

**Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)
Chief Administrative Officers Subcommittee on Recycling Meeting
Summary Minutes of October 29, 2021**

The Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) Subcommittee on Recycling Meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM by Greg Grootendorst at the offices of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission located at 723 Woodlake Drive in Chesapeake. The following members of the CAO Subcommittee on Recycling were in attendance:

Patrick Roberts, attending on Chip Filer's behalf	Norfolk
David Freeman, attending on Cindy Rohlf's behalf	Newport News
Randy Keaton	Isle of Wight County
Scott Stevens	James City County
Chris Price	Chesapeake

Others in Attendance:

Keith Cannady, HRPDC
Greg Grootendorst, HRPDC
Katie Cullipher, HRPDC
John Harbin, HRPDC

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Grootendorst recommended the order of the agenda be modified to discuss the Goals of the Subcommittee after the Roundtable Discussion. The CAO Subcommittee concurred.

Public Comment Period

Mr. Grootendorst stated that no public comments were submitted and no members of the public were present.

Background Information on Hampton Roads Recycling

Mr. Grootendorst explained that on April 14, 2021, HRPDC staff convened a group of local staff representing various localities across Hampton Roads to discuss the current state of recycling in Hampton Roads, including contract status and challenges with local programs, current commodities markets for recyclable materials, as well as opportunities and barriers to regional collaboration and coordination. The group agreed that there is significant potential to collaborate as a region to improve recycling. At the June 2, 2021 CAO Committee meeting, a summary of this meeting was presented and the Committee agreed to establish a Subcommittee of CAOs to investigate the topic in more detail and make recommendations to the full Committee. Mr. Grootendorst explain that this is the first of those meetings and would like to start with a brief presentation. Mr. Harbin, Ms. Cullipher, and Mr. Grootendorst presented on the evolution of household recycling in the USA, recent local recycling developments, information on recycling contracts held by various localities, issues and challenges that are shared amongst all localities, some

potential goals for the Subcommittee and topics for discussion, including best practices for recycling contracting, ensuring quality material streams, recycling programs for glass only, and education and outreach to promote better recycling practices.

Roundtable Discussion

Subcommittee members discussed various trends and insights from their respective localities. Mr. Roberts noted that there is a disconnect between the public's perception of recycling and reality. He also noted there is a need to better inform the public on how to recycle better in an effort to improve overall program effectiveness and reduce costs. Mr. Stevens noted any effort to scale back recycling programs to reflect reality or save money will likely see significant pushback from the public and elected representatives. Mr. Price noted that Chesapeake is at a critical point in their recycling program and will need to find additional revenue if curbside pickup remains the primary method of collection. He also suggested that ending curbside pickup in favor of convenience centers would reduce costs while still providing recycling service for the public. Mr. Stevens agreed but noted that 70% of residents have opted into James City County's curbside recycling program, proving the popularity of the program. Mr. Price asked about the status of recycling contracts for each locality and if there is a termination for convenience clause. It was discussed that most existing recycling vendor contracts have some mechanism to terminate, providing flexibility for regional coordination if desired. Mr. Roberts noted that convenience centers are difficult for localities to locate on public properties, but a regional program operated by private entity with centrally-located and staffed convenience centers might be a better approach. Ms. Cullipher noted that using convenience centers in lieu of curbside pickup will reduce public participation in recycling and presented information on the regional Start Smart, Recycle Right campaign, which focuses on cleaning the recycling stream. Mr. Stevens noted that glass is not included as a primary recyclable in the Start Smart, Recycle Right campaign and explained a new glass recycling pilot program in James City County. Mr. Roberts noted that creating high quality recycling streams will result in greater marketability of recyclables, which is an important objective of all recycling programs. Ms. Cullipher discussed how the Start, Smart Recycle Right campaign provides a simple and consistent message to the region on what to recycle and the need to have the message broadcasted at the local level. Mr. Keaton noted the difficulty in changing people's behavior and habits but agreed that a regional message promoted at the local level may help. Mr. Price suggested that the Subcommittee focus on regional outreach and education, collaborative vendor contracting and exploring regional convenience centers. Mr. Roberts also suggested that a workgroup comprised of locality staff could help vet ideas of the Subcommittee and members of the Subcommittee agreed.

Goals for Subcommittee

The Subcommittee members identified four initial outcomes for regional collaboration on recycling:

1. Universal, regional messaging and outreach to educate residents on what and how to recycle, including a uniform, regional list of what is accepted in residential programs;
2. Regional contract exploration and review of residential recycling contracting best practices;
3. Determining the feasibility of regional recycling convenience centers;
4. Determining a consistent set of recyclables across the region.

Other Business

No other business was discussed.

Next Steps

The Subcommittee members agreed to the following next steps:

1. Provide a brief report to the full CAO Committee at their November 3, 2021 meeting and request that each CAO identify a local staff member to serve as technical support to the Subcommittee.
2. Reconvene the Subcommittee with local technical support staff and discuss how desired outcomes can be met.
3. Report back to the CAO Committee with recommendations.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the CAO Recycling Subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at approximately noon.