**Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee**

**August 24, 2023**

**4:30pm**

Members present: **Judy Dorsey**; **John Cameron**, Public Works Director; **Vanessa Berry** **,** **Terry Berry**, City Councilor; **Kathy Brown**, City Councilor; **Nancy Rines**, **Kelly Hare**, Public Works Admin.

1. **Review and approval of minutes from July 24, 2023 meeting**

Motion made by Kathy Brown to accept the minutes, seconded by John Cameron. All in favor.

1. **Status report regarding community survey**

There are still issues with the community survey; however, Judy, Kathy, and Vanessa will continue to work on it in the days ahead.

1. **Status report regarding Hatch Hill Landfill**

The data collected has caused them to go back to the drawing board with the vertical expansion. However, they still intend to put an application in with DEP (Department of Environmental Protection)

1. **Conversation with Kathy Cutler regarding recycling options within the City**

Kathy Cutler did not know about Troiano and the plans for a future transfer station. Therefore, it was agreed that it doesn’t make sense to circulate a flyer about recycling at this time since the options about recycling are unknown.

Regarding compost bins, Maine Resource Recovery Association does a sale every year on compost bins. Judy and Kathy Cutler discussed possibly doing a sale on these bins in the spring. Although, they are scaling back on selling these bins due to lack of interest, it’s possible to gather interest from citizens first and then place orders in advance for those who want one to avoid purchasing many bins the City could potentially be stuck with. Vanessa suggested managing a table at an event where the City could promote and educate compost bins and recycling to citizens who may otherwise not know about the program. (Judy noted that we only order the # of bins that have been purchased/paid for.)

1. **Discussion with City Manager Andrew Carlton about Troiano’s transfer station and options**

There are three possibilities for recycling in the City of Gardiner.

1. Recycling at Troiano’s new facility in Gardiner.

This is possible if we have enough volume to make this work. The question is, do we include other communities or just the City of Gardiner.

1. Place “Silver Bullets” at a designated area within the City.

Some questions with regard to the Silver Bullets are:

* Who will have access?
* Will there be enough volume to make it worthwhile?
* How do we pay for it?

1. A regional recycling approach, i.e., with neighboring communities

At a previous meeting, TJ from Troiano stated the estimated cost to purchase a bag for trash and/or recycling could be roughly $13-$15/bag. The bags would be color coded, and the price difference reflects what will go in the bag to avoid having residents weigh their trash going in. Kathy Brown wonders if people will want to pay this price when Hatch Hill charges $6-$11/300lbs. Judy mentioned that the City may not continue to pay to allow citizens to use Hatch Hill in the future and that Troiano said they will not be charging the City a per capita fee, but only charging tipping fees. If the City decides to stop using Hatch Hill, the trash haulers will not be able to bring trash from Gardiner there unless Hatch Hill allows it. Historically, if a town does not have a contract with Hatch Hill, that town’s trash cannot be brought there.

Andy added although there has been no conversation yet with City Council, there will be in the future, and he wants to sit down with TJ from Troiano to discuss the bag fees and more specifically what size bags these will be. Currently, it is assumed the bag size is your typical 13-gallon kitchen bag. He feels these fees are too expensive for most people. Kathy Brown feels that although TJ seems very willing to work with the City, the City has a duty to work with and for the people of Gardiner.

Andy feels we’re going to have to wait to decide, but that in November, we will reup with Hatch Hill and will continue to have discussions about the future. Vanessa noted the municipality has an obligation to provide for the disposal of materials and therefore we must have a contract for a destination. Judy disagrees, she states the law says that, but she has asked both DEP and Maine Municipal Association and they have said there just needs to be an option for trash disposal. Vanessa noted, if one day the trash haulers went out of business there would be no plan for trash disposal within the city. Andy agrees we would need an agreement to ensure that citizens have somewhere to dispose of their trash.

Another option for recycling is the Silver Bullet. The issue is, where would we put it, who would manage it? The City is already short-staffed and it is agreed that a Silver Bullet would have to either be monitored, to prevent people from disposing of inappropriate items, or locked up at night for similar reasons. Andy feels that between staffing issues, costs associated with the Silver Bullet, and questions about where to put it, the best scenario for recycling in Gardiner is a regional approach. He feels that by spreading the costs and fees as well as staffing with surrounding communities who wish to join us, we can provide a better service to the community. Financially, he feels this makes the most sense and historically City Council is very interested in a regional approach. The ambulance system is currently a great example of a regional approach for the City that is working well. Judy volunteered to contact neighboring communities to see if they want to participate in a discussion about a possible regional facility.

Some questions for future discussion:

* If a Silver Bullet is placed at Troiano, will they have staff who can monitor it?

If we can get a Silver Bullet at Troiano and staff it through Troiano, we can divert the per capita fees we pay to Hatch Hill and use them for recycling (container costs, hauling costs, etc.).

* Will Troiano take universal waste such as TVs, computers, etc.? If not, where will people take them?
* Will the smaller haulers be able to use the recycling facility?

The meeting adjourned 5:40pm.