

**SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA**

October 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting will be held at or hosted from the  
Mona Lisa Drexler Assembly Chambers  
Juanita Helms Administration Center  
907 Terminal Street, Fairbanks, AK

This meeting will be conducted in-person and by zoom or zoom-only with consideration given to the Borough Operational Status and if the Juanita Helms Administration Center is otherwise open to the public. Please visit <https://www.fnsb.gov/406/Boards-Commissions> or contact the Borough Clerk's Office (907) 459-1401.

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

**B. ROLL CALL**

**C. MESSAGES**

C.1. Citizens' Comments - limited to three (3) minutes

C.1.a. Agenda items not scheduled for public hearing

C.1.b. Items other than those appearing on the agenda

C.2. Disclosure and Statement of Conflict of Interest

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

Approval of consent agenda passes all routine items indicated by asterisk (\*) on agenda. Consent agenda items are not considered separately unless any Commission member or citizen so requests. In the event of such request, the item is returned to the general agenda.

**E. MINUTES**

**E.1. \*Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes from September 8, 2021.**

Documents:

[09\\_08\\_2021\\_SC\\_DRAFT MINUTES.pdf](#)

**F. REPORTS**

**F.1. Reports from FNSB Technical Staff**

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

**G.1. Review and approval of a draft letter to the Borough Mayor and Assembly supporting the Capital Improvement Program proposal to construct a central recycling facility and providing a brief orientation of the Sustainability Commission.**

Documents:

[2021 Welcome and CIP Support Letter \(PDF\).pdf](#)

**H. EXCUSE FUTURE ABSENCES**

**I. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

**K. AUDIO FILE - SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION**

[10.13.2021 SC AUDIO TRACK 1](#)

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH  
Sustainability Commission  
September 8, 2021  
6:30 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Sustainability Commission was held Wednesday, September 8, 2021, in the Mona Lisa Drexler Assembly Chambers of the Juanita Helms Administration Center, 907 Terminal Street, Fairbanks, Alaska.

**ROLL CALL**

There were present appearing telephonically:

Jimmy Fox	Wyatt Hurlbut
Ariane Glover, Vice-Chairperson	Brett Parks, Chairperson

Comprising a quorum of the Commission, and

Alexis Fackeldey, Administrative Assistant III, Clerk  
Brittany Smart, Special Assistant to the Mayor  
Matt Pearson, Recycling Center Manager  
Bob Jordan, Solid Waste Manager

**MESSAGES**

- 1.a. Citizen's Comments on agenda items not scheduled for public hearing.  
NONE
- 1.b. Citizen's Comments on items other than those appearing on the agenda.  
NONE
2. Disclosure & Statement of Conflict of Interest  
NONE

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

GLOVER,  
Seconded by HURLBUT

moved to approve the agenda and consent  
agenda as read.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA - continued**

VOTE ON MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA AS READ.

Yeses: Fox, Glover, Hurlbut, Parks

Noes: None

MOTION CARRIED 4 Yeses, 0 Noes

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. \*Sustainability Commission Meeting minutes of August 11, 2021.

Without objection this measure was read by title and approved under the consent agenda.

**REPORTS**

1. Reports from FNSB Technical Staff

Brittany Smart, Special Assistant to the Mayor, introduced Matt Pearson, Recycling Center Manager. Bob Jordan, Solid Waste Manager, spoke a few words as an introduction for Mr. Pearson. Mr. Pearson introduced himself including his recycling experience in Hawaii and Alaska. Mr. Fox, Mr. Hurlbut, and Mr. Parks welcomed Mr. Pearson.

2. Recycling Strategic Plan Quarterly Report by FNSB Solid Waste.

Mr. Pearson gave a report on the Recycling Score Card and stated the FY21 recycling numbers have been finalized.

Ms. Glover asked Mr. Pearson to clarify the bailer recyclables process. Mr. Jordan answered the question explaining the discrepancy.

Mr. Fox thanked Mr. Pearson for the update and asked a question about where the revenue goes after it is generated. Mr. Jordan answered with the budgeting process. Mr. Fox also asked about the increase of costs for electronic recycling. Mr. Jordan said that the budget has been adjusted to account for it. Mr. Fox wondered why the costs would increase fifty percent. Mr. Jordan stated that Green Star's costs have gone up and thus so did the prices.

Ms. Glover asked if certain costs were included in the total percentage of diversion rate. Mr. Jordan stated they were. Ms. Glover asked how the diversion rate could have decreased and explained the reasoning for her question. Mr. Jordan explained how the diversion rate was calculated.

## **REPORTS - continued**

Mr. Fox asked about the feedback from the microphone and the clerk clarified that it was necessary for the microphones in the Chambers to be on.

Mr. Hurlbut asked what "UBC" referred to. Mr. Parks answered it was the aluminum.

Mr. Fox remarked that prices have risen and asked if this was something that would continue into the near-term future. Mr. Jordan stated that this increase is due to a previous decline in prices and that these prices should be expected and the shipment of "pure" loads also increases prices.

Mr. Hurlbut said he noticed there was more cardboard in the last few months and wondered why and if that would continue. Mr. Jordan stated it was a result of what is brought to the center but was not able to be more specific.

Mr. Jordan continued his report by talking about the Recycling Strategic Plan and the limits of the current facility including the lease term.

Mr. Fox asked how the public process works for the Capital Improvement Plan projects. Ms. Smart answered with a detailed explanation of the process. She also stated this information can be found at [www.fnsb.gov/cip](http://www.fnsb.gov/cip).

Mr. Fox stated that he felt it would be beneficial if the commission wrote a letter to the administration for the CIP process in support of the Central Recycling Facility.

Ms. Glover thought it should be on the agenda for the October 13, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Hurlbut asked what the scope of the request for the Central Recycling Facility was. Mr. Jordan gave a brief overview of the scope. Mr. Hurlbut expressed concerns that perhaps the scope did not include the specifications needed. Mr. Jordan said that the process has not reached that point yet. Ms. Smart provided further elucidation of the CIP process.

Mr. Parks asked for the commission to clarify what the letter of support would be supporting. Mr. Fox volunteered to draft it.

Ms. Glover asked if increasing the input from Alaska Waste was still a possibility or if it was only on the radar. Mr. Jordan stated the facility was accepting cardboard but was reticent to expand what the system received from Alaska Waste as it could cause problems.

## **REPORTS - continued**

Mr. Hurlbut inquired how much the recycling program could grow before it could not be maintained. Mr. Jordan replied that very limited growth could be accommodated. Ms. Smart stated that Mayor Ward wanted a forward-thinking facility that is constructed specifically for recycling. Ms. Smart also said that the current facility is a stopgap until a purpose-built facility is available.

Ms. Glover wondered whether there was any response to the memo submitted to Mayor Ward. Mr. Jordan said that he was in the middle of a response and it should be forthcoming.

### 3. Update on FBX Talks Trash by FNSB Solid Waste.

Mr. Jordan gave a run-down of the FBX Talks Trash program.

Ms. Smart asked Mr. Jordan if there was a way to expand promotion of the recycling facility as part of the FBX Talks Trash program's efforts. Mr. Jordan replied that it would be possible to start that in the middle of winter or early next spring.

Mr. Fox asked if there was any way to talk about the Central Recycling Facility with the six codes previously mentioned. He also asked for the timeline to be elaborated on. Mr. Jordan gave his timeline and the reasoning behind it. Mr. Fox asked about the length of the contract and Mr. Jordan gave the specifics. Mr. Fox stated it would be interesting to see how the CIP process goes and how it would affect the recycling program.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### 1. Discussion with FNSB Solid Waste and possible recommendations regarding the Recycling Strategic Plan.

Ms. Smart provided some context as to why this topic was on the agenda. Ms. Glover said that she had questions from the August meeting for Mr. Pearson. Ms. Glover asked about the alignment of the diversion goal and the Central Recycling Facility's diversion quarterly diversion goals. Mr. Pearson stated staffing levels were a problem. Mr. Pearson also stated that the ability to process the recycling materials was imperative in meeting goals.

Mr. Fox said that the new Central Recycling Facility was imperative in meeting goals and continuing to promote recycling. Mr. Fox also spoke about proposed changes to the Recycling Strategic Plan.

Ms. Glover also felt that a new recycling facility was important.

### **NEW BUSINESS - continued**

Ms. Smart asked if the commission was asking for the Solid Waste Division to make changes to the Recycling Strategic Plan and what the timeline would be if that was the case.

Chair Parks asked if it was the commission's plan or if it belonged to the staff. Mr. Jordan answered that the Sustainability Commission helped draft it and staff had updated it over the last few years. Mr. Jordan agreed that a new recycling facility was necessary, and he would spend some time updating the plan to reflect that.

Mr. Hurlbut asked how the scorecard aligned with what the staff was experiencing and the questions the public was asking. Mr. Jordan stated the scorecard helped the staff to contextualize the raw numbers.

Ms. Smart asked if there was a first quarter report available for the October Sustainability Commission meeting. Mr. Jordan stated that it would be difficult due to the timing of the quarterly reports. Ms. Smart also asked that the proposed changes be added to the first page of the Recycling Strategic Plan report. Mr. Jordan said it would be done.

Chair Parks invited Jewelz Barker to make a quick comment.

Jewelz Barker spoke about FBX Talks Trash.

Chair Parks summarized what was needed from staff and Mr. Fox added what he gleaned from staff's comments. Ms. Smart also helped to clarify the expectations of staff and what was needed from commissioners.

### **EXCUSE FUTURE ABSENCES**

NONE

Ms. Smart asked if the meeting time could be changed to 6:00 p.m. moving forward. There was an informal roll call and everyone agreed they could be present at that time.

### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Parks thanked everyone for their patience.

Mr. Fox thanked everyone for their patience and also thanked the staff. Mr. Fox also brought up the general congratulations letter to any newly elected officials and volunteered to draft it.

## **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS - continued**

Ms. Glover welcomed Mr. Pearson and thanked everyone for their updates and Mr. Fox for his willingness to volunteer.

Mr. Hurlbut stated he was at the University of Alaska sustainability meeting and updated the commission on what happened during the meeting.

Ms. Glover brought up America Recycles Day November 14, 2021. Chair Parks recommended staff participate.

*Clerk's Note: America Recycles Day is on November 15, 2021.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Sustainability Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.



# Fairbanks North Star Borough

DEPARTMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY  
Division of Boards and Commissions

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October 6, 2021

Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor and the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly  
907 Terminal Street  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Mayor and Assembly Members,

The Sustainability Commission wishes to express congratulations to new office holders and appreciation to all for your service to all citizens of the Borough. We're writing for two reasons:

- 1. We urge your support of the CIP proposal to construct a central recycling facility.**
- 2. We wish to provide you with a brief orientation to the Sustainability Commission.**

NEW CENTRAL RECYCLING FACILITY. Recycling is a wise use of materials. It provides short-term economic opportunities and long-term benefits for future generations. Local historian Joan Skilbred has shown wise reuse and recycling of modern goods in Fairbanks has been in our cultural DNA since the early 1900s. Recycling in the Borough continues today using a successful public-private partnership. Surveys repeatedly show citizens want this service from the Borough and are willing to pay for it. Recycling also provides an opportunity to address concerns that citizens have with the current transfer site program.

You've been presented with a well-informed proposal from the Borough administration to construct a central recycling facility. The current facility is leased from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. With a more well-designed facility, the Borough can model the Mat-Su Borough's successful low-cost, high-impact recycling program. In addition to environmental benefits, financial benefits would include avoiding short and long-term costs of waste management, and employment benefits downstream. During Fiscal Year 2021 Borough revenue from sales of recyclable materials was positive and increasing. Recycling industry experts and the Borough's recyclable materials buyer suggest stabilization of global and national recycling operations, and societal preferences will continue to drive a long-term increase in the value of recyclable materials.

However, we have a problem. The Borough waste reduction goal is to divert a very modest 10% of household solid waste by weight from the landfill by 2028. Due primarily to current central recycling facility limitations, the current diversion rate is less than 1%. The leased-UAF building



cannot be modified to increase recycling capacity primarily because there is not enough space and cannot accommodate an in-floor horizontal baler. An in-floor horizontal baler would be a game-changer allowing the Borough to bundle larger loads more quickly saving time and money. Perhaps most importantly, an in-floor horizontal baler provides the power to bundle office paper - a high-value commodity that can't be bundled with vertical balers. Moving toward a solution, the Borough recently purchased a like-new, in-floor horizontal baler for less than \$100 from the U.S. military. Now it needs a home.

The Commission urges the Assembly to consider how issues at the transfer sites, barriers to recycling at the UAF facility, financial future of recycling, and other Borough land use issues overlap. Taking a broader, long-term view, might there be a win-win-win solution? We believe construction of a Borough-owned, privately-operated central recycling facility is a widely supported and wise use of citizens' tax dollars. We urge adoption of the proposal to construct a new Borough-owned central recycling facility.

If you have financial concerns, surely you will consider that taxpayers have another option to pay for the growing waste management problem: placing the financial burden onto the manufacturing industry as a growing number of states and countries are doing. Countries with these programs have recycling rates as high as 80% and healthy economies. A study by the State of Oregon found that such programs in Canada increased consumer product prices by only \$0.0056 per item. And recently over 100 major entities like Walmart and Coca Cola signed a declaration stating, "As a group of businesses and stakeholders that are drawn from across the packaging value chain, we are calling for the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for packaging. We recognize that EPR is a necessary part of the solution to create the circular economy for packaging we are aiming for." These programs are typically funded by corporations and administered by nonprofit organizations. They protect taxpayers from paying to bury or recycle excessive packaging, plastics and materials that are expensive or difficult to recycle like electronics. This may be a viable alternative for the Borough and could be pursued separately or in conjunction with a Borough-owned central recycling facility.

ORIENTATION TO THE COMMISSION. In October 2017 the Assembly revised the purpose of the Recycling Commission and renamed it the Sustainability Commission. The Commission's purpose is to "provide leadership to ensure a secure and sustainable community development that maximizes public health, safety, self-reliance and welfare within the powers of the borough; and to lead a public process to identify sustainability goals for the borough and select metrics for monitoring progress toward meeting those goals. The Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the mayor and assembly regarding how to support or improve those efforts and annually report to the mayor and assembly at the end of January on the progress made for the previous year."

As a first step, the Commission hosted two town hall meetings in the spring of 2018 to discuss aspects of sustainability. Approximately 20 people attended a meeting in North Pole in January, and around 25 in Fairbanks in April. A broad range of topics were shared and discussed. After consideration of oral and written public comments, the Commission agreed to focus on three issues of sustainability: food security, energy security, and waste reduction. After review and revision by the Commission in September and early October 2018, draft goals and indicators

were shared and discussed in-person with over 60 members of the public. After reviewing comments, the plan was modified, and recommendations were added. The updated draft was then made available to the public in early November with comments accepted during the Commission's November 2018 meeting.

In the plan, finalized in December 2018, the Commission presented community-generated goals and indicators to track progress. The plan reflects comments, questions and observations received from the public and Borough staff. For food security the Commission recommends increasing the agricultural workforce, food stocks, food production and access to local fruits and vegetables. We recommend reducing household and Borough energy consumption. We encourage the rapid reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions and increased use of renewable energy. The Commission also recommends 10% waste diversion from the landfill by 2028. These sustainability goals align with the following Borough plans: Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Currently the Commission is working with Borough staff to make progress on the waste reduction goal. The overarching problem is collecting, hauling, burying, and maintaining wastes in landfills is expensive. Landfills are harmful to the environment, require huge expenditure of diesel and money to power equipment daily, and must be monitored for at least 30 years after closure. And despite limited reserves of food, an estimated 30-40% end up in the landfill. In 2018, an estimated 23.5 million pounds of food and 20.5 million pounds of plastics were buried in the Borough landfill. About 25% of buried waste was likely office paper and cardboard – resources with predicted steady demand in the recyclables market. In Fiscal Year 2021 the waste diversion rate remained at less than 1% with positive revenue. As stated earlier, a larger recycling facility would enable significant growth in volume and revenue and respond to citizen preferences for how their tax dollars are spent.

Sincerely,

Brett Parks  
Chair of the Sustainability Commission