



Memorandum

DATE: October 11, 2016
TO: Chairman and Members of the Board
FROM: Kevin H. Roche, CEO/General Manager
SUBJECT: Recycling Committee Minutes – Sept. 15, 2016

There was a **Recycling Committee Meeting** held on the date noted above. The meeting was called to order by Lisa Wolff (at the direction of Caleb Hemphill, Chairman, who arrived 15 minutes late).

Item #1: - Approval of May 19 Meeting Minutes

Lisa Wolff cited the May 19 meeting minutes and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Dennis Doughty made a motion to approve the minutes. Maxine Beecher seconded the motion and all unanimously approved.

Item #2: - Food Waste Recovery Program Launch

- Lisa shared a summary of the Food Waste Recovery Press Conference and resulting media coverage earned in *The Forecaster*, MPBN, *Portland Press Herald*, WGME 13, and Waste Dive.
- The committee discussed the various projects underway for food waste recovery in ecomaine member communities, namely in Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, South Portland and Falmouth.
- The committee asked us to keep an eye on odors, which Lisa and John Morin assured was well under control due to the reverse pressure in the tipping hall where the food waste is stored.
- The committee remarked on the increase in demand that the press conference has created among their communities and requested that a working group be convened by ecomaine to establish common standards for: costs, best practices, messaging and marketing. As part of this working group, the committee asked for best practices from communities involved with food waste in a similar climate (such as Halifax, Nova Scotia) to be consulted as a baseline for those communities pursuing food waste recovery efforts.
- At the request of Tory Moon and Kevin Roche, Lisa suggested having a field trip up to Exeter Agri-Energy for those who are interested, to learn more about what kinds of food waste can be recovered and why. Instead, the committee agreed that they would prefer to organize a presentation with videos and a virtual tour of Exeter Agri-Energy, complete with time for discussion about next steps in this process. The committee would like to be able to invite non-board members (such as public works directors) who will be directly involved with implementing food waste recovery.
- **Immediate Next Steps:** Poll towns to see who is interested in food waste recovery and formalize a formalized way for these groups to organize themselves. Organize a presentation with Exeter Agri-Energy timed with the next Recycling Committee meeting to refine presentation and gather specific questions, to be followed by the larger-group meeting.

Item # 3: - Website and Social Media Analytics

- Lisa Wolff shared the recycling rates by community report, followed by a demo of two new features of the ecomaine website:
 - The Will is Recycle? form, which is the same form that has been present on the bottom half of the Single-sort Recycling guide page, but much easier to access. This is a step to gather more questions from the public as we design our searchable database of answers to commons recycling and waste management questions. Jamie Garvin suggested using the photos and questions as user-generated content for social media tips on recycling.
 - The homepage also features a new rotating slideshow to better advertise new programs.

- Lastly, Lisa also demonstrated the new map interface to recycling drop-off locations, one of the most frequently visited pages on the website.
- A suggestion was made to consider including covered bins in our marketing materials, given that those are more of the “way of the future” of bins.
- Lisa handed out a presentation about the concept of the ecomaine “Will it recycle?” web database vision and project. The group liked the concept.

Item #4: - Advertising, Public Relations, Outreach & Education

- Lisa shared updates on the current advertising campaigns on Portland Radio Group stations, WPXT/CW, and various newspapers for the Open House.
- In the interest of time, Lisa referenced the Outreach & Education reports included in the packets for the committee to review. She pointed out that Katrina Venhuizen is in place and jumping in quickly into the education role, and that support by Sarah Bernier also helped to keep outreach numbers strong through the hiring period.
- Lisa invited committee members to volunteer for the open house and Maureen, Ed, Maxine, Jamie and Caleb volunteered (as did Erik Street and Mike Shaw). **Thanks everyone for your great support!**

Item #5: - Recycling Market Report

- John Morin covered the recycling market report, noting that #3-7 plastic is so low that we had to pay to move it in recent months. The paper market is rebounding, as is the metals market.

Item # 6: Plastic bags proposal

- John Morin passed around photos of the contamination of plastic bags in recycling that require much labor and other associated costs with breakdowns to equipment.
- In light of that, the very soft markets for #3-7 plastics (which is where #2 and #4 plastic shopping bags get mixed in with recycling), and the many ordinances going into effect to encourage the use of reusable shopping bags, Lisa Wolff proposed (with ecomaine staff leadership) to discontinue accepting plastic bags altogether as part of the single-sort recycling. This would also stand to eliminate much consumer confusion around what to do with a wide range of plastic bags and films.
- The committee unanimously agreed with the recommendation. The committee then discussed a Hannaford report that stated an 80% reduction in plastic bag usage in its stores after the city of Portland instituted its plastic bag ordinance, citing it as useful data for other towns considering bag ordinances.

Item # 7: Meeting adjournment

Dennis Doughty made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alan Bradstreet seconded the motion and all unanimously agreed to adjourn.

The next recycling committee meeting is November 10, 2016, at 4:00 p.m.

Present Board Members:

Caleb Hemphill, Dennis Doughty, Sarah Bernier, Ed Suslovic, Jamie Garvin, Maureen McDevitt, Maxine Beecher and Alan Bradstreet.

Present Staff: Lisa Wolff, John Morin