

**DRAFT**  
**CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OHIO**  
**SERVICE AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**May 11, 2022**

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Chairwoman Sheri Sax called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were: Councilmen Justin Gould, Brian King, and John Rach; Councilwoman Barbara Blankfeld; and Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. Also present were representatives from Kimble Material Recovery Facility (MRF); as well as residents, both in-person and attending via Zoom.

Mrs. Sax noted that Service Director Jeff Pokorny could not be present this evening. Mrs. Sax thanked the Mayor, Council members, residents., those attending via Zoom, and invited guests for attending this meeting.

**Agenda Item**

1. **Discussion amongst committee members and invited guests from Kimble’s Material Recovery Facility (MRF) Twinsburg to increase education and awareness about recycling**

Chairwoman Sax introduced Mr. Don Johnson, Business Development Manager, with Kimble. Mr. Johnson has spent over 30 years in the refuse and recycling industry. Mrs. Sax also welcomed Mr. Brett Fagan, Southern Ohio Regional District Manager, and Mrs. Elizabeth Biggins-Ramer, representing the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District.

Mr. Johnson provided background on Kimble, stating that it is a family business and described the origins of the company’s growth over the years. Mr. Johnson pointed out that Kimble now has operations in Twinsburg, Canton, Carrollton, and Cambridge, Ohio. The first recycling facility was opened in Canton in 1995. He provided a detailed explanation of how and where recycling started, techniques used and its evolvement. It was noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) passed House Bill 592 in 1988 that mandated each county write a solid waste plan.

Regarding the terms of the agreement with the City of University Heights for processing the recyclable materials, Mr. Johnson stated that blue bags are delivered to Kimble which amounts to about five tons a week. It was noted that there are 4,200 single and two-family homes in University Heights. Mr. Johnson provided a comprehensive review of the process, pointing out that it is estimated that about 2.3 pounds per house per week can be accepted at the Kimble facility from the City’s residences. He emphasized that the facility is designed for accepting loose material.

Mr. Johnson noted that blue bags are accepted and described the technical mechanical recycling process in detail including methods used for sorting cardboard, plastic, glass, fiber, and paper materials once material is received at Kimble’s facility. Among processes included, Mr. Johnson noted that contaminated materials are removed and taken to a landfill. He described one procedure that can process about 30 tons per hour. It was explained that fiber materials, cardboard, news and

mixed papers, as well as glass, steel and aluminum cans and plastic, are marketed in efforts to get the best price.

Mrs. Sax stated that the primary area being focused on is improving and increasing education awareness about proper recycling versus contaminated recycling. She noted that a proposal to purchase 64-gallon recycling bins for each household had been made which would cost a quarter of a million dollars. She asked Mr. Johnson if he had any insight to the impact this could have on improving the city's recycling or reducing recycling. Mrs. Sax stated that since recycling is voluntary, it is difficult to know how many households will participate. Mr. Johnson stated that more people participate when provided with carts by their municipality or service provider.

Mrs. Sax stated that the main reason for contamination is the blue bags are being filled with solid waste. Mrs. Sax questioned whether the remedy is to provide bins noting that just because bins are provided, proper recycling is not guaranteed without educating residents. Mr. Johnson explained how those non-recyclable items including contamination, are dealt with and noted that if there are consistent offenders, the City would be notified. The company's knowledgeable drivers identify materials that are inappropriate; bins would be marked that the items are not recyclable. Mr. Johnson mentioned that municipalities are notified of those offenders and also that it is difficult to control this. He noted that there is an expensive auditing organization that can be contacted. Mrs. Sax noted that she has learned that some municipalities do their own auditing.

Mr. Johnson reported that contamination is not quantified so much by volume and truckload. "Spotters" identify loads that don't appear in compliance when ejected. There is a transfer station next to Kimble's facility where the material can be taken. The excess material is then weighed and then the tonnage for trash is charged. Mr. Johnson noted that fully contaminated loads are not real common. In response to a question by Mrs. Sax, Mr. Johnson reported that he has not been made aware of University Heights having contaminated waste that needed to be investigated. With reference to rate changes, Mr. Johnson suggested that the company be notified when changes to the manner of pickup are announced.

Councilman Rach clarified that Kimble will continue the city's current arrangement using blue bags for recycling. Mr. Johnson stated the company is committed to its contract with the City, and briefly described the terms.

With reference to other cities, Mr. Rach asked whether or not there is a difference in volume of recycling with loose bags, 18- or 64-gallon bins or carts - where contamination occurs the least. Mr. Johnson stated that it is consistent throughout.

Transitioning was discussed and how and when residents would be notified. Direct mail was suggested as well as notification in Mayor or Council's newsletter. Mr. Johnson described how bins/service would be distributed to residents.

Councilman King asked Mr. Johnson about when/if Kimble might accept plastic tubs, such as yogurt containers. Mr. Johnson answered that this isn't something being considered at this time. Mr. Johnson indicated that the larger clear blue bags are easier to handle than the smaller, opaque blue grocery store bags.

Mr. Johnson noted that larger blue bags are easier to handle and enable the equipment to process efficiently, and it was mentioned that those are see-through.

Following are some additional issues discussed.

- The method of residential pickup
- Options for those unable to roll carts to the curbside; the possibility of having accommodations for those unable; perhaps having volunteers to assist those with disabilities. The administration has been requested to investigate this through the American Disabilities Act; or if it is possible to have a dual pickup; the possibility of the Service Department assisting, and there would be costs associated with same. Mayor Brennan mentioned that the CIC approved costs for a survey which will also gauge how many households express physical disabilities.
- It was stressed that the City and Council intend to provide the needed services to ensure the process. Mr. Johnson stated that this could be included in bid specifications, that setback service is needed. In terms of cost, Mr. Johnson stated that it depends on the number of feet of the setback the community is considering, the number of driveways; the cost could be anywhere from \$29 to 36 per unit, per month.
- Wet cardboard and newspapers may be rejected for pickup and it is suggested that those be dried in a garage and then placed in a blue bag.

Mrs. Sax expressed concern about the cost of the 64-gallon bins and added that she understands that loose recycling is superior to bag recycling. Mrs. Sax reiterated that education is needed as well as data. The survey is going out, she reported, and once the data is reviewed the hope is to move forward to improve recycling.

Discussion regarding surveys ensued, that results may be skewed and there may not be a perfect response, but that at least there would be some ideas of what residents' interests are. Mrs. Biggins-Ramer stated that participation in recycling follows socio-demographic lines. Mr. Johnson stated that timely communication is needed. Mr. Johnson suggested that if the City is interested, proactive steps should be taken to gather information and perhaps buy carts, send out detailed communication about the program, including a postage-paid envelope to return responses back to the City. He urged wide-ranging ways to get the information out, direct mail, social media, newsletters, etc.

Mr. Gould referred to 2020 data collected and asked Mrs. Biggins-Ramer if that financial information could be updated. Mrs. Biggins-Ramer stated that is actually the work to be done with RRS to be updated with full cost accounting of the existing system. She noted that the City's

representatives from the community, administration and council are needed quickly so that the first meeting can be organized.

It was clarified that there is no cost for the survey and that it is being paid for by the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District. This is an enterprise fund from grant monies. The district provides \$1.50 per ton of solid waste disposed within a district. With reference to Mr. Rach's question about the cost of mailing the survey, stamps, etc., Mrs. Biggins-Ramer stated that it is all-inclusive. Residents will receive a postcard, asking them to go online to take the survey; this is the most economical way.

Regarding the composition of the committee which is referred to as Evaluation Team, Mrs. Biggins-Ramer stated that the recommendations of who should be on it were made based on other projects worked on with RRS. Mrs. Sax referred to a memo that clearly states the three ways the evaluation team can select to distribute the survey to residents are: 1) mail, 2) online, and 3) both mail and email. Mrs. Biggins-Ramer stated that although the memo listed the three choices, she made the unilateral decision to only distribute/allow residents to respond online. Mrs. Biggins-Ramer stated that everything is spelled out in the memo – the makeup of the committee, the timeframe and whether meetings are in person or virtual.

Discussion continued about the selection; it was noted that Council picks its own representatives. Mrs. Biggins-Ramer stated the District has no vested interest, but wanted to ensure that interested people in the process are represented. The topics of the number of representatives making up the committee, the longevity of Council members and those who participated in public hearings who were cognizant of the process were discussed. It was mentioned that with such selection(s) the council person will complement some of the knowledge and longevity that Mayor Brennan and the Service Director will add. Mrs. Biggins-Ramer noted that large committees are harder to manage and cited cost concerns. Mr. Gould noted that although the RRS/CCSWD is allowing Council to choose representatives, in reality, RRS/CCSWD is telling Council who the representatives are. Mr. Gould objected, asking how it can be said that Council can choose its own representatives and being told who its representatives are. Mr. Gould expressed frustration about that process. It was agreed to have some flexibility with the committee to expand it; Mrs. Biggins-Ramer will consult with RRS.

Emphasis on public discussions and balance of representation was stressed. Costs of classes for education were discussed.

The fact that two surveys would be distributed was mentioned. It was questioned whether or not one or the other would be comprised. It was agreed that residents will be encouraged to answer both. Mrs. Biggins-Ramer hoped that the City would assist the District in advising residents that there will be a postcard regarding their survey, and that similar information from different views will be helpful. Mrs. Sax thanked Mr. Johnson for his presentation and all participants in this meeting,

The meeting adjourned.