INFORMATIONAL MEETING AGENDA

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2018
CITY HALL (COUNCIL CHAMBERS)
6:30 P.M.

A. Items for discussion submitted by the City Council and/or the City Manager:

1. Two-Way Traffic – City Manager
2. Reallocation of Funds for Augusta Downtown Alliance – City Manager
3. Patrick Pierce Artwork Installment Downtown – City Manager
4. Augusta Trails Donation – City Manager
5. Recycling Program Discussion – City Manager
6. GAUD Rail Trail Easement – City Manager

B. Persons wishing to address the City Council who have submitted a formal request in accordance with Section 2-61 of the Code of Ordinances:

1. Kevin Lamoreau – Several Issues

C. Open comment period for any persons wishing to address the City Council:
June 7, 2018

Dear Mr. Bridgeo:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Augusta Downtown Alliance Board of Directors to express our firm support to move forward with the installation of art as proposed by Patrick Pierce.

As you know, increasing art in our downtown community is one of our primary goals and we as an organization feel strongly that the pieces selected by Mr. Pierce would not only enhance the look of both Waterfront Park and Market Square, but add an extra reason for visitors to come downtown.

We hope you will put the question of funding before the council and we appreciate your time in reviewing this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Hall
Executive Director, Augusta Downtown Alliance

Heather Poulit
President, Augusta Downtown Alliance
June 8, 2018

Dear Mr. Bridgeo:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Augusta Downtown Alliance Board of Directors to request a reprogramming of the remaining signage grant funds to pay for the two-way traffic study speaker, Rick Chellman.

As you know, Mr. Chellman is a renowned expert in traffic engineering and his work in tailoring his presentation to the city council helped shed new light on the two-way traffic study at hand. We respectfully request that the remaining $1579.70 from these funds thus be reprogrammed to help lessen the burden of the $2120.00 the ADA incurred in his hiring.

We hope you will put the question of reprogramming to the council and we thank you for your time in reviewing this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Hall
Executive Director, Augusta Downtown Alliance

Heather Pouliot
President, Augusta Downtown Alliance
May 24, 2018
Information for Augusta City Council
Single Stream Recycling Drop off

Information provided by Lissa Bitteman of ecomaine and Lesley Jones, Augusta Public Works Director on recent collapse in the single stream recycling markets and effect on local recycling programs:

The Problem

“Three primary variables are contributing to this:

1. A huge glut of residential mixed paper, which has put supply and demand severely out of balance. In particular, China recently banned the importation of many grades of paper and plastic which has had a negative impact on markets.

2. Contamination levels are high and China (the largest importer) has set new contamination policies that are very strict. Other markets have followed this trend and enforcement of these new requirements is at an all-time high. China’s new requirements allow only a 0.5% contamination level, which is below industry specifications.

3. Compounding the problem is the disappearance of newspapers, which used to be the predominant recyclable material in the bin. With little to no newspapers, markets have dried up.”

Working on a solution- ecomaine’s plan:
More effort at their sorting facility
More effort in sorting and.
“To meet these new market demands ecomaine is:

- the quadrupling of staff on our paper-sorting lines and slowing down the sorting lines,
- researching new sorting screen technology,
- more closely monitoring and inspecting recyclable loads and assessing fees to communities with contaminated loads:

Specific fees are as follows:
- loads with greater than 5% contamination with be charged an extra $40 per ton;
- loads with 10% or greater contamination will be charged an extra $70.50 per ton”

More education with the communities and residents
ecomaine wants to work with communities to make single stream cleaner and more marketable and are suggesting the following steps:

1. Look for and share media coverage.
2. Promote use of the RECYCLOPEDIA app:
3. Contact our full-time environmental educator to work with your community
4. Replenish your inventory of DO/DON'T cards and new YES/NO posters.
5. Attend and invite your staff to attend an ecomaine educational session. Save the Date and invite your community to attend the annual ecomaine Recycling Open House on Sept. 29 from 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.
6. Follow us on social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and share our posts

**Augusta recent single stream loads**

We delivered 5 loads of single stream to ecomaine from May 11 to May 15. A summary of the loads is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contamination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Center</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunker</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatch Hill</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Center</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result we received a letter from ecomaine stating that our loads were contaminated and will likely get assessed a per ton fee of between $40 and $70 a ton for the contaminated loads.

**Augusta’s Action Plan**

- Replace old educational material with new updated information, including very bold and visible signs on sandwich boards at the recycling containers that list the Do’s and Don’ts and a sign that says “No Bags” – completed
- Educate our employees on acceptable recycling materials – in process
- Assign employees to monitor recycle bins- when we have available workers which is not very often
- Posts on social media and through the City Manager’s office on the problem with contamination - ongoing
- Remove Bunker and City Center single sort containers until we are able to provide more education to our residents. Hatch Hill and Public Works containers will still be available. The Public Works container can be used on Saturdays from spring until it starts snowing.
  - Recommend doing this
- Look at moving the Bunker single sort container to the Police Department where it will likely see less out of town usage and people will be less inclined to drop off unacceptable materials.
  - Recommend doing this
- Work with ecomaine on public education - ongoing
- As consumers we can be more cognizant of Reduce-Reuse –Recycle-Repurpose with our buying and disposal habits. First thing we can do is take reusable bags with us to the stores so we don’t need to use a plastic bag.
Ecomaine has a message for recycling customers – if you keep sending us trash mixed in with materials for recycling, it is going to cost you.

The nonprofit corporation is losing thousands of dollars a month as it struggles to pick out as much non-recyclable material – called contamination – as it can from the thousands of tons of recycling it processes every year. The current problem: a global price collapse brought on by a Chinese ban on importing many types of waste.

**RECYCLABLES AT A GLANCE**

Paper, including but not limited to:

- All clean cardboard, paperboard and pizza boxes
- Newspapers, advertising inserts and mail
- Magazines, catalogs, phone books, hard-cover books
- Clean paper plates (not soaked or caked with food or oils)
- Wrapping paper that can rip
- Milk and juice cartons (it helps to remove caps, but isn’t necessary)
- Drink boxes and other aseptic containers (such as nut milk boxes)
- Shredded paper (contained in a clear plastic bag)

Until the market turns around, the only way to bring down costs is to make sure ecomaine is getting “clean” recycling, CEO Kevin Roche said Thursday during a tour of the Portland recycling plant. That means checking to make sure plastic bags, Styrofoam, food waste, light bulbs and propane tanks aren’t getting into the recycling bin with paper, glass, metal containers and cardboard.
Unless contamination rates come down, more than 70 towns and cities that send recycling to ecomaine could face hefty penalties – up to $70.50 a ton for very dirty deliveries.

“The only variable we can do something about is contamination,” Roche said. “We need everyone’s help to fix this problem. The next time you go to a recycling bin, ask yourself, ‘Which bin should I put this in?’ If you don’t know, please find out.”

Ecomaine takes in 150 tons of mixed recycling a day, but a lot of what gets unloaded can’t be recycled. Mixed in with newspapers, cardboard and metal cans are plastic scraps, broken lawn furniture, dirty diapers, old food and a galaxy of other refuse. Plastic bags, rope and string easily get stuck in the sorting machines and force the plant to stop work. On average, about 15 percent of “recycling” is actually trash, Roche said.

Ecomaine is stepping up a public education campaign to remind people what can be recycled and what can’t, including its new online encyclopedia, a database of 700 common household items.

**CHINA DISRUPTS THE RECYCLING MARKET**

For years, selling dirty recyclable materials wasn’t a problem because China, the world’s largest recyclables customer, allowed contamination rates of 30 percent to 40 percent, Roche said. In January, the Chinese government banned or restricted 24 types of materials, including mixed paper, which accounts for about 60 percent of ecomaine’s recycling.

In 2017, ecomaine was getting about $100 a ton for mixed paper, Roche said. Today, it has to pay someone $60 a ton to haul it away. Dozens of compressed paper bales are stored outside the recycling plant and may stay there for as long as six weeks until a buyer emerges.
China disrupts ecomaine and other recyclers with ‘foreign garbage’ ban

As of March, the company had earned $1.9 million from recycling, which is $582,000 less than it earned during the same period in the last fiscal year.

“We have entered territory that we have never experienced in this industry,” Roche said. “Markets for residential mixed paper have reached an all-time low after a very long stretch of stable markets.”

Exporters have found new markets for household paper in India, Vietnam and Indonesia. There is no local market for the material, Roche said.

With a global glut, buyers can be picky, only taking material with 2 percent to 4 percent contamination, he said.

To meet those standards, ecomaine has spent heavily to quadruple its sorting staff, slow down processing and invest in new technology. The plant’s operations for the current fiscal year had cost $1.6 million as of March, which is more than $46,000 above budget and almost $265,000 more than at the same time in 2017, according to a March finance report.

To recover those costs, ecomaine is starting to charge $70 a ton to process recycling from about 40 communities that contract with the company. It also is
inspecting recycling loads for contamination and charging customers $40 to $70.50 a ton if contamination is over 5 percent.

“It is not a new policy. It has always been there, but we are going to have to exercise it more in the face of these market challenges,” said ecomaine spokeswoman Lisa Wolff.

CAMPAIGN TO KEEP RECYCLING ‘CLEAN’

The collapse of the mixed-paper market has American waste management companies scrambling to recover costs. In an April financial report, Waste Management, a Houston-based company with branches in Maine and across the U.S., said its recycling business was down $77 million in the first three months of 2018 compared with the same period last year.

Waste Management public affairs director Susan Robinson decried the problem of contamination in an April blog post, claiming some consumers equated putting any material into a recycling bin with actual recycling.

“We call this wishful recycling or ‘wishcycling’ and it is lethal to our nation’s recycling programs,” Robinson said.
Waste Management, like ecomaine, is launching a campaign to limit the rubbish mixed into recycling bins and will likely increase fees.

Casella Waste Systems, a Rutland, Vermont-based company with operations in Maine and other New England states, also is considering higher fees.

The market for recycling has gone up and down over the years, but the current crash is unprecedented, said Casella Vice President Joe Fusco.

"The problem here is that you have so much mixed paper around the world chasing smaller and smaller outlets," Fusco said. "The economics of recycling are broken right now."

If the market downturn persists, it may force a discussion about whether items that have no demand will still be listed as recyclables.

"One of the mistakes we made 20 years ago was pushing the idea that recycling was free," Fusco said. "I think that did recycling a disservice in the long-run. It has to make economic sense, and that means paying for it."
Dear Ms. Lathe,

As you are probably aware as you were copied in her e-mail to me, I was informed by Clerk Fogg in reply to an e-mail of mine that to get something on an informational Meeting agenda I needed to submit a detailed request to you in writing. My original goal was to get a City Council to make a request, and I have received a receptive reply to an e-mail I sent to a few Councilors Tuesday morning, but I wouldn’t necessarily know if anyone had acted on my suggestion so I might as well make the request here. This request should not be considered a request for something on Part B of the agenda (although I imagine I’ll be at the June 14 Council Informational Meeting to speak to this topic under the open comment period (Part C) of the agenda). I just want an item on the Part A agenda of the June 14 Informational Meeting that will provide the opportunity for Council Orders like those I will mention below to placed on the agenda for the June 21 Council Business Meeting if Councilors so desire. The Council Orders I have in mind (the appropriateness of each of which would depend on the results of the seven referendum questions on the City of Augusta - Candidate and Referendum Ballot (those dealing with proposed amendments to the City Charter rather than approval of the School Budget) in the June 12, 2018 election) are as follows:

A) A Council Order sending a referendum on creating a City Charter Commission to the voters, said referendum to coincide with the November 6, 2018 General Election. I would consider such an Order called for if Question 3 on the city’s referendum ballot (which would eliminate the current directive for the Council to send such a referendum to the voters within 10 years of the conclusion of such a process, the 10-year mark being in November of this year, and replace it with a directive to have a discussion of such an action or proposing amendments to the Charter – like the discussion the Council had this spring) ends up receiving more “No” votes than “Yes” votes (or the same number of each), regardless of the total number of votes cast. State law (Title 30-A, §2105 (http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/30-A/title30-Asec2105.html), sub-§4, 1st ¶) doesn’t say anything about a referendum vote “not counting” if a certain participation level is not met, only that for a proposed Charter amendment (or any other change to a City Charter or adoption of a new Charter) to be adopted, there have to be both more “Yes” votes than “No” votes and a total number of “Yes” and “No” votes equal to at least 30% of the number of votes cast in the municipality (presumably for Governor; it says votes rather than ballots) in the last Gubernatorial election. The election of the “voter members” of the Charter Commission members could be delayed until June or perhaps November 2019 (with that election only occurring if the referendum on creating the Charter Commission passed on November 6, 2018), or the election of “voter members” could be held concurrently with the referendum in November 2018 (with any person’s “election” being conditional upon the concurrent referendum passing - but there is no minimum total number of votes required on a referendum creating a municipal Charter Commission).

The Council Order I am proposing here would arguably be appropriate if Question 3 receives more “Yes” votes than “No” votes, but the combined number of “Yes” and “No” votes is less than that 30% threshold. My calculations peg the minimum combined number of “Yes” and “No” votes at 2,324, which is 30% (well, 2,323.5 is) of 7,745, which is 7,846 (the total number of ballots cast in Augusta in the November 4, 2014 General Election) minus 101 (the number of “Blanks” for Governor in Augusta in that election). But it might not be the most egregious breach of the Charter to simply send that question to
the voters again on the November 6, 2018 ballot (Option B-3 below), with the assumption that a majority of those voting would vote “Yes” again and that in November the 30% threshold would be reached. If by chance the voters rejected the question on softening the 10-year rule on November 6, after voting for it on June 12 (but without enough total votes in June), then the city would seemingly be in violation of its Charter, but the Council could rectify that unanticipated situation by ordering a referendum on the creation of a Charter Commission on the June 2019 ballot (with the election of “voter members” of the Charter Commission either being held then or in November 2019). But in the case where Question 3 receives more “Yes” votes than “No” votes but not enough total votes in the June 12, 2018 election, I would consider either the order in Option A or that in Option B-3 to be called for.

B-[#] A Council Order “re-sending” the proposed Charter amendment in Question [#] to the voters in a referendum to coincide with the November 6, 2018 General Election. I would consider such an Order to be appropriate (not necessary, but advisable in my opinion) if Question [#] receives more “Yes” votes than “No” votes in the June 12, 2018 election, but the combined number of “Yes” and “No” votes is less than 2,324 (or whatever the threshold ends up being for Augusta). This would give Augusta voters to a second chance to adopt a Charter amendment they already “voted for”, just without the requisite total number of votes. It’s possible that question could be rejected by the voters in November, at which point I would suggest the Council not try to get that same amendment adopted again in the near future.

Both Option A and some of the suggested Council Orders under Option “B” could be called for if Question 3 is rejected by Augusta voters this coming election (with more “No” votes than “Yes” votes) while one or more of the other proposed Charter amendments was supported by the majority of Augusta residents voting on the issue, but that question or those or some of those questions failed to meet the 30% threshold. Resending those amendments that failed due to a lack of “quorum” might not seem necessary if it looks like there will be a Charter Commission in the next year or two, but if a Charter amendment were to have demonstrated popular support in June, giving the voters another chance in November to get that amendment into the charter without waiting until potentially November 2020 for whatever revision the Charter Commission comes up with to go before the voters, and it could mean there are a few fewer areas that a Charter Commission would feel the need to concern themselves with.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Lamoreau

Kevin M. Lamoreau
600 Riverside Drive, Unit 22
Augusta, ME 04330
(207) 446-2132
Lamoreau8047@gmail.com
Polling Places
June 12, 2018 Election

Ward 1 – Buker Community Center - Gym
22 Armory Street

Ward 2 – City Center Council Chambers
16 Cony Street

Ward 3 – Civic Center North Wing
76 Community Drive

Ward 4 – Cony High School Band Room
60 Pierce Drive

Specimen Ballots are available on the City of Augusta website and at the City Clerks’ Office
Last day is June 7th

Polls open at 7am and close at 8pm