

## Plymouth Environmental Advisory Board

March 16, 2021

Start time 7pm via Zoom

Attendance: Bill, Debbie, Andrew, Agam, Carolyn, Mike C & Eunice

Staff in Attendance: Rick Carbo (Buildings & Grounds Director) & Karen Bramblett (Council Member)

Guests: Chris Loschiavo (Plymouth Township Public Works Director) & Colleen Falicki (owner, Back to Earth Compost Crew)

### 1.) Pledge of Allegiance

### 2.) February 2021 Minutes – Motion to accept: Andy; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Debbie

3) **Recycling Status** – Presentation by Chris Loschiavo, Plymouth Township's Public Works Director on the status of trash collection and recycling. Here is a link to the recorded meeting; Chris' presentation starts at time stamp 3:25 and runs to time stamp 40:33. <https://youtu.be/NA2iRz6QQ90>. Some highlights include:

- In 2008, Plymouth was making \$12/ton for recycling. We are now paying \$59.95/ton for trash removal and pay \$70/ton for recycling.
- Plymouth is part of a 7-municipality consortium where we dump recycling at Upper Dublin transfer station which is then managed by J. P. Mascaro at their Birdsboro facility.
- Recycling has shifted from single-stream to considering to reverting back to dual stream/segregation by commodity. Township would like to figure out how to make money on the commodity (paper, plastic, glass, cardboard, aluminum, etc) before the township shifts to having two different bins (one for paper, one for everything else).
- There is no market for glass recycling. There is still a market for tin/aluminum. Paper/cardboard would be separated from everything else.
- The biggest contaminant in recycle bins are plastic bags. These bags get entangled in the equipment that require the machines to be shut down and be cut off by hand with razor blades. There is also too much residue on glass, plastic, aluminum in the recycle bin; we need to do a better job of cleaning things before tossing in recycle bins.
- Covered Device Act of 2010: can't throw out TVs, electronics. Plymouth is one of the few townships that take back TVs. NEW UPDATE: No fee for residents to recycle TVs with Plymouth Township.
- From reports Chris shared with our group, in 2004, of all the solid waste that was collected (trash, recyclables, wood, etc), 16.7% was actually recycled. In 2014, Plymouth was recycling 52% of all solid waste picked up. Currently, Plymouth recycles about 47% of solid waste picked up.
- Chris hopes recycling will recover, but it will be just paper, cardboard, & aluminum. Landfills were using glass as a cover, but the DEP has said it wasn't a good use for a cover. Not sure if the plastic market will come back.
- Statewide recycling in PA began in 1988 with the Waste Reduction Act (PA ACT 101) of that mandates larger municipalities to recycle for both residential as well as commercial establishments (including schools, churches, retailers, office, non-profits, and others) according to the plan their municipality has created.
- Chris has to quantify all recycling from the haulers going to HOAs, commercial properties, as well as residents in single homes. Plymouth hires the service of Hough Associates to do calculations for Grant 904 (Performance Recycling Grant) and are awarded more by working with other municipalities.
- The biggest challenge for Public Works is to (re)educate resident on what is able to be recycled & how to make our recycling cleaner so there are less rejected product as it goes through the sorters.

**4) Community Composting** – joining in the conversation on waste, was Colleen Falicki, from [backtoearthcompost.com](http://backtoearthcompost.com). Colleen would like to help others find a way to compost. She started in business in 2017. They work with farmer’s markets, curbside for residents, and commercial food waste and breweries. Twice per year, the organization gives back composting to subscribers. They haul approx. 3 tons per week. Compost consists of leaves, twigs, chipped wood to help as feed waste, as you just can’t use food waste in compost. Question raised: How can residents be incentivized to start composting? Colleen’s organization charges reasonable monthly rate. Some other municipalities have help subsidize the cost.

It was suggested that perhaps a survey could be sent out, similar to what was previously sent to residents, to see if any interest in composting (learning opportunities, proximity to suggested location for compost site at Harriet Wetherill Park, etc).

**5) Zero Waste/Covanta** – It will cripple the Plymouth Public Works to try to manage the logistical aspect to go anywhere but Covanta as they are in our backyard, even if another hauler has their own landfill. Our township trucks dump twice a day at Covanta. If they had to take to a landfill, it would mean the trucks would be off their routes for 2 hours. We don’t think we can ever actually get to Zero Waste, but good to keep all eyes on reducing waste.

Plastic bags: a few local municipalities have implemented a plastic bag ban. However, PA State has overridden those bans. But Mont Co Public Works will be discussing this topic further with participating municipalities.

Covanta: They are very aware of their perception to the neighborhood. Due to the fines, they incurred, Covanta required to make upgrades to electrical parts, scrubbers, steam vents, and more. There is a list of needed upgrades in the Covanta report: <https://www.plymouthtownship.org/wpfb-file/covanta-air-quality-impact-assessment-7-31-2020-pdf/>

**6) Follow-up on Smoking Ordinance proposal – reaching out to solicitor for next steps?**

**7) Ready for 100 Plymouth –**

a) **Clean Energy Transition Planning program** – The ETP will be presented at the April Council workshop on Mon, April 5. The classes that Bill and Andy have been attending will continue through May 2021. Following presentation to Council, the next step would be to start community outreach and collaboration with nearby municipalities.

b) **Villanova Spring 2020 Project**– anticipate their presentation on the heat and transportation assessment conducted on Township to be conducted at Council’s May workshop.

**8) Tree Planting for Spring 2021** – Expected date is Sat, April 24<sup>th</sup>. Rick ordered 10 trees that he’ll pick up 4/21-4/23. The plan is to plant them at Colwell Park & Sandwood Park, the neighborhoods most impacted by Covanta.

**9) Facebook** – continue to invite your friends and neighbors to follow/like.

10) **Announcements from Rick** – Major focus on the remodel at the Township building Just starting outdoor projects; some renovations at some park bathrooms.

Next Meeting: Tues, April 20th at 7pm - via Zoom

Meeting ended 9:04 pm. Motion to close: Debbie; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Andy