

**CITY OF NEW HOPE
4401 XYLON AVENUE NORTH
HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA 55428**

Citizen Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting

June 8, 2010
New Hope City Hall, 7 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pronovici called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Kilsdonk, London, Nolte (arrived 7:30 p.m.)
Pronovici, Riley, Sievert, Skalland, Terres (arrived 7:05 p.m.),
Wills

Absent: None

Staff Present: Shari French, Staff Liaison

Also Present: Dan Ruiz, Hennepin Recycling Group

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner Sievert to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2010 as written. Commissioner London seconded the motion. Voting in favor: Commissioners Kilsdonk, London, Pronovici, Riley, Sievert, Skalland, Wills. Opposed: None. Absent: Commissioners Nolte, Terres. Motion carried.

**CONTINUE "GO GREEN"
DISCUSSION**

Dan Ruiz, Hennepin Recycling Group (HRG), addressed the commissioners. He handed out informational packets and explained that Hennepin Recycling Group is a joint powers agreement between the cities of Brooklyn Center, Crystal and New Hope. He also noted that he is employed by the city of Brooklyn Park and works under contract with the other three cities to run their environmental recycling programs.

He stated that information shared this evening would include curbside recycling, recycling and waste disposal education, yard waste site, special material drop-off, bulky waste curbside collection, Hennepin County recycling center, and city facility recycling.

Mr. Ruiz reported that curbside cart recycling began in 2002 and was picked up every other week. He mentioned that there were a number of households with two carts, and noted that the maximum number of carts per household was three.

Mr. Ruiz referred to the graphs outlining recycling participation, and commented that New Hope has had above average participation in the program compared to Brooklyn Park and the Hennepin County average.

Commissioner Wills wondered how the participation percentage was determined.

Mr. Ruiz replied that the truck driver would tally each house with a recycling cart at its curb on a given day.

Mr. Ruiz next referred to recycling pounds per household, and reported that New Hope's participation was again above average. He explained that this information was used by the county as a basis for its grant funding, and noted that the HRG program received approximately \$170,000 per year from Hennepin County.

Recycling/Waste Disposal Education was briefly discussed. He reported that a recycling calendar and guide was published annually and mailed to every residence. He also noted that a Recycling and Materials Management Guide was published every two years, and was available for pick-up at city hall. He added that guides were mailed upon request.

Mr. Ruiz then reviewed yard waste and reminded the commissioners of the black plastic bag ban that had recently gone into effect. He noted that residences must use compostable bags for curbside pickup of yard waste. He also mentioned that the Maple Grove yard waste facility was available to all New Hope residents free of charge.

Mr. Ruiz briefly discussed the popularity of the Special Material Drop-off program, which is offered twice per year in Brooklyn Park. Mr. Ruiz also noted the popularity of the curbside collection of bulky waste, which is offered every other year. He reported that the cost of that program averaged out to approximately \$21 per residence, and noted that a monthly service fee covered the cost of that program.

Mr. Ruiz announced that paper milk cartons and juice boxes could now be recycled, and he planned to meet with Waste Management staff to promote the recycling of those additional materials.

Chair Pronovici wondered whether the plastic caps on juice and dairy product cartons was recyclable.

Mr. Ruiz replied that plastic caps were not recyclable. He noted however, that Aveda Corporation offered a cap recycling program at five facilities in Minnesota.

Mr. Ruiz also noted that scrap metal, such as doorknobs and metal frames could now be recycled curbside. He commented that he would like to have more route audits performed to ensure that recycling carts included only those items that were available for recycling, and noted that the recycling facility often received items that were not recyclable.

Mr. Ruiz then discussed organic waste collection, which consisted of food waste, pizza boxes and other non-recyclable paper products. He reported that there were two facilities in the twin cities area that accepted organic waste for composting, and noted that the end product was bagged and sold. He informed the commissioners that MN DOT often purchases the compost material in bulk to

control erosion on road construction projects. Mr. Ruiz also mentioned that organic waste facilities must be carefully managed to control odor. He then briefly reviewed the city of Wayzata's organic waste collection program.

Chair Pronovici wondered how organic waste was bagged for pick-up.

Mr. Ruiz replied that compostable bags or paper bags could be used. He noted that material was picked up weekly at residences in Medina, Elk River, Loretto and Medicine Lake upon request. He also review open hauling systems in Minnetonka and Orono, as well as neighborhood collection systems in Edina and Minneapolis.

Commissioner Wills felt that it would be a good marketing opportunity for waste haulers to promote this extra service.

Mr. Ruiz agreed, and reported that the cost of dumping organic waste was only \$15 per ton, versus \$40-45 per ton for regular trash.

Commissioner Nolte wondered whether communities were making money on their recycling programs.

Mr. Ruiz stated that collection costs still outweighed the income from the sale of the materials, and added that he was not aware of any communities in Minnesota that made money on their recycling programs.

Commissioner Wills inquired whether each city held its own recycling contract.

Mr. Ruiz replied that there were two contracts; one for the city of Brooklyn Park and one for the combined cities of Brooklyn Center, Crystal and New Hope. He explained that the contracts were created based on the number of households, and stated that Brooklyn Park consisted of about 21,000 households and the three cities combined also had about 21,000 households.

Commissioner London noted that recycled electronics were often sold to scrap dealers, and wondered if revenue exceeded expenses for that recycling component.

Mr. Ruiz reported that although some valuable metals were recycled, it was still a net expense. He added that the county paid more to ensure that the material would be processed in North America and would not be shipped overseas.

Commissioner London wondered whether there were any roadblocks to establishing an organic waste recycling program.

Mr. Ruiz gave his opinion that waste haulers might be concerned about the extra work and expense to establish organic waste collection, and whether participation would be high enough to make the program worthwhile.

Commissioner Nolte questioned whether organic materials recycling would require additional personnel.

Mr. Ruiz felt that it should fall within their business model, but added that they would probably want to ensure that residents are using the service to make it more efficient.

Commissioner Kilsdonk wondered whether compostable bags could be used for household trash.

Mr. Ruiz replied yes, but noted that approximately half the waste in the county was incinerated, rather than ending up in a landfill.

Commissioner Wills wondered about the biggest problem that residents might be having with recycling.

Mr. Ruiz stated that plastic bags were probably the biggest concern. He stated that recyclables were sometimes placed in plastic bags and then put in the cart, but noted that plastic bags can wrap around conveyors and cause problems at the recycling facility.

Commissioner Sievert questioned whether there were any changes in the handling of regular refuse.

Mr. Ruiz reported that due to the cost, Hennepin County was no longer participating in the waste to energy program at a facility in Elk River. He added that they were looking into other options for their existing facility in downtown Minneapolis.

Mr. Ruiz also mentioned that pharmaceutical waste and sharps disposal would probably need to be addressed in the future. He stated that those items should be kept separate, and noted that in 2009 the recycling facility received five 55-gallon barrels of needles.

Chair Pronovici wondered whether those items were coming in sharps containers.

Mr. Ruiz replied that they were coming in all types of fashions, and noted that staff must take precautions to ensure their safety.

The commissioners thanked Dan Ruiz for his presentation. He excused himself from the meeting at 8 p.m.

UPDATE ON ICE ARENA ENGINEERING STUDY

Chair Pronovici reported that a meeting had been held the previous week, and had focused on primarily on energy use. He stated that one additional meeting would be held at which time a draft document would be presented. He added that the committee intended to present its findings to the city council on August 16.

BEAUTIFICATION CHECK- IN

Commissioner London stated that he had reported weed violations as he observed them and encouraged the commissioners to report violations as well.

Commissioner Kilsdonk commented that there was a lot of trash at Hidden Valley park.

Chair Pronovici also commented on trash at Civic Center park near the skate park.

PARK REPORTS

Park reports were handed in. Commissioner Kilsdonk took over park responsibilities for Little Acre park and Commissioner Nolte will now oversee Hidden Valley park.

Commissioner Riley commented on graffiti at Fred Sims park.

Commissioner Kilsdonk commented that the trees that were planted at Holiday park last year looked dry.

Ms. French stated that trees were typically watered only during the first year of planting.

Commissioner Kilsdonk again expressed interest in incorporating bike racks throughout the city.

Commissioner Kilsdonk also commented that there is often a lot of trash on the 49th Avenue bridge over Highway 169.

Ms. French encouraged her to call and report it, and offered to provide a number to call.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner London wondered whether there was a link to the recycling calendar and recycling materials guide on the city's website.

Ms. French stated that she would check with the communications coordinator.

Ms. French reported that the city did not receive a grant from Hennepin County for proposed improvements at Lions park at this time.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the commissioners to cancel the July meeting. Chair Pronovici reported that the Citizen Advisory Commission was scheduled to attend the council work session on August 16, and suggested they consider it their regular meeting for the month of August. The commissioners were reminded that they would not be able to meet on the second Tuesday in August due to primary elections. Chair Pronovici informed the commissioners that a joint meeting was being planned in September to discuss tax increment financing with the Planning Commission. A council/commissions picnic was also being planned for September.

Chair Pronovici encouraged the commissioners to send him an email if any issues arise prior to the September meeting.

Commissioner Wills expressed interest in publishing "go green" information on the city's website, including what the city has done, what the city would like to do, and what residents can do.

Commissioner Skalland added that he would also like to point out the steps the city has taken to go green, as well as measurable goals it would like to strive for.

Following a brief discussion, Commissioners Skalland and London volunteered to work together to prepare a draft document for the September meeting.

Commissioner Riley wondered whether the city staffed a booth at the Farmer's Market.

Ms. French responded yes.

Commissioner Riley suggested that the city provide information on recycling at its booth.

Chair Pronovici stated that reevaluation of the dog park at Lions park would be added to a future agenda.

Commissioner London requested an update on the Emerald Ash Borer problem at the next meeting.

Commissioner Nolte wondered if the city would be interested in creating a beautification fund.

Chair Pronovici suggested that Commissioner Nolte prepare a list of ideas, but commented that he would want to know that the public was interested in donating money prior to seeking a designated fund from the city council.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Nolte, seconded by Commissioner Sievert, to **adjourn the regular meeting of the Citizen Advisory Commission**. All present voted in favor. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Penny Spitzer
Recording Secretary