to have schools composting?

In the plan, the 1st phase of composting would be at schools / city govt / pilot residential

What have been DPW’s conversations with BRESCO since the Clean Air Act? *None*

Green Building Council – this is the time to start your zero waste journey

UWW – we need local, good paying jobs. Are you willing to be aggressive about that?

The Commission is very willing to advocate for it.

Would you be willing to work with UWW to ensure that this is happening?

UWW – Workers Rights – need 3rd party monitoring of worker’s rights. DPW’s plan is missing an equity analysis. Where is the analysis in the plan about health concerns?

Miriam Avins: What are the specific programs that can be put in place quickly

And, look at priorities that are in support of policies on the local and state level

Next Meeting:

Wednesday December 182019

417 E Fayette Street

Topic: Upcoming State Legislation