

To: Freeport Town Councilors
From: Freeport Sustainability Advisory Board (FSAB)
Re: Recycling and Waste Management
July 21, 2020

On January 6, 2020, FSAB submitted a letter to the TC on waste/recycling, including an addendum relevant to the Freeport Town Charter and Solid Waste Ordinance, PAYT, and neighboring town's programs. This is included in today's packet for reference.

To summarize the letter:

- FSAB recommends that Freeport Town Council adopt curbside pick up with Pay-Per-Bag.
- FSAB recommends considering curbside pick up options that promote equity and better environmental policy and are aligned with the Freeport Solid Waste Ordinance.

Important issue requiring education addressed in the addendum of January 6, 2020 letter

Freeport Town Charter 2.12: The Town Council shall not enact any ordinance transferring R.W.S. disposal costs to the people by enactment of a user fee, "Pay Per Bag" or other new tax.

Relationship to Freeport Town Charter

Both Curbside Pick Up and Pay-Per-Bag PAYT avoid Charter change if any "new tax" and/or "Pay-Per-Bag" fee goes towards transport and NOT towards disposal. Property owners in Freeport, (residential and commercial) currently pay for "disposal costs" (tipping fees) via property taxes. Transport costs are covered by the .90 "pay per bag" fee for residents who drop off garbage at the Transfer Station. For residents who contract with Pine Tree, or other haulers, their payment to the hauler covers the transport of their waste and not the disposal. A change to the Town Charter WOULD be required if the curbside with Pay-Per-Bag PAYT model were to cover "disposal costs" in addition to transport.

Because any increase in property tax can result in anxiety and confusion, FSAB recommends educating the town about the current system, as well as communicating the environmental, economic, and functional benefits of transitioning to an incentive based system where residents pay based on how much waste/recycling they create.

Contamination rate issues to consider

Contamination rates June 2020:

Pine Tree: from 15-25% contamination rate average 22.5%. Has the highest contamination rates.

Because Pine Tree is a private business, interns (like those used at silver bullets last summer) likely COULD NOT be used to assess, tag and educate about what can and cannot go in recycling bins. Interns COULD be used for education with a town run curbside program, as in other local towns.

Transfer station: 2-5%, average 3.5%.

West St silver bullet: 5-10%, average 6.39%.

Hunter Rd silver bullet: 5-10% one at 20%, average 8.77%.

Contamination rates of satellite silver bullets decreased as of June 2019 and stayed down:

(exceptions are So Freeport Village Store - with unchanged low-ish rate; this Silver Bullet was removed; and Transfer Station where rate increased - perhaps related to increased volume at Transfer Station.)

The table below compares silver bullet contamination rate averages. The vertical red bar represents the beginning of recycling contamination educational efforts (mid-May 2019), outlined below.*

	10/18	5/19	6/19	6/20
Doherty's Market	16.88%	14.08%	10.00%	
Village Store	5.88%	9.38%	7.00%	
West Street	11.25%	12.92%	7.73%	6.39%
Hunter Road	14.00%	14.12%	10.78%	8.77%
Transfer Station	1.00%	1.00%	6.00%	3.50%
Avg (excl. Transfer Station)	12.00%	12.63%	8.88%	7.58%

**Town-wide mailer with info about contamination and proper recycling, ecomaine recycling refreshers x 2 in Freeport, Freeport resident recycling volunteers at SBs, 2 recycling interns at SBs (July-Oct), improved signage at remaining SBs.*

Other important issues to consider

Corporate vs small haulers and effect on Danny Wentworth's business: TC would want to consider whether there would be one or more haulers and how they would be chosen.

Retention of 2 Silver Bullets: Importance of keeping silver bullets during transition so as not to get out of recycling habit. Also allows for the potential of more recycling education by having FSAB sponsored recycling interns again.

Next Steps:

- Identify questions and areas of concern from Town Council members.
- Continue to evaluate cost options with Peter Joseph and Adam Bliss.
- Continue to create opportunities and methods for educating and communicating about waste, recycling, and compost issues. *Any transition to a new system will require understanding about the issues to address any anxiety or confusion.*
- TC could request data from other curbside haulers about contamination rates before final decision on haulers.

Any change will require time to implement, but we do need to choose a path forward. FSAB recommends the curbside pay-per-bag model for Freeport because it will minimize waste, improve overall quality of recycling, promote equity, and could actually save money on what townspeople are taxed now.