

Green Team Minutes - 1.18.2022 Meeting

In attendance Patti Hamilton, Ted Armbricht, Rod Watkins, James Young, Linda Frame, Emmett Pepper, Nikki Smith, and Brent Webster. Guests: Steve Pilato and Scottee Newkirk from Gorilla Recycling

Patti called the meeting to order.

Guest Speakers

Rod Watkins introduced Steve and Scottee from Gorilla Recycling. Scottee gave a presentation on recycling opportunities in West Virginia which is number 50 on a list of recycling states. Gorilla has devised a unique, affordable MERF system for Charleston. The company would need a piece of property and on which to build and operate it at a cost of \$8 – 9 million. It would use robotics and very little manual operations providing contamination-free products that are marketable. The facility would be powered by solar energy and 2.5 – 3 acres of land would be needed. This could be a brownfield as long as there is good access. Availability of water preferred and access to the grid for power backup.

The company would need commitments from surrounding communities to bring their recyclables. They will build it, commission it and will need one-two people local to take over after 5 years when it would be turned over the city to operate. Start-up would include an educational component including a state-wide bus tour to teach people how to recycle. Currently \$175/ton being paid to Beckley to take Charleston's recyclables.

Ted mentioned that solar is a tough sell in West Virginia. Scottee answered that they could use reclaimed coal mining sites. Steve said that while solar saves the company money and better for bottom line, it is not their driving force.

Ted asked if there will be a market for glass. Scottee answered that glass is accepted but is sometimes crushed and sent to the landfill to be used for cover. It does not have a high value but can be recycled at an extra cost. These decisions are community borne and made by the city not the company.

Linda asked about competitors like commercial recyclers and Waste Management opposing this project. Scottee would work with them and make the city an example.

Rod suggested that glass could be dropped off at the facility as it's a safety issue for pick up. Brent confirmed that there are safety issues.

Rod asked what Gorilla needs in order to move forward. Gorilla will provide language so the Green Team can put together a letter of recommendation to Mayor Goodwin.

Ted asked if they would pick up materials but that is not part of their proposal. The city would still pick up and bring to their facility.

Gorilla has a tipping fee but it's cheaper than \$175/ton currently being spent.

Patti asked if the proposal would come to the Green Team and Scottee confirmed it would.

Dirty MERFs are not allowed in West Virginia where refuse and recycling all goes in one stream.

Ted recommended talking to local solar industry in order to help promote solar in this proposal.

Emmett commented that the asks from Gorilla appear to be land, a forklift and a commitment to send materials to facility and pay a tipping fee. Scottee confirmed this and said the facility would process 5-8 tons/hour or 10,530 tons/year. Currently Charleston is ranging 500 – 1,000/year. Scottee said education would be involved on Gorilla's own dime to boost numbers. Rod said the city currently has 50 tons/month and at its peak the Kanawha County Solid Waste Authority (KCSWA) had 600/tons a month. He mentioned the need to involve mayors from other communities and Kanawha County Commission in order to meet goals.

Ted asked how Waste Management's opposition would be handled. Rod said that Waste Management will only take trips to where they make money, despite being required to do so by state law. They have been uncooperative.

Emmett asked what tipping fee might be. Scottee answered \$45/ton.

Patti asked for a proposal from Gorilla before the next meeting. Scottee said it would be helpful to have allies from solar.

Other business:

Patti asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the December 6 and 21 meetings. Ted moved and Rod seconded. Unanimous.

Patti thanked Rod for lining up today's guest speakers.

Patti asked for suggestions for new Green Team members so a list can be sent to Mayor Goodwin. Stephanie Hysmith, Corey Zinn, and Scott McMillion were mentioned. Patti will ask Mayor Goodwin and Chair Cook about how best to handle nominations. The Green Team can have no more than 2 members per ward. Patti and Linda are both from Ward 15.

Members reviewed and discussed the bylaws. Language was added about term limits for officers. Rod moved that the bylaws be adopted. James seconded. Unanimous. Patti asked Linda to provide bylaws to Nikki.

Updates:

Patti asked Emmett for update from recycling committee. None. Emmett mentioned that the Team Up to Clean Up event is in April each Saturday except for Easter weekend. He suggested

the Green Team take a more active role this year. Patti asked Emmett to provide dates, if possible, as well as dates for recycling committee meetings.

Communications committee – none.

Future guest speakers: James will reach out to DEP and invite Tom Aluise to be our next guest speaker.

Brent asked for numbers needed for recycling and said there may be another clean up in May.

Ted thanked Rod for bringing in the guest speakers. Ted will try to find a rep from the solar industry. Emmett unsure if Kanawha County Recycling Authority (KCSWA) would get on board but could provide personnel. Ted suggested keeping glass recycling a priority. Rod mentioned that Elkins has drop-off sites for three colors of glass. He also raised the question that Gorilla wants to run the facility but then turn it over and asked who beyond the KCSWA would do it? A hurdle could be the \$45/ton cost for communities beyond Charleston.

Rod moved the meeting be adjourned. Ted seconded. Unanimous.

The next meeting is February 15, 2022 at noon on Zoom.