

CITY OF DUBUQUE - COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

GOVERNMENTAL BODY: Resilient Community Advisory Commission (RCAC)

DATE: October 5, 2023

TIME: 5:00 pm

LOCATION: Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Katharine Connolly, Robin Kennicker, Steven Drahozal, Adam Hoffman, Jake Kohlhaas, Dean Boles

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sandra Evans, Josh Chamberland, Lalith Jayawickrama

STAFF PRESENT: Gina Bell, Amanda Lewis

Commissioner Kohlhaas called the meeting to order at 5:06 pm.

TEST AGENDA

MINUTES APPROVAL: Kennicker motioned to approve the September minutes. Katherine seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

NEW BUSINESS

1. Sustainable Dubuque Grants Recommendation

Drahozal motioned to approve Sustainable Dubuque Grant Recommendation. Kennicker seconded. Boles abstained. Motion carried.

2. Solid Waste Agency grant support (from March) – Ken Miller, DMASWA and Jake Jansen, Public Works

Jake Jensen, Resource Management Supervisor with City of Dubuque. FY22&FY23 Waste Minimization Reports presented. Worked closely with consultants to obtain data with benchmarking goals from 2037 Imagine Dubuque Plan. Curbside collection is offered to single family homes and buildings of 6 units or less for trash collection and recycling options. Additionally, have organic collection, which is mainly yard waste and diversion programs for TVs, appliances, paint, etc. FY23 total customer counts: 20,658 combined uses of single-family homes up to buildings with 6 or less units.

Resource Management Department has three goals:

- Goal #1: Increase the overall waste diversion rate, including recycling, yard waste, and food scraps.
 - o FY22 has a 22.87% diversion rate.
 - o FY23 has a 24.10% diversion rate.
 - o Landfill Tonnage over time graph which trended upwards and peaked during 2020-2021 and is decreasing.
- Goal #2 Reduce per customer annual waste disposal based on landfilled waste and total annual waste generation.
 - o National average waste generation rate per household (2.5 people) per week: 28 pounds for recycling, 59 pounds for waste
 - o Dubuque average waste generation rate per household (2.5 people) per week: 7.5 pounds recycling, 23.7 pounds waste.

- Daily per person waste generation rate is 1.85 pounds in Dubuque and 4.8 pounds in State of Iowa.
- Goal #3 Incorporate greenhouse gas reduction initiative into waste minimization planning using WARM analysis specific to waste diversion efforts. WARM analysis includes:
 - Distance to the disposal sites
 - Presence of a landfill gas recovery system at the landfill
 - Annual precipitation rate

Community engagement, targeting new Dubuque residents, is used to boost waste diversion. Social media, website views and search tools to determine where materials go, utilized cart sticker campaign where QR code is linked to the search tool, with a large usage increase from FY22 to FY23.

Routing software investment is a newer tool to email customers with violations, like extra materials, large items without an appointment, people not having trash out on time, contaminated recycling, etc.

DNR waste characteristic study: DNR measures a load of garbage and sort it out to determine what is the most that makes up a typical load in the landfill:

- Food waste
- Plastic film
- Textiles and leather
- Mixed recyclable paper
- Compostable paper

About 27% of material going into the landfill in Dubuque is food waste.

Next Steps:

- Develop waste minimization long term plan
- Waste minimization intern (funded for FY24)
- Invest in outreach
- Recycling cart expansion- switching from bins to carts
- Revamp food scrap recycling
- Promote reuse

Question: Are they still looking at ideas of recycling construction materials?

Answer: Don't collect it at curbside collection, but it can possibly be donated and reused via Habitat Restore.

Question: What is the plan for a waste minimization plan?

Answer: Looking at hiring a consultant to do some of the work and find potential comparisons with other cities.

Update on environmental Study: Ken Miller, Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency

- Consultant is preparing construction design for drainage around compost site to install the compost pads
- Part of plan will include permitting assistance and look at what is the capacity for food waste so the compost turns out okay rather than sludge. Don't want to take in more food waste than can properly be managed because there will be odor issues.

Question: Will we be able to continue to have a City compost facility?

Answer: Facility will be a permitted site, but not with an unlimited amount of taking in food waste.

Question: Out of roughly 25% of food waste that is going into the landfill, how much of that can be diverted?

Answer: Facility will be able to take in 200 tons of straight food waste per year because they don't have enough other materials (yard waste) to mix with it, which would almost double the amount that is currently taken in (which is 104 tons per year). 25% would be 3,000 tons, but some of it would not be able to be composted (like meat and dairy. Meat cannot be composted under State of Iowa's regulations without significant changes to the composting facility).

Question: When will the composting facility be up to date?

Answer: Most likely, next spring.

Composting program is through Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency and is not a City program. Want to continue discussions about what is the best option for food waste diversion.

3. Public Input related to DMASWA food scrap compost

Paul Schultz: Has concerns about the need to hire people who know how to manage the composting facility. Met with people who recently moved to Dubuque and people who have concerns about not being able to compost their food scraps due to a lack of space on their own properties.

Terry Stewart: Wants to understand why meat can't be composted. Desires to have the City maximize potential for displacing food waste from the landfill. Has concerns about food scraps going into the landfill. Coaches people at church to educate people how to properly compost and recycle. Attends events and has a leave no trace philosophy.

Paul Uzel: Revamp does not mean reduce and would like to see the language changed to increase the food scrap program. Without food scrap recycling program, many people can't compost at home.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Policy Work** – Review ordinances and policies as they relate to Climate Action Plan and determine subcommittees and where to focus plane height, urban agriculture, and tree canopy. Reports from Commissioners regarding Climate Action Plan (CAP) activities:

Bell will update City website with current greenhouse gas inventory soon.

Next Steps:

Follow up next meeting about how Commission can support a solid waste plan to maximize waste reduction and composting.

HOW DID I SHOW UP? COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

Kennicker discussed a tour via the Parks and Rec Commission to discuss park names that are very small and just have street names attached to the park. Conversations included creative ideas that would fit in very small parks.

Boles discussed improvement to home improvement loan package. If you are so low income that you won't ever be able to pay back the loan, it has now turned into a grant.

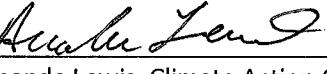
Jake went to commissioner picnic and movie screening at National Mississippi River Museum.

Motion to adjourn by all.

NEXT MEETING: The next commission meeting will occur on November 2, 2023, at 5pm at the Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) in the Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

ADJOURNMENT: The Commission adjourned at 6:30pm.

Minutes approved by: 
Jacob Kohlhaas, Commission Chair

Prepared by: 
Amanda Lewis, Climate Action Coordinator