

City of Newport Planning Commission Meeting
March 1, 2022

Members Present: John Monette, Denis Chenette, Kevin Mead, Amanda Chaput, Carol O'Connell

Guests: Jeremy Labbe, P.E. General Manager; John Gay, E.I. Region Engineer, and Kelly Gleason, Environmental Analyst, all from Casella Waste Systems Inc.; Alison Low from NVDA, Zoning Administrator George Cudd, and city manager Laura Dolgin

Laura informally introduced the representatives from Casella Waste USA and provided context for the work the Planning Commission has been doing to update the 8-year Municipal Plan.

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Monette called the meeting to Order at 6:14 p.m. Chair Monette announced he would move right into agenda item #4 since the group was ready to jump in and no members of the public were present.

Guest speakers (agenda item #4): Joe Gay has been with Casella as an engineer since 1998. Kelly Gleason is the administrator of the Newport's Solid Waste Implementation Plan by MOU. Jeremy Labbee is the general manager for the Coventry site.

Casella acquired the site in 1995. Prior, it was operated by a Canadian group with the Rancourts, Waste USA inc. They acquired it around 1989 or 1990 and developed the first lined section. And prior to that was Charlie Nadeau, who had an unlined landfill as well as a racetrack, mobile home park, and a junkyard.

Waste USA developed cell 1; Casella acquired it and was in phase 2, and then phase 3 started in 1998, which is when Joe started. Phase Cell 3 is 10 acres and they recently just stopped placing waste here right up through last fall.

The unlined landfill is to the right. There were wetlands down there. And the trash would go into the wetlands, and it would disappear, and at the time people liked that because there was room the next day to fill it in again. The fed's said we need to stop and capture this fill. This was the beginning of the modern lined landfill. They have a double containment system. The first liner captures the leachate. Shaped like a bathtub, they pump it out, and then have a second liner in case of any issues, they can monitor the infiltration to the second liner, which is regulated by the state. Reporting is done monthly. Environmental awareness, and the groundwater monitoring around the landfill as well. All water must be clean. They are constantly draining the leachate, pumping it out. It's like a sump pump. They can never have more than a foot of water in there. 90 acres of lined landfill, which is a constant. 30 or 40 inches of melted precipitation over the year, 14 – 17 million gallons a year of wastewater. That would be going into the environment without the lining. Must have 2/3's storage tanks full, management and movement of the wastewater. Landfill generates enough methane gas to capture and produce 7.0 megawatts of power, which is enough for 6-7000 households.

There is a 450,000-gallon storage, and a 520,000-storage tank, and a 20,000-gallon underground storage tank. The leachate from 8 sumps, 90 acres, is carved into 8 segments and has its own pumps. The leachate pipes are lined, a pipe in a pipe, as a secondary containment system, for safety. Redundancy in everything to protect the environment, always have a backup system. Must be able to operate in a state of emergency., to accept flood debris. The 20,000-storage tank is double contained, and then it goes to the above ground storage tanks. They have a lot of storage, moving anywhere from 4-10 loads a day, have a buffer, and expect precipitation. Leachate has some industrial components but is not toxic.

If it was, it would not be able to go to a municipal water treatment plant. If there were certain elements above the standards, it could become toxic, but it is not.

The 520K tank is not being used at this time so that it remains available for the pilot test of pre-treating leachate to reduce PFAFs. Currently leachate goes to Montpelier, but the state is looking at requiring a pilot pretreatment system on the leachate, and John Casella wants to stay ahead of this regardless of any state permit. PFAFs in leachate the standard is 3000 – 4000 parts per trillion, whereas drinking water is 20,000 parts per billion or less for drinking water. The state of Vermont is very far ahead with their standards and expectations. The state has a condition for a pilot test system to see if we can treat the leachate and knock the pfafs levels down. Casella is already working on this.

The Permit for Phase 6 was received three years ago, and Casella finished the first cell in November. Since then, all the operations are now in the new cell. Another unique thing is there is an underdrain system which has a 6-foot separation from the bottom of the landfill to the ground water. We don't have that separation naturally at the site. To get that separation they have an underground system, which is designed to over excavate and then back fill to get to the appropriate level. Connected by piping and discharges and can sample as an early warning system.

Agreement with Washington electric, 5 engines producing 24/7. They don't have a lot of interest to expand, 100% of the portfolio is renewable, and 75% is from Casella, solar etc. The plant is maxed out. 78 acres captures methane gas. Phase 6 doesn't have methane production yet. What will we do with the extra gas? We've started those discussions with Washington Electric and Vt. Gas and will probably do something other than power generation because this is very expensive, hard to comply with permits, and there might be better uses like (methane and carbon dioxide) NH has partnered with a company to do this. The gas goes into a facility to separate the gasses, carbon dioxide needs a home, and the methane can go into a natural gas line.

Currently, there is not a lot of money in power production and not as much tax credits available. It is very expensive to build and operate. And air compliance is difficult. Electrical generation is challenged because the electric grid coming out of NEK is constrained, which means we can't get the power on the grid. Their plan to improve this is maybe 10 years away. Renewable energy credits are available but have dropped a lot; natural gas is where it is at right now. Casella doesn't want to waste the energy. Methane is produced by present carbon. 5 greenhouses, heated geothermally from the landfill. Waste mast is always warm. The green houses are 100 feet by 30 or 40 feet wide. There is plenty of power to offer.

Banning compost affects methane production and the landfill will eventually lose some gas, and this is a factor when they talk about the future. Composting organics has other benefits, ie., nutrients into the soil. Landfill gas is projected to be slightly less but will still be generated. EPA has a program to anticipate waste mix and can look at projections to give a conservative idea of what to expect. As of today, there is no noticed reduction. Covid has made no large decreases in generation of waste.

Phase 6 is permitted for 13 million yards, which is anticipated to last for the next 22-25 years, depending upon settlement. There is a phase 5 available which is a 15-acre site at the very north end and that project considers the first 7.5 acres of unlined landfill. This is to be used for excavating the unlined site: to remove what is there and restore it to current day standards along with any contaminated soil and groundwater, and then build the last 7.5 acres which equates to 3.2 million yards, which could last for another 5-7 years. This equals about 30 years of capacity. 80 percent of the waste is from Vermont source. Other 20% is from Vt out. The City's SWIP allows the municipality to utilize Casella. Most towns have grouped into a district. Today, there is no out of state municipality that can bring garbage to

Casella. From out of state (Land in state) special waste, contaminated soil, can't go to a lined landfill if liquid or hazardous, once it is determined to be solid waste, then can take it. Can sometimes accept special waste from out of state, can take asbestos, sludge, petroleum, contaminated solids, contaminated brick, debris, blocks, can sometimes reuse this stuff, but about 20% of this comes from out of state. NH Mass. Urban fill also needs to be determined unhazardous.

Casella has a process to deal with special waste. If stuff is too contaminated to go to a lined landfill, call Casella as they will tell you what to test for. Folks will be responsible to send it to a lab and get a profile; once data comes in, they review the data, and then send a package to the state of Vermont who will determine if Casella can take it. It is a rigorous process and a case-by-case basis for accepting the materials. Special waste is a very broad term. Could be food products and could be more complicated. The state has sent witnesses to ensure proper disposal on some items.

Resource solutions looks at ways to reuse materials, rather than taking it to the landfill.

What is going to happen in 30 years? Landfill will be closed and waste that is produced will be in a deficit because one can't get another landfill permitted today. The state has responsibility to figure this out. Incinerators are not the answer whereas maximizing the life of the landfill and where's next.

The state requires them to stick around for 30 years after the landfill closes for the post closure period and ground water monitoring. Act 250 requires a post, post closure that extends the 30 years by another 15 years for a total of 45. There is money in a bond to sustain the efforts of this site in the event Casella goes bankrupt.

The municipal plan is essential for the PC to think about goals and strategies the plan can support at the municipal level, in addition to providing an overview of the approach for managing solid waste. The SWIP already considers what we can do at the municipal level to reduce solid waste. Public awareness and education campaign and data collection. Hosting repair café's is an idea to instill longer term habits of repairing things and finding a use for them instead of just tossing them. The SWIP also requires attendance at events to provide information, and contacting 20% of the businesses in the city.

(Planning Commission member Kevin Mead had to depart at 7:55.)

2. **Approval of minutes:** Denis Chenette moved to approve the minutes of February 15, 2022, with Carole O'Connell seconding. The minutes were approved.
3. **Public Comment:** None.
4. **Downtown Transportation Grant:** "authorize the City Manager to submit an application to the State Downtown Transportation Fund for a grant of up to \$200,000 to support a total project cost of up to \$350,000 for Intersection Improvements at Main Street/Coventry Street and commit to the local match (cash and in-kind) of up to \$150,000. Denis Chenette moved to recommend the city go through with the application. Carol O'Connell seconded, and the motion was approved.
5. **City Plan Development:** just a few points were made to include mention of the Stantect Traffic Study of 2017 and to remove the word 'water' in the neighboring community portion of regional connectivity. We will review this one more time before we put this on the website: Regional connectivity next time and tackle the downtown one next meeting. Nothing to publish until after next meeting.

6. Old Business: The RFQ for the Bylaw Modernization Grant consultant has been distributed.
7. **New Business:** none
8. **Next agenda:** Rural Edge will join us as guest speakers.
9. **Motion To Adjourn** made by Denis Chenette at 8:25, seconded by Carol O'Connell at 8:25.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Dolgin, City Manager
Unofficial until Approved

Approved this 15 day of March, 2022



Chair, City of Newport Planning Commission