

Go Green Illinois' 35th Meeting
January 8, 2019
Moving Towards Zero Waste

Attendees:

68 people from 19 communities represented.

Objectives:

- GOAL: give you the information you need to reduce waste in your communities using existing programs and inspire you to add new waste reduction programs and practices

Beth Drucker – Go Green Wilmette President - Welcome + Opening Remarks

- Solar for Faith Communities program on Jan. 16 at 10am
 - Details on the GGW website – please invite faith groups in your community
 - Marcia Heeter is GGW's faith community liaison (marcia.heeter@gmail.com)
- Go Green Reads
 - The Nature Fix - next Monday's book group meeting at 6:30 pm at the Winnetka Book Stall
- Attend other Go Green group programs - i.e. Northbrook Library Zero Waste Home program on Jan. 22nd.
- Topic of waste is really hot
 - Plastic straws reduction campaigns have swept across the planet fast - people are ready for this message
 - We have great waste services, but we are affluent American suburban communities and we have a massive carbon footprint, one of the largest in the world

Mary Allen – Recycling and Education Director – Resources Matter! Moving Towards Zero Waste

- Speaking on behalf of SWANCC (Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook Cty) and SWALCO (Solid Waste Agency of Lake County)
 - Highlighting commonalities and roles both play
 - SWANCC has 23 communities in north and northwest suburbs, SWALCO has 42
 - Same philosophy: solid waste agencies, moving materials to places that are not harmful, but also waste reduction in general
 - US EPA hierarchy: reduce (most desirable), reuse, recycle, compost, waste-to-energy, landfill (least desirable)
 - Change idea from waste to "misplaced resources"
 - Four main ideas
 - Support with municipal contracts
 - Request for Proposals (RFP)
 - Attend bid meetings
 - Provisions to request in new contract
 - Goal is to get biggest bang for lowest buck
 - Community programs for residents (i.e. recycling of electronics, textiles, holiday lights, etc., disposal of pharmaceuticals)
 - Education Programs and Resources
 - School programs (waste audits)
 - Make recommendations to SWANCC Board of Directors as opportunities present themselves

- GGIL Members should join SWANCC's mailing list (all electronic) to get information about programs
- Do's and Don'ts of Recycling
- Policy
 - State-wide laws (i.e. electronics recycling law)
 - Legislation is tricky - good to have lobbyists for face time in Springfield
 - Members of many different programs and task forces (i.e. Illinois Food Scrap Coalition, Task Force for Recycling Contamination)

Josh Connell - Managing Partner with Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS)

- Works with SWANCC and SWALCO, but is private and for-profit
- Organic Collection Services
 - Numerous communities now collecting food scraps curbside
 - "Ride along" programs - during yard waste season, residents can put food scraps with yard waste (LRS services 20 communities with this program)
 - Participation is at approximately 1-2%
 - 150 homes out of 9200
 - GREAT start - these programs take time
 - We need to educate the public and develop the program (both the pick up, but also learning how to compost)
 - Current programs
 - Loyola University - interested dynamic faculty/student group in starting program
 - To be successful: start small (i.e. just kitchen staff at schools with fruits and veggies, then rolled out to students, now pick up 30 cubic yard dumpster once a week)
 - Cost has been big area of concern
 - Ride along does not cost more money because trucks are already out there picking up
 - Once more trucks have to be put out in community, cost could be issue
 - With schools, can be difficult in terms of cost
 - Most cases, food waste is going further than transfer station and landfills, which is not cost-effective.
 - With Loyola, because they produce so much material, they are now at a cost-effective level (i.e. use of food compactor).
 - Once we develop food recycling, and create more business around it (especially private sector), it will be more cost effective
 - Food scrap recycling
 - Get a lot of nice, clean material that should not be wasted in the first place
 - So, they built an aerobic digester to produce soil amendment (compost)
 - Every day they put 15 tons of food scrap material in and get 4 tons of soil out (marketable rich fertilizer)
 - Single stream recycling
 - Samur-AI: robot can sort HDPE natural and HDPE color, aluminum foil, septic containers
 - Takes the place of 4 people
 - Highly effective, great way to reduce cost (especially with recycling becoming more expensive and China not accepting our waste); want to lower operating cost with help of technology
 - Technology has been around for a while, we just need to apply it
 - As a company, they have a budget for education

- How can we educate our communities to recycle better?

Peter Adrian - Food Scrap Collection Program, SWALCO

- Lake County Solid Waste Management Plan
 - Goal is to increase recycling by 60% by 2020
 - No longer just cans, bottles or paper, but organics as well
- Food Scrap Collection Options
 - Can create community food scrap drop off spots in every town
 - Ride along programs
 - Include food scraps with landscape waste during summer
 - SWANCC has 6 communities, SWALCO has 19 communities doing this
 - Year round organics collection as part of base service (not opt-in)
 - Residents pay flat/adjusted rate, whether or not they use it
 - Highly discourage opt in programs as participation is very low
 - Highwood Program
 - 3 different carts: recycling (95G), trash (65G), and landscape/organics (35G)
 - Expanding food scrap collection programs
 - Midwest Organics recycling made significant investment in expanding its site in 2017, largest in Lake County
 - In 2018, Lake County Jail implements food scrap/recycling program, cut waste by over 50% and reduced costs (500-700 pounds of food waste/day)
 - Hired Bright Beat to initiate compost program with restaurants in Highland Park and Grayslake
 - Key factors to expanding programs
 - Education (tough to fund) to change behavior
 - Infrastructure expansion (need more people buying finished material)
 - Local governments must help
 - Ride along can be done at no additional cost
 - Haulers willingness is key
 - Do not offer an opt in program

Katie Friedman - Sustainability Fellow at Highland Park

- Greenest Region Corps - AmeriCorps volunteers working to improve sustainability
- Highland Park Composts: food scrap composting for local businesses
 - SWALCO and HP contracted Bright Beat to help with this
 - Business selection
 - Demonstrate/generate community interest
 - Strategic outreach to local businesses known to be leaders and examples for others in HP
 - Long term objective: snowball effect
 - Phone calls to restaurant owners
 - Explain no cost to restaurant, process, etc.
 - Identifying Partners
 - Bright Beat - provided recommendations for best practices
 - Lakeshore Recycling Systems - waste hauler
 - SWALCO - co-funding
 - Organix - compost services/producer
 - Consultation and recommendation
 - Consultation with Bright Beat (walk through of operations and waste audit)
 - Recommendations based off of consults
 - Many restaurants were recycling at a minimum level - i.e. just cardboard

- Goals; achieve a recommendation which offers a net zero or minimal cost increase
- Bright Beat gave option to bring in organics gradually (i.e. just produce)
- Some restaurants had decreased cost, but others had increased cost
- Materials provided
 - Bilingual restaurant training guide
 - Laminated posters
 - Communication cheat sheet
 - Compostable bags
- Total Monthly Waste Diversion
 - Divert 57.62 cubic yards of waste from landfills - La Casa de Isaac and Moishe
- Logistical concerns and challenges
 - Restaurant: business owners who want to make a profit, be respectful when asking them to consider their options (space in restaurant, outside of restaurant, cost, training + education of staff, operational logistics, health and sanitation, accounting for waste, contamination of waste)
 - Waste hauler: route density, specifications of compost site
 - Municipalities: increased staff time and effort, support in elected body
- Next steps
 - Follow up meetings, check in meetings, marketing and communications to promote those businesses, register restaurants, training and education of staff

Jennifer Kainz and Renee Blue – Mindful Waste in Barrington (mindfulwaste.org)

- Mission: nonprofit organization working to eliminate food waste in schools through education, prevention and recovery
- Partnered with Smart Farms to produce organics to show kids how to do hands-on composting
 - Have lesson plans
 - Encourage students to see food as a resource
- Video
 - 1 in 7 people go hungry
 - Rotting food produces greenhouse gases like methane that pollute the environment
 - Recovery programs save food to give to those in need
- Barrington
 - All schools except the high school have composting programs
 - Waste audit has been done at the high school
 - 200 pounds every day of perfectly recoverable food (i.e. fruit in peel, sealed package, sealed milk)
 - Want to keep food in schools first, but will then give it to food pantry

Erlene Howard - Collective Resource

- Encouraged Evanston to include CR in composting plans so every resident could compost
- Can work with schools, offices, residents and caterers
- Work with Go Green Park Ridge to promote food scrap collection

Stephanie Katsaros - Bright Beat

- Bright Beat works with cities and communities to identify stakeholders that need to come together and communicate message, and then actually make operations be successful
- A lot of the work tends to be large scale (arenas, hospitals, schools), but can be brought to a smaller scale
- Build sustainable solutions that are literally sustainable

Susan Casey – Seven Generations Ahead Zero Waste Schools Program Manager

- Mission: promote ecologically sustainable communities
- Many arenas: solar energy, community planning, Farm to School program, zero waste programs
- Providing on the ground or remote support, use a tool-kit
- Chicago Public School compost program - daily, diverting a ton of food scraps and compostable trays

Beth Drucker – Go Green Wilmette, Go Green Illinois

- scarce.org is a good resource
- Documentary "Wasted"
- Grocery store chains waste
 - Have to talk to General Managers
 - Imperfect Produce
 - Tell Stephanie Katsaros about grocery stores that could be good for a pilot program
- Free Cycle
 - Free Box Facebook Page in Highland Park - a way to give away stuff you no longer need to those in your community
 - Next Door is broader, but can also use this service
 - Friends of the Green Bay of Trail - compost buckets in community garden

Julie Wolf – Wilmette Village Trustee

- It is in the budget to start composting pilot in Wilmette, but will be opt-in and expensive

Nicole Boomgaarden – Go Green Wilmette

- Greening Events - small to large events, reducing waste (compostable utensils, reducing food)

Q + A Session

- Styrofoam boxes - is there success in reducing those?
 - Mary Allen: issues with policy and legislation, continue to bring your own containers if you know they serve big portions, if you want legislation, go to your individual villages and speak up
- With ride along programs, what can be taken?
 - Peter: it depends on your hauler and where they deliver the food scraps. In Lake County, they use Organix (which is limiting), while Midwest Organics take pretty much anything
- Nicole: how to green your event page on GGW website
(<https://www.gogreenwilmette.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Event-Greening-Guidelines.pdf>)
- Yuh - isn't bad that we truck things away instead of composting in our backyards?
 - Reducing waste is great, backyard composting is great but limited
- Erlene - make sure you look for certified compostable material!
- Any news on recycling batteries or electronics?
 - Mary: Agency has battery recycling program, but came to halt because vendor had too many alkaline batteries; alkaline batteries are no longer hazardous waste and can be safely thrown away in garbage
- Will China no longer take our recycling?
 - Mary: Because China is not taking our stuff anymore, we need to make sure our materials are clean to be recycled locally. Check with your providers.

- Are small cell batteries recyclable?
 - Tough question. There seems to be 4 places in Illinois where you can drop them off; but, they may be lithium and thus hazardous waste.
- Anne - Illinois EPA guidelines for recycling
(<http://dataservices.epa.illinois.gov/recycle/curbside-bin-recycling-guide.html>)

Community Sharing

- Flores: Winter Farmer's Market
- Lake County Green Congregation
 - Can leave no straw/plastic cards at restaurants
- Liz Kunkle of Go Green Winnetka
 - Hosting screening "Bag It" – check Go Green Winnetka site for more details
- Yuh Schabacker-Koppel of Forest Bluff Green Minds
 - Recycling old t-shirts for produce bags for food deserts
- Lake County Green Congregation: bring back to UPS the packaging bubbles and peanuts
- Beth Drucker of Go Green Wilmette: Invite people to Solar for Faith Communities on Jan. 16th and Going Green Matters on March 10th
- Nicole: Thin film plastic recyclable at almost all grocery stores
- Lake Bluff
 - Plastic bags have been largely eliminated after 7 cents tax introduced
- Yuh: can bring old toothpaste and tubes to Green Minds for recycling
- Illinois Food Scrap Coalition event
 - Free food and drinks Jan 31st
 - Illinoiscomposts.org
- Peter: plasticfilmrecycling.org
 - Gives listing about items that are acceptable in programs

*** Next meeting: March 12 Protecting and Preserving Open Spaces ***

19 Communities Represented

Arlington Heights	Northfield
Barrington	Park Ridge
Deerfield	Riverwoods
Elmhurst	Skokie
Evanston	Vernon Hills
Glencoe	Wilmette
Highland Park	Winnetka
Lake Bluff	
Lake Forest	
Libertyville	
Mundelein	
Northbrook	

