

3-23-2023 Public Works Committee meeting Comments from Diane Collins

Good morning

I'm Diane Collins from Zero Waste Warren County. Hello to the new members on this committee, Supervisor Braymer and Supervisor Stec.

Background:

Zero Waste Warren County is a citizen volunteer group that has been working with Kevin Hajos and Thomas Szabo, and this committee, on projects to do with modernizing the county transfer stations. Thomas is working on one project now, standardizing the format for solid waste collection data from all the municipalities. When this is implemented, the data collected will be used for future decisions on handling the marketable (and profitable) recyclables. If done by June, we could have 6 months of data from most of the transfer stations. Public Works has agreed that Warren County has the potential to market our own recyclables and make money rather than continue paying high costs to send recyclables elsewhere. An example of reversible waste is our collected plastics (there are markets for #1 and #2) now buried in a landfill.

Last summer a working group made up of Kevin Hajos, Thomas Szabo, and three interested supervisors from this committee, John Strough, Dennis Dickinson, Eugene Merlino, keen on the potential of marketing our own recyclables, along with our Zero Waste group, met to discuss applying for ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funds to establish a Central Recycling facility. Thomas submitted the application in August 2022 but unfortunately ARPA funds were not approved. Thomas has been following up with other grant and funding possibilities.

We appreciate that collecting and evaluating the standardized data, then locating and designing a collection site, and then implementing a marketing plan is a very long-term goal.

Suggestion:

We wonder if there might be a **short-term next step** to keep things moving forward.

I come here today to see if there is interest in reconvening the working group, perhaps with several interested supervisors here, to talk about designing a smaller project, a small-scale "**demonstration project**", such as focusing on collecting the most marketable recyclable(s) from a few large sites such as the Queensbury and Lake George transfer stations, purchasing or renting balers for each site, and marketing the baled items directly. The potential to earn revenue would be demonstrated, and would enhance support among all the supervisors for the goal of modernizing the transfer stations. There would be much to discuss in setting up a "demonstration project" of some kind with your input and ideas. Please follow-up with Supervisor Conover or Kevin Hajos if interested. We look forward to continuing our enthusiastic support and participation. Thank you very much.

Diane Collins
Zero Waste Warren County

