

Geneva Green Committee Minutes January 19, 2021

Present: Richard Cox (co-chair), Anne Hoyt (co-chair, FLCC representative), Sara Britting, Michael Amadori (Hobart & William Smith Colleges Sustainability Manager), Larry Campbell, Dan Belliveau, Scott DeHollander (Cornell Agri-tech representative), Sarah Meyer (Cornell Technology Park facilities manager), Jacob Fox (liaison with Town of Geneva Sustainability Committee), Jan Regan (Geneva City Council liaison), Ellis Bozzolo

Presentation by Robert Putney, CEO, Impact Earth, a Rochester-based corporation that provides zero-waste services, including life-style products, consultations on waste diversion, educational programs, and composting services. Putney was invited to speak to the GGC as part of its efforts to reduce the city's contribution to the landfill and to encourage participation in composting at the recently-constructed, soon-to-be-operational Resource Recovery Facility. Impact Earth currently diverts around 30,000 lb/week of organic wastes through its curbside organic waste pick-ups in Monroe County, Canandaigua, and Victor. The company recently opened a storefront in Eastview Mall selling life-style products, and it has provided K-12 educational programs to students in Brighton and most Ontario County schools. Impact Earth's waste reduction consultancy contributed to a major sustainability study conducted by the engineering firm LaBella Associates on behalf of the city of Rochester. The company assessed and designed waste collection policies for Finger Lakes Community College and the CMAC Performing Arts Center in Ontario County. A sustainability consultation would begin with a "listening" session to ascertain goals and parameters and then involve a waste assessment/audit, to be followed by a report with policy recommendations as well as estimated cost savings to the city's residents, institutions, and businesses when wastes are diverted. Waste assessments can evaluate such diverse uses as vehicles, lighting schemes, and other categories beyond food wastes. Asked what other groups provide the same services, Putney said engineering firms do similar work, but Impact Earth is the only consultancy firm in NYS with expertise in food waste diversion.

- Larry asked why do an assessment, to which Putney replied, "so you know what the current system is [achieving]. You can't make changes to improve without knowing where you stand. It begins a process of changing behaviors to align policy with attitudes."
- Dan asked if it wouldn't make more sense for Ontario County to undertake a countywide waste assessment, to which Jacob said the county has no plan to undertake waste assessments and the city has a unique facility that it has an interest in having succeed.
- In answer to Larry's question, Putney said a waste assessment would identify different types of items in the waste stream.

Putney estimated that a waste assessment would cost between \$5,000-\$7,000, could begin within two to three weeks, and would take two to three months to complete.

Ian Smith's request for assistance with a project, presented by Jacob Fox, since Ian could not attend. Jacob said the Town of Geneva recently came into possession of a property off Carter Road that the town plans to use to create retention ponds for stormwater abatement. The

property will also be available to hiking. Ian would like help from the GGC in identifying invasive species at the site.

Update on the city's Resource Recovery Facility. Jacob said he has signed the final paperwork with the city this week, and that the facility should be operational soon. Signage is going up, yard wastes are being accepted, and the organic toters arrive next week, making Phase One operational in the near future. Phase Two will involve a transfer station capable of accepting trash, construction and demolition debris, metals, etc. Jacob said he is looking into purchasing a "pounder" to convert glass wastes into a sellable commodity for road application.

GGC Sub-committees. Anne and Sara discussed the need to divide up the committee's work into sub-committees that would report on a monthly basis on their activities at each monthly meeting. Reports should be submitted two days ahead of the meeting, and each sub-committee should have a spokesperson and someone to take meeting notes. The following sub-committees were proposed. GGC members were asked to sign up for at least one:

Safe Alternatives and Practices to Synthetic Pesticides and Fertilizers in the city to include:

- working with the city's Department of Public Works on the issues it is confronting with managing its public spaces and native plantings and the removal of invasive species at the lakefront
- developing and rolling out a citywide campaign to residents, businesses and institutions to adopt "lake-friendly" property management practices that exclude the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers

Waste Diversion & Reduction to include

- planning for the 2028 landfill closure
- promoting use of the city's new Resource Recovery Facility
- community-wide hazardous waste reduction and collection
- negotiating a better waste hauler agreement that incentivizes waste reduction
- developing a plan to make Geneva no longer an Every Day is Trash Day city

Climate Smart Community Grant to include

- researching and presenting to the GGC and ultimately city council what's involved in this grant, what it requires, what it covers and what the benefits would be to the city
- Note: the city of Canandaigua has passed a resolution approving its cost share for this grant. They would be a good resource.

Citywide Renewable Energy Program to include

- investigating the different programs available for purchasing energy for the city as a block

Stormwater Abatement in the City to include

- working with Ian Smith and others, including Sarah Meyer, to lessen the impact of stormwater in the city, including in the Castle Creek corridor

De-icing Alternative Practices for reducing the use of road salt, to include

- researching practices advocated by Phil Sexton as explained at <https://witadvisers.com/>
- measuring current outputs and levels of service
- working with city's Department of Public Works and private contractors
- exploring working with the Town of Geneva on a joint project to determine funding and implementation options

The following GGC members have signed up for committees:

- Scott DeHollander: Stormwater Abatement and De-Icing
- Michael Androtti: Waste Diversion
- Anne Hoyt: Alternatives to Synthetics and Waste Diversion
- Ellis Bozzolo: Stormwater Abatement and Waste Diversion
- Larry Campbell is continuing his work updating the inventory of the city's greenhouse gas emissions, from 2017-2019, and may be available for the Climate Smart committee once finished.

Councilor Regan regarding the 2022 waste haulers' agreement with the city. As requested at our November meeting, Jan put the following actions before city council:

1. We would like to incorporate a REQUIRED pay-to-throw option, or a policy that states that the hauler will, at minimum offer, this model to customers. Specifically, that is to say we would like haulers to only charge residents when they pick up trash. (Lyons Road already has this policy in place). As an alternative, haulers could offer a two-tier approach of offering a pay-per-throw option, or the traditional year-long contract where households pay weekly regardless of whether they have put out trash. (I think there would be a preference to NOT have this clause in a contract, so if this were a transitional phase it might be more acceptable.)

2. We would like to see haulers develop a system that offers compost pickup and drop-off at our city vermiculture center. They could subcontract this or add it to their own services. It would follow the course similar to the process of recycling pickup. There are many cities that have incorporated a three bin tote that goes to curbside to cover these three components of waste. We may be far from that vision, but we would like to start down the path that makes something along these lines a reality.

This is a particularly important aspect of our trash management, as organics are over half of what is currently going into landfills, and we, the City now has a facility that will take this waste and make incredibly rich use of it. It is more than a win-win to facilitate the use of the vermiculture center.

3. Fees for TRASH (landfill disposal) pickup should be higher than for compost/recycling pick up.

4. City of Geneva residents who hire haulers should be required to have (or provided) a clearly marked, covered receptacle for all things that will be picked up.

5. Also, exploration into limiting the number of days of trash pick up in Geneva would be welcome. Right now not a day goes by that there are not totes out on curbsides.

Jan said haulers would probably need a month or two to assess how these changes would affect their fees. If a fee adjustment is necessary, we will need to have a City Council discussion on this, hopefully in March.

Follow-up on working with DPW to implement synthetic pesticides/fertilizer ban. A meeting with Joe Venutti, head of the city's Department of Public Works, is set for **Tuesday, Jan. 26, 9-10:00 a.m.**

Meeting with the Town of Geneva's Sustainability Committee is scheduled for Feb. 4, to give a brief overview of the projects we're working on this year and to discuss partnering on projects, perhaps de-icing, stormwater abatement, and waste diversion. In advance of this meeting, subcommittees should meet to discuss ways we might collaborate with the town committee.

Update on the city's rezoning project. Anne will send report under separate cover.