

Holyoke City Council discusses city-wide recycling program

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

The possibility of a residential recycling program was discussed at length Tuesday, July 16 at the Holyoke City Council meeting.

Waste Management, Inc. recently reached out to the City of Holyoke about the possibility of beginning a city-wide residential recycling program.

The proposed program would put a curbside recycling bin in front of every home in Holyoke.

A fee of \$3.82 per house would cover the cost of collections once a month and \$6.64 for twice a month. If it is decided to go forward with the program, the council would have to decide who the financial burden would fall on.

If the city were to foot the bill for the 870 residential customers in town, the plan would cost the city \$3,323.40 a month for one collection and \$5,776.80 for two collections each month.

Through the program, it is estimated by Waste Management, Inc. that 40-50 pounds of garbage would be removed from the city's monthly waste stream, saving the city between \$546-\$682 each month.

"Unfortunately it ends up costing more than it saves, but that's pretty much how recycling works," City Superintendent Mark Brown said.

Brown noted that Holyoke and Haxtun had worked together to get a state grant for the large recycling bin placed outside of the Holyoke Police Station, and the city does not want to enter into any agreement that would jeopardize that.

Marick's Waste Disposal out of Crook pays Holyoke \$50 each time the current recycling bin is dumped, which is one-to-two times a month. That money could be lost if the new program is implemented.

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The residential bins would serve as single-stream receptacles, meaning plastic, tin, aluminum and paper would all go in the same bin. Brown mentioned his concern with who would be responsible for sorting the recyclables. He stated the city workers do not have the time for the extra work.

Brown also pointed out that trash collection in Holyoke doesn't necessarily make money now, so whatever is charged for the recycling program would be reflected on the garbage collection rates.

Council members David Churchwell and Steve Moore expressed their beliefs that just because everyone has a recycling bin in front of their home does not mean that they will participate in the program. The group questioned how many more people would recycle based purely on the convenience of having a bin at their homes.

Council member Scott Murray also voiced his concern that citizens shouldn't be forced to pay for a recycling program that they have no intention of using.

No final decision was made on the subject and council members will return to the topic during the Aug. 6 City Council meeting.

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Grant writer tapped to help land GOCO grant

For the third attempt at securing a grant through Great Outdoors Colorado for improvements to the Holyoke baseball complex, it was decided by Holyoke City Council that Heidi Hillman would be hired as the grant writer.

Hillman wasted little time as she arrived in Holyoke Wednesday, July 17 to visit the fields and review past grant applications and GOCO feedback.

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With the work that has already been put toward the grant by City Clerk/Treasurer Kathy Olofson, Hillman anticipates needing 20-30 hours to complete the application.

Hillman has had success applying for GOCO grants in the past as she recently served as the grant writer for the Phillips County Community Track Project.

Citizens are encouraged to participate in a short online survey regarding the possible improvements at the ballpark found at surveymonkey.com/s/7WF8NSM.

City will participate in coordinated mail ballot election

For the November coordinated mail ballot election, city council members agreed to include a pair of questions.

The questions, titled Referendum A and Referendum B, deal with a lodging tax and term limits.

Referendum A raises the question of whether Holyoke should be authorized to implement a lodging tax of five percent on rooms at lodging facilities for short-term visitors and guests. Referendum B asks voters if the City of Holyoke should have term limits for elected officials.

Changes by the council to the wording of the questions can be made up until Aug. 27.

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Officials report

Brown reported that there had been four power outages since the last city council meeting. There were two outages Saturday, July 13. The first one occurred at 4:45 p.m. between the 100-500 blocks of Phelan and Morlan avenues. The cause of the outage was undetermined. The second outage occurred three hours later between the 200-500 blocks of South Belford and Baxter Avenues. A squirrel was to blame for the outage.

Monday, July 15 there was a power outage in the 900 block of Belford Avenue due to a squirrel. A squirrel was also to blame for the Tuesday, July 16 outage at 8:40 a.m. in the 200 block of Bowman Avenue and Sherman Street.

Sergeant Damon Ellis with the Holyoke Police Department reported that from June 27-July 10, the police department had generated 80 calls for service, made four arrests, wrote 15 reports, handed out seven citations and issued seven warnings.

Ellis also made mention that the department had investigated an infant death which turned out to be from natural causes.

On the Fourth of July the department also handled several calls regarding fireworks.

Other Business

In other business July 16, the council:

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—accepted a quote from Perfection Door Co. for three overhead doors to be installed at the fire shed at a cost of \$11,535.

—approved request from Holyoke Housing Authority to waive the excavation permit fees and the labor for the tap fees for the new laundry facility.

—determined that Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Scott would contact the state highway department about the condition of Highway 385.

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