

***City Council Committee Reports for 2020***

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**DATE:** March 2, 2020    **RECORDER:** McCauley-Chair

**COMMITTEE:** Public Safety

<b>Councillors Attending</b>		<b>Others Attending</b>	<b>Address</b>
Barry N. Connell		<b><i>Molly Ettenborough</i></b>	
Joseph H. Devlin		<b><i>Art Currier</i></b>	
Afroz Khan	<b><i>x</i></b>	<b><i>Lynne Schow</i></b>	
Byron J. Lane	<b><i>X</i></b>	<b><i>f-Councillor Larry Giunta</i></b>	
James J. McCauley	<b><i>X</i></b>	<b><i>Laurel Hanke</i></b>	
Heather L. Shand			
Charles F. Tontar			
Bruce L. Vogel			
Christine E. Wallace	<b><i>X</i></b>		
Sharif I. Zeid	<b><i>x</i></b>		
Jared J. Eigerman			

***AGENDA ITEMS***

***ACTION TAKEN***

<b><i>APPL002_02_24_2020 Ride to End Alz (6/6)</i></b>	<b><i>Recommend Approval 3-0</i></b>
<b><i>APPL003_02_24_2020 Newburyport PMC Kids Ride (6/14)</i></b>	<b><i>Recommend: Conditional approval (insurance form) 3-0</i></b>
<b><i>Comm 227_02_10_2020 Update from Waste Stream Task Force.</i></b>	<b><i>Recommend: Keep in Committee</i></b>

**Notes:**

**APPL002: Ride to End ALZ.**

*No one was present to speak on behalf of the ride, however the paperwork package was complete: App, map, signatures, and Ins form. Vote 3-0 to recommend*

**APPL003: Newburyport PMC Kids Ride.**

*No one was present to speak on behalf of the ride, however the paperwork package was mostly complete: App, map, signatures, no Ins form. As a note there is another race approved for that day, Comm 218 Town & Country Half Marathon. That race starts/ends at Riverwalk Brewery travels Malcom Hoyt-Scotland Rd-Turkey Hill Rd loop. It will not conflict with the use of Cashman Park, Vote 3-0 to recommend conditional approval.*

**Comm227 Update from Waste Stream**

*Councillor Wallace asked Molly Ettenborough to give us some background and an overview of what the WSTF wanted from the memo.*

*Molly Ettenborough (summarized): Feb'19 submitted a waste stream proposal, got feedback, made changes and resubmitted In July. That proposal died in PS committee. In 2020 WSTF wants to restart the discussions.*

**More background can be found at**

<https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/recycling-and-trash/solid-waste-collection/food-waste/pages/trash-proposal-pay-for-overflow>

*Q: from Councillor Khan: Has WSTF received new inputs? Ans MollyE: No  
Councillor Lane: During Campaign he had lots of inputs from residents...all against the previous proposals. He wants to be environmentally positive, but is not a fan of add'l fees.*

**Councillor Wallace:**

*Asked why July proposal did not come out of committee? Ans: Too controversial during election. City hit the pause button.*

*Shared that her household is interested in Composting and recently joined Black Earth. Stressed its ease, and suggested more education about the impact of composting and investigate incentives*

*Q: Can the City negotiate lower rates? Ans: Yes with more users*

*Q: is there a plan to also have collection points within the City? Ans: Yes investigating*

*Q: Can we learn more about city services on this (ie within the schools)? Ans: Yes, NHS has embraced, Molin newly embraced, Bres still has work to do.*

*Q: Has the WSTF run cost impact scenarios? Ans: Yes*

*Comment by Councillor Khan: Through her experience we need incentives to enroll folks. For ex: even when it was free, City only had 400 users (out of 8800 households).*

*Comment by Molly E.: Mello priced is fixed, Wheelabrator (incinerator) is \$68.70/ton, and recycling will be 110/ton.*

**Councillor Zeid**

*Suggests moving away from PAYT. Does not want to 1. Introduce a bag vendor into the discussion, 2. Fairness (size of home etc), 3. Finances: cheapest option is status quo. Interested in savings vs moving costs to different piles, 4. 1 bag/1 barrel...need definitions of households to be equal.*

*Suggestions for WSTF: move towards composting. He uses composting and sees the impact. Suggest a 5 year timeline (which may coincide with our contracts). Free didn't get folks to sign up, need to simplify the whole process. Costs don't have to offset today.*

*Councillor Wallace: Q: 300k cost was suggested, is that still valid? Ans: No, would need to revisit with new assumptions. During canvassing folks were concerned if they have a medical issue which means disposing items that are not diverted to recycling or composting. Need to think through on Incentives and not "Dis" Incentives. Q. Can locations for pickup be expanded to other than the south end only? A. This can be considered. Will require working through council for approval.*

*Councillor Lane: Have you looked at the cost of only doing composting and the reduction in trash versus the bag fees? Was the bag fees the most financially acceptable? How much would the city pay per weight of composting? Q: Rates will go up? Ans: Yes. Mello is a fixed price to pick in city since trucks will still be driving through for collection.*

*Wheelabrator is \$68.70 / ton (+2.5% year). Recycling costs are increasing and is at \$110/ton. In 2023 we expect a much larger increase from Wheelabrator. As space will be even tighter than today.*

*Chair Opened Public Comment: (summarized below)*

*Art Currier: Happy that the WSTF has restarted. NHS kids doing great things. Encourages more input so that the WSTF can create more options. We all need to think long term. WSTF created an FAQ last year for residents. Would recommend that folks review that.*

*Lynn Schow: Two topics: PAYT and Composting.*

*Not a fan of PAYT. Feels like paying twice. Has 6 people in her home, trash in 1 64gal container, 2 recycling bins. Paying above that is a tax. Education is key to changing behavior. For ex: she self-composts as she is a gardener. Sees the impact. Is now making choices wrt using restaurants that don't have environmental takeout containers. Asks if we can expand our program to include Businesses? Most folks want to do the right thing, but may need some incentives to start.*

*Larry Giunta (f-city councillor): Was a member of the Pub Safety committee last year. Proposal died because of the election (pause), and because the proposed finances did not work, the weight of the trash is the main driver, but the composting program was not mature enough as an option. Glad to see the conversation restart. Suggests City-wide composting with the goal being to reduce the weight sent to the incinerator*

*Chair Closed Public Comment:*

*Councillor Zeid: Q: Is the issue of private condo's, private ways etc being addressed? All residents need pick up, need to simplify the plan? Ans: Councillor Khan indicated that she held a resident meeting on the previous trash ordinance (one free cart option) and many residents from condo's brought up this issue. Since then she has been working with the Planning Department, Health Director and some condo owners in creating equitable rules and regulations on municipal trash services.*

*Q: What are the commercial trash services provided by the city? A: Pick up on Business district only (1x), some businesses will contract for more days.  
Q; Should downtown businesses be part of the composting program?*

*Councillor McCauley: In wrapping up the discussion, suggested to WSTF to come up with concrete goals actions against them. Some illustrative examples: reducing weight by 20% in year 1 to be accomplished by adding 500 Households to composting. Or Reduce contamination in Recycling stream 30% and thus volume through education and spot checks.*

*Motion to Hold in committee allowing WSTF to come back with updates. 3-0  
Motion to Adjourn 3-0*

## *Additional Comments from the Council*

### Questions from Committee and City Councilors

1. How to address people with medical issues?
2. Composting is of interest. Garbage is nothing after composting. Incentives are a better offer than disincentives. Voluntary program versus a fee based and who can't afford it. Expanding composting.
  - a. Can cost come down for composting? Yes, as more people sign up costs can come down.
  - b. Can we expand the locations for composting? Right now there is only one location in the South End. It may happen but needs to get city council approval.
  - c. Is city doing all it can before asking residents? Schools have quite a bit of waste so it would be excellent to demonstrate best practices.
  - d. Have you looked at the cost of only doing composting and the reduction in trash versus the bag fees? Was the bag fees the most financially acceptable? How much would the city pay per weight of composting. Compost weighs the most; cost will come down as increase.
3. Waste Stream Task Force
  - a. Steer away from PAYT. Community is not in support; Ward 4 and Ward 6 not in support. More time on the PAYT is not fruitful.
  - b. What is the philosophy? Weary of introducing another vendor; Wastezero is not good to introduce. Does not like the bag concepts?
  - c. Fairness argument is inherently not something that is viable as an argument. Bob Barker prepared spreadsheets, current system of doing nothing is the lowest of the two and the pie is shifting so there is no real savings; the aggregate is something less.
  - d. True savings is to indicate that there is a way. \$1.5M in the budget is dedicated to waste. How can we give that back to residents where larger households would spend more money.
  - e. Skepticism is on one bag and one barrel. Households don't equate to anything and the gallons don't really tell you the cost.
  - f. What the Task Force should do is push composting and do an incentive for that? A better waste system needs to have a new age of recycle. Need to teach people how to do it. Put the \$300K into the city's budget and cover Black Earth. Reducing the cost is not compelling but have the city eat the cost.
  - g. City Council support on financing composting. Offset of weight to put the cost down.

4. City-wide Composting for the City – Need to find out what the cost is for that. Trash is going up per ton. Did we run numbers to see what the offset would be in cost? Mello will still be driving down all streets. Wheelabrator cost is \$68/ton. 2023 contract ends. \$90-100/ton to happen in 2023.
5. Recycling is increasing in cost as well. Started with China and then the National Sword. Material was contaminated with food and couldn't be used. Many things started changing.
6. Three years is timeframe we have to make some institutional changes.
7. Composting is the way to go and then to head towards.
8. Condos and private ways. Generally speaking; All resident exempted right now because of the planning board decisions. Single family and two-family homes. Large complexes are in a more complicated with the bins. Grandfathering. Need a rule on 6 or 7 units. Dumpsters....easy rules.
9. What are the commercial services? Pick-up truck that does the downtown; Mello on the city does the downtown district. DPS picks up only from pedestrian barrels.
  - a. Composting for downtown business?
10. Task Force come up with tangible goals with some actions (i.e. reducing "dirty" recycling – single stream recycling removal, education needs to be done) tough to make mandatory but maybe a goal to get a certain number of restaurants on board.
  - a. Not saving money but reducing trash generation; waste diversion through options; several options and plans that allow folks reduce overall the drivers that is by us.

### ***Additional Public Comment***

**From:** Amy Roberts <amyg.roberts@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, March 2, 2020 3:53 PM

**To:** Sharif Zeid <szeid@cityofnewburyport.com>; Jared Eigerman <jeigerman@cityofnewburyport.com>; Barry Connell <envirocom@comcast.net>; Joe Devlin <jdevlinnbpt@gmail.com>; Afroz Khan <afrozkh@cityofnewburyport.com>; Charles Tontar <tontar44@comcast.net>; bruce@vogelatlarge.com; Heather Shand <HShand@cityofnewburyport.com>; christinewallace.ward4@gmail.com; mccauleyward5@gmail.com; byron@byronlanenbpt.com

**Subject:** Thoughts on trash/composting

Dear Councillors Eigerman, Connell, Devlin, Khan, Tontar, Vogel, Zeid, Shand, Wallace, McCauley, Lane, and Mayor Holaday,

I am reaching out to you after studying the hybrid PAYT programs outlined by Molly Ettenborough. I understand the issues with our trash weight and the lack of final destination for recyclables. I am extremely interested in taking the right steps environmentally, and have investigated the decisions that other forward thinking Cities have made in their zero waste initiatives. I believe that instead of discussing trash bag options and payment scenarios, our first priority is instead to figure out exactly how to implement a mandatory municipal composting program to include residential and commercial addresses.

Mandatory citywide composting would serve to significantly decrease the weight of our trash, and therefore the City's cost to incinerate it. I have been participating in the Black Earth curbside composting program

for several months, and have noticed a drastic decrease in our family's trash. This service would benefit all residents, and should be free of charge. Black Earth's method of high heat composting can accept more food waste items than backyard composting, and therefore takes more items out of the trash. I think the smartest plan is to figure out how to provide all residents with curbside green containers for compost, and how to mandate that local businesses compost as well. Families living in apartments or dense residential housing should be provided with containers suitable for transporting table scraps to the nearest drop-off point in their complex.

Resident participation in a composting program will certainly be key, and I believe we would maximize participation through making the program mandatory as well as having an excellent comprehensive marketing and education program. I have confidence that education can be tackled by people of all ages who are already interested in this effort for environmental reasons. The NHS Environmental Club has already launched a composting effort at the high school and is collaborating with younger students to implement this at the Bresnahan, Molin and Nock Schools as well. These students would facilitate their own family's participation. The Senior Community Center would be a great place to disseminate information as well. I'm confident that the inspired and capable staff in our City's Recycling Dept would do an excellent job facilitating education in collaboration with many local advocacy groups as well.

I think that AFTER we implement this composting initiative, we can then assess our trash weight, costs, and a new trash plan if needed. For now, we can take inspiration from other leading Cities like Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and even Beverly MA, and pursue the composting solution. This is the first step we take if we are doing this for the benefit of the environment.

FYI----

<https://pathtopositive.org/how-city-composting-benefits-communities-and-climate/>;  
<https://smartasset.com/mortgage/the-economics-of-composting>"

For businesses and institutions, a compelling reason to compost is to save money by cutting back on landfill fees. In 2011, Middlebury College in Vermont saved \$100,000 on landfill fees by composting 90% of food waste generated on campus. The 370 tons of food Middlebury composted translated into a savings of \$270 per ton of waste. Composting is catching on at sports venues across the country. California's O.Co Coliseum, where the Athletics and the Raiders play, cut its waste hauling costs by over 20% when it stepped up its composting game. The Mariners' Safeco Field composted 85% of all stadium food waste in 2014. Between composting and recycling, the ballpark diverted over 2.4 million pounds of waste from area landfills in 2014, for a savings of \$131,000 in disposal costs.

<https://frontiergroup.org/blogs/blog/fq/four-reasons-why-every-town-and-city-should-compost>  
<https://www.inquirer.com/science/climate/philadelphia-compost-food-waste-20190619.html>

Thank you very much,  
Amy Roberts  
5 Dexter Street