

Minutes: City of Geneva Green Committee and Town of Geneva Joint Meeting Feb. 4, 2021

Members present from the Town of Geneva's Sustainability Committee: Jennifer Grant (chair), Mark Venuti (Geneva Town Supervisor), Vinnie Aliperti, Jacob Fox

Members present the city Green Committee: Richard Cox (co-chair), Anne Hoyt (co-chair), Jan Regan (city council liaison), Michael Amadori (Hobart & William Smith Sustainability Manager), Sara Britting, Jennica Simon, Jeanette Nelson, Sean Roulan, Ellis Bozzolo, Larry Campbell

This meeting is the first in what will become quarterly meetings to discuss how the two committees might collaborate. The next joint meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 3.

The agenda included three items: an invite from the city to the town to join in a waste assessment by the Rochester consulting firm, Impact Earth; joint storm-water abatement projects; and a joint exploration of alternatives to current de-icing practices.

Waste Assessment

The city has been in conversation with Robert Putney, CEO of Impact Earth, a Rochester-based firm that offers waste reduction consultation services. The city's interest stems from its new Resource Recovery Facility, opening in March, on Doran Avenue. The facility will accept compostable materials, including food wastes, yard wastes, all grades of paper, and cardboard. The city is hoping to obtain funding from the county's Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management to hire Impact Earth to conduct an assessment of the waste stream in Geneva from businesses, restaurants, the hospital and other institutions, government, schools, and residences. Mark Venuti indicated the town would be interested in participating in the assessment and added that the county might be more likely to fund a more comprehensive plan that included both the city and town. He noted the town may have different issues, such as farm waste which includes agricultural plastics, but residences are probably similar and town entities are likely to be using the same haulers that serve the city. Richard will set up a joint meeting between Putney and representatives from both the town and city to discuss the parameters of a joint waste assessment for both municipalities. We agreed to ask for more than one quote, one for a comprehensive assessment and one for a more limited assessment.

Michael Amadori mentioned a city project sponsoring a series of hazardous waste pick-ups for different neighborhoods in the city and sponsoring a used mattress collection. The town did a similar collection of old mattresses three years ago and successfully filled up a tractor trailer truck that was then taken to Buffalo to a mattress recycling facility. Michael will be working with the town to collaborate on another collection in May, when H&WS students leave for the summer. Mark was skeptical that the county would want to fund a hazardous waste collection in the city since the county has its own hazardous waste collections twice a year. Geneva committee members pointed out that many people don't have vehicles to travel to the county sites and many are not aware of the collections. Mark said the hazardous waste collections have to be staffed by people who are trained to handle those kinds of materials. He suggested

we ask the county to sponsor its own waste pick-ups in the city. We also briefly discussed an electronics pick-up in the city as well. We agreed that funds for these projects will be applied for separately from the waste assessment project. Funds would include marketing materials for the mattress and other waste pickups. Mark said the county's future plan is to establish Resource Recovery Parks, similar to Geneva's RRF, that will serve as drop-off sites for recyclables, re-useables, metals, wood, and compostable materials such as food waste, yard waste, paper, and cardboard. Michael will pursue working with the town to do a used mattress pickup in Geneva in May. Anne and Sara will contact Carla Jordan, the county's sustainability manager, to ask if the county can do hazardous waste and electronics pick-ups in the city in May as well.

Storm-water Abatement

Jacob said he is working on the town's behalf collecting a list of potential projects for storm-water abatement. The town is collaborating with Ian Smith, the Seneca Lake Steward, who helps coordinate the comprehensive Nine Element Plan for the Seneca and Keuka lakes watershed which includes more than 40 municipalities and six counties. Mark asked for the city committee to come up with a list of places where there is flooding in the city, especially places where the town and/or city could intervene with berms or holding ponds to reduce flooding. "Get the word out to regular residents," he said. In addition, the town will contact Joe Venuti, the city's director of Department of Public Works. Anne suggested the Castle Creek watershed be included. Jacob suggested the outlet pipe at Jenkins Beach that funnels water directly from the Routes 5&20 arterial into Seneca Lake. Mark said the list must be complete by the end of March, and the more projects included in the proposal, the better its chances of being funded. Ellis Bozzolo, a member of the city's sub-committee for Storm-water Abatement will follow through.

De-icing Strategies – Best Practices for Reducing Salt Use

Jennifer mentioned an informative session the town had with Phil Sexton, the CEO of WIT Advisers, a consulting firm based in Schenectady, that specializes in helping businesses, institutions, and municipalities manage winter conditions with a minimum of salt by adjusting its de-icing strategies to maximize results and switching from using rock salt to using saltwater brine. Better practices, Sexton maintains, can significantly reduce by as much as 40% the cost of de-icing. Jennifer said the transition to using brine, rather than salt (as Sexton advocates), must take place over the long-term as old salt trucks are replaced with new trucks with brine tanks. In addition, she added, it's a complex issue because "it's difficult to change the whole system without having someone internally, someone in the highway department, who wants to make it work." She said it could very well be a ten-year project. In their talks with Sexton, the town was given an estimate of \$5,000-\$9,000 in consulting fees for an assessment of needs and current practices. She noted that Sexton did a corporate project for Wegmans that included many of the Wegmans stores but not the Geneva store. She suggested Wegmans could be persuaded to work with Sexton in Geneva and that could serve as a demonstration project illustrating how the program works and whether it is effective or not. Mark said his highway superintendent has been given a video, featuring Sexton's work, to be shown to his crew. The link to the video is: <https://app.box.com/s/agichrit1dnq8xj9nbp0wh657eyc0e4r>

Further discussion

Jennifer suggested both committees start making lists of projects that might be done together. We also talked about other programs the town has sponsored a Senior Clean-Out Day. Senior Clean-Out Day was offered to senior citizens age 65+ and/or their families to help sort through unwanted household items to remove recyclables and determine what goes to the landfill.

Jacob said ten households participated. The town plans to hold a Free Day where anyone can bring something he or she would like to get rid of. Whatever is left at the end of the day will be sorted to remove recyclables and then hauled away as trash.

Asked how the town publicizes events, Mark said they were advertised on the town's Facebook page, an email flash was sent to town residents, and an ad placed in the *Finger Lakes Times*.