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Date: November 18, 2018
To: Jane Howington, City Manager
Cc: Eric Hutchinson, Asst. Public Works Director Sonya Mottram, PW Support Supervisor
From: Frank J. Comeriato Jr., Assistant City Manager-Operations
Re: City Recycling Drop-Off Center

Background

In 2016 the Public Works Department relocated the City's Recycling Drop-off Center from 95 Owen Brown Street to Oak Grove Park on Barlow Road. The relocation was intended to be a temporary home for the drop-off center while Phase II was being designed and built. Since before the relocation, Public Works has been tracking the operations and expenses required to keep the drop-off center open. From an operations standpoint the current drop off center costs more for general upkeep including removal and disposal of non-recyclable materials than it receives in grant funds and revenue on an annual basis.

Current Status

Based on these continuous operational and budgetary challenges, the Environmental Awareness Committee has made a recommendation to close the drop-off center at Oak Grove Park. More importantly the EAC wishes to begin putting more direct emphasis on educating the community regarding the recycling services that all trash vendors in Hudson offer as a component of their solid waste services. This objective will utilize city communications and publications to distribute materials. In addition work is now being carried out to require more recycling education and communications requirements as part of the preferred hauler contract agreement. Using these types of available resources, the EAC is committed to bringing residential curbside recycling to the highest participation rates as possible.

Lastly, the EAC has begun to survey and analyze recycling practices in the historic and core downtown business district. This is a work in progress and will include engaging property and business owners to establish how recycling is being achieved currently and helping to develop potential solutions for creating the most effective way to handle recycling efforts in this area.

Plan Moving Forward

Taking into consideration that trash hauler companies operating within the city are required to offer curbside recycling services as part of their solid waste service, and the ever increasing operational and cost challenges in offering a public drop-off recycling center, below are several bullet points describing the current status and the direction the EAC would like to move toward.

- To keep the current recycling drop-off center in operation at Barlow Road Park annual expenses are approximately \$3000 after grant funds and paper recycling revenues have been considered.
- The current operation has become more of a dumping ground for non-recyclables such as paint, and tires and chemicals as well as unwanted junk items than a true recycling center.
- The EAC's focus needs to be directed towards educating and promoting residential curbside recycling services and eliminating costly, unsightly and unfunded recycling drop-off centers.
- The EAC is actively investigating recycling in the historic and core downtown business district, including future Phase II businesses to gain a better understanding of current recycling practices and developing a solution driven plan looking forward. Phase II development plans should incorporate recycling needs of new and existing businesses.
- Actively develop and implement the education and engagement with the community through City communications resources and through the preferred hauler vendor advertising and customer communications to ensure the public is aware of the closure and the options provided by local trash and recycling haulers.
- The EAC has recommended the facility be closed by May 1, 2019. This date will give the EAC and staff sufficient time to publically announce the closing of the center while simultaneously releasing continued public information on recycling options.

Recommendation

I am in full support of these efforts brought forward by the EAC and Public Works staff. With the current City requirement that all trash vendors operating in the City offer curbside recycling services as part of their solid waste service, we need to re-think the value of the City using resources to support a tax payer drop-off center.

I recommend the current City Recycling Drop-off Center be closed by May 1, 2019 and the area be returned to its original state for park use. I further recommend that the EAC move forward with their plan to announce the center's closing and begin to execute the comprehensive communications and education campaign as they have set out to accomplish.

The EAC is requesting support from the administration and City Council to move forward with the plan as soon as possible. The EAC also asks for comments, questions or concerns before executing the plan.