
AUTOMATED REFUSE COLLECTION PROGRAM

Mr. Richard Grant, Solid Waste Manager, gave City Council an overview of the automated refuse collection program policies.

Last year City Council approved a pilot automated refuse collection system to more than 3,000 households. All equipment, training and logistics are in place for the program to begin April 2, 2000. This program will require citizens to learn new policies in order for efficient, cost effective service. As with any changes, there will be resistance until new habits are formed.

The current system of refuse collection provides for the collection of up to six containers placed at the curb. The use of personnel to load refuse allows for considerable flexibility to citizens in the type and placement of refuse. For example, bulky wastes such as televisions are often placed on top of or adjacent to containers, which posed no problems to collection personnel; however, an automated system is designed to pick up standardized collection containers designed for the arm mechanism (all wastes must be placed in the supplied container). Thus, the habit of placement of wastes on top of or adjacent to containers will no longer be acceptable due to the inability to load with the arm mechanism.

Households in the pilot areas will receive written information, policies and guidelines with the delivery of their container. Staff will also mark the spot where containers must be placed. Sanitation area supervisors will make every effort to educate, correct and service citizens to insure a smooth transition to the new system.

However, municipalities who implemented similar programs advised staff to designate a 'grace period' where customary service is provided to help citizens adjust to the new system. The grace period will be provided for 30 days. In addition to customary service (return for pick-ups, pick up non-containerized refuse, etc.), citizens would also receive information pamphlets and notices to help educate them.

At the conclusion of the grace period it was recommended that sanitation staff eliminate 'customary service' and not return to pick up, remove, or hand-load any refuse not appropriately placed in the supplied containers.

Consequently, after the grace period some citizens may call Council members to demand 'customary services' (after the grace period). Such service would neutralize the advantages of such a system.

New policy consists of: residents must use City supplied roll out container only; trash left beside the roll out container will not be collected; trash placed on top of the roll out container will not be collected; trash must be bagged prior to placing in the roll out container; the roll cart must be placed so the handle faces away from the street; roll out containers must be in an accessible location, at least five feet from any obstacle, within two feet of the curb and away from low hanging utility poles; and bulky items will be collected separately from the automatic collection – residents must call 21-1122 to schedule.

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Conformance with these policies is critical to the success of the program. Staff requests City Council's support for staff's enforcement of the pilot program policies (beyond the grace period).

Mayor Sitnick had a suggestion that prior to the formal Council meetings, a 10-minute promotion spot be taped for viewing on the Government Channel to inform the public about a program, instructions for new

trash pick-up, etc.

City Council discussed different avenues to notify the public of this new system.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Due to the 4th of July holiday falling on a Tuesday, it was the consensus of City Council to cancel their July 4, 2000, City Council worksession.

Mayor Sitnick wanted the City to become very serious about the problem with litter, about cleaning it, enforcing our laws and prevention programs. She hoped that during the budget process perhaps more money should be allocated for litter prevention.

Mayor Sitnick suggested City Council send a letter to the Buncombe County Commissions requesting them to eliminate or reduce dumping fees for demolitions done by non-profits who will provide affordable housing on those sites where the demolition occurs. It was the consensus of City Council to have Councilwoman Field do some preliminary dialog with the person who is mostly involved with affordable housing at the County level prior to sending the letter.

At the suggestion of Mayor Sitnick, it was the consensus of City Council to send a letter to the local N. C. Dept. of Transportation to request they make an effort to repair the islands and, in conjunction with the Governor's Litter Sweep, to clean the state roads and medians. She will also include in that letter a request to coordinate the traffic lights on Tunnel Road near the Asheville Mall.

CLOSED SESSION

At 5:15 p.m., Councilwoman Field moved to go into closed session in order to (1) consult with an attorney employed by the City about matters with respect to which the attorney-client privilege between the City and its attorney must be preserved, including a lawsuit involving the following parties: Elijah Jones t/a Jones Convenience Store and City of Asheville - the statutory authorization is contained in G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3); (2) to establish or to instruct the City's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the City in negotiating the terms of a contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease - the statutory authorization is contained in G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5); and (3) to prevent disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the laws of North Carolina, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. The law that renders the information to be discussed confidential is N. C. Gen. Stat. 160A-168, the Personnel Privacy Act - the statutory authorization is contained in G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1). This motion was seconded by Councilman Hay and carried unanimously.

At 6:16 p.m., Councilman Hay moved to come out of closed session. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Field and carried unanimously. (Vice-Mayor Cloninger signed off at 6:00 p.m.)

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CIVIC CENTER

A brief discussion was held about the Civic Center and potential changes to the Civic Center Commission ordinance to clarify the Commission's role. City Attorney Oast and City Manager Westbrook were to meet with some Commission members on Friday, March 24, 2000, to discuss this matter.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Sitnick adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

CITY CLERK MAYOR
