

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

1

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm, 14th, Fl

B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

FERNANDO CABRERA

CHAIM M. DEUTSCH

RAFAEL L. ESPINAL, JR.

PAUL A. VALLONE

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

2

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Kathryn Garcia
Commissioner for the Department of Sanitation

Bridget Anderson
Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and
Sustainability for the Department of Sanitation

Eric Goldstein
New York City Environmental Director at the
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Melanie Weniger
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Marc Shifflett
Chair of the Organics Committee for the Manhattan
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Melissa Iachan
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Justice Program at New York Lawyers for Public
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Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli
Director of Common Ground Compost

Steve Newman
Former First Deputy Comptroller of New York City,
Former Chair of Community Board 11, Treasurer of
Environmental Foundation

Christine Datz-Romero
Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Lower
East Side Ecology Center, LES Ecology Center

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COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

3

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you. Good morning, I am Council Member Antonio Reynoso, the Chair of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. Thank you all for attending this oversight hearing which is an update on the city's organics collection program. I'd like to acknowledge that we've been joined by Council Member Vallone from Queens. One NYC stated that the residential organics program will serve all New Yorkers by 2018, however many communities will remain without service beyond the end of 2018. In May of 2018, DSNY announced that the city was temporarily halting the programs expansion. New York City has committed to a goal of sending zero waste to landfill by 2030, this is an extremely important and ambitious goal. If we are serious about reducing our waste, we have to commit more resources to the organics program. In 2017 waste characterization study showed that organics is the biggest area of opportunity for the city to divert waste from landfill. Thirty-four percent of residential refuse was suitable for organics collection. Fifty-one percent of school waste was suitable for organics collection and 32 percent of

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

4

nitro refuse was suitable for organics collection.

Unfortunately, most of this material is still ending

up in landfill. Organic waste generates green house

gases if left to decompose in a landfill, instead

organics can be collected and composted in nutrient

rich fertilizer or processed through anaerobic

digestion and gas released can be captured for fuel.

DSNY has been working to educate the public but there

is much more that needs to be done. In communities

already receiving organics collection service only

10.6 of the organic waste produced is getting sorted

into the organic bins, the remaining 89 percent of

organic waste is still being sent to landfill. If we

look at the overall numbers, the outlook is even more

concerning. DSNY has shown through their most recent

waste characterization study that organic material

makes up 34 percent of the residential waste stream.

According to their 2017 refuse and recycling

statistics, DSNY collected 81.4 tons of organic waste

per day through curb side collection of a total of

11,823 tons per day in total material, this

constitutes less than one percent. Once again, 34

percent of the city's residential waste stream is

suitable for composting and right now we are

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

5

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2 composting less than one percent. The city has set a
3 goal of sending zero waste to landfill by 2030, it is
4 clear that if we are to meet this goal we will need
5 to have a mandatory citywide organics collection
6 program in the coming years. I'm looking forward to
7 DSNY's testimony and learning how they plan to engage
8 and support the public moving forward, what the
9 timeline is to continue expansion of the program and
10 what other efforts should be made to ensure that it
11 is successful. I also look forward to hearing
12 testimony from DSNY, environmental advocates and
13 other interested groups about their experience with
14 the city's efforts to reduce waste and any advice
15 that they have for how much more we could be doing.
16 So, I want to thank the Commissioner for being here
17 and also the Deputy Commissioner Bridget Anderson and
18 take it away.

19 KATHRYN GARCIA: Good morning... [cross-
20 talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Oh, we're going to...
22 we're going to swear you in.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Do you...

24 [off mic dialogue]
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

6

COMMITTEE CLERK: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer Council Member questions honestly?

[panel affirms]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Good morning Chair Reynoso and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner for the Department of Sanitation. I am joined today by Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and Sustainability for the department. Thank you for holding the hearing on the status of the Department's residential organics collection program. I will be making an opening statement after which I'll be happy to answer any of your questions. Organic waste including food waste, yard waste and food soiled paper products makes up one third of everything New Yorkers throw away, that is a staggering 1.1 million tons per year. Putting this resource to good use is the cornerstone of sustainable waste management not only because of our commitment to send zero waste to landfills but also because when organic waste decays in landfills it produces methane, a green house gas 25 times as

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

7

potent as carbon dioxide. Sustainable organics management makes business sense and adds to our city's resiliency. We can use organic waste to our advantage. Through composting, we can create a valuable, beneficial product that enriches our soil to grow new food. And through anaerobic digestion we can create clean, renewable energy to heat our homes and fuel cars, trucks and buses. That is why New York City last week made a strong statement by signing C40's Advancing, Advancing Towards Zero Waste Declaration. Organics recycling is the next frontier of a recycling journey that started more than 30 years ago. Curbside recycling started with a pilot program for collection of newsprint and bottles. Today, our dual stream recycling program accepts all kinds of metal, glass, rigid plastic, cartons and paper. Collections that were once every other week now occur weekly. And the diversion rate is growing, finally recovering from a rollback of the program undertaken during the financial crisis that followed the attacks on our city on 9/11. However, it is important to remember that even this program, which many of us take for granted today, started small and took time to build participation. Our organics

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

8

program also began as a very small pilot, just 3,200 households in the neighborhood of Westerleigh on Staten Island in 2013. Shortly after that pilot, the council passed Local Law 77 of 2013, which mandated an expanded pilot program for homes and schools. The last time this committee held an oversight hearing on the city's organics collection program was February of 2016 following the submission of the final pilot report required by Local Law 77. At that time the city's curbside organics collection program served 650,000 residents. Today, just two and a half years later, this program is available to more than 3.5 million New Yorkers in all five boroughs. In the two and a half years since that last hearing, the program has expanded to more than 2.8 million additional residents, equal to the combined populations of Seattle, San Francisco, Boston and Portland, Oregon. It is the most aggressive and most rapid expansion of a curbside organics collection program in this country's history. That is an impressive feat for which I have to commend the hard work of my staff, our community partners and committed residents and activists. I also thank the City Council for your consistent support of this important program. This

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

9

past May at the fiscal year 2019 executive budget hearing, I testified that the department had placed the implementation schedule for the expansion of the curbside organics collection program on hold, with a goal of increasing efficiencies and streamlining the program. I want to be clear, however, that the residential organics program continues to operate in all neighborhoods currently receiving organics collection. We continue to educate and engage residents in the newest service areas with door to door canvassing and targeted campaigns highlighting the program's benefits. In fiscal '18, our multilingual outreach staff hosted more than a thousand events including tabling, presentations with community groups, street tree care and one-pound bag compost giveaways. Our program is the largest of any other municipal curbside organics program in the nation and one of the largest in the world. The department, in collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Labor Relations, is evaluating the program to ensure that residents receive the very best curbside organics collection service and that we are building a strong foundation for continued growth. We are hopeful that

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

as these discussions continue we will be able to announce a new rollout schedule in the coming months. As with any new program, we continue to assess it's, it's effectiveness and the most appropriate tactics to achieve the city's goals. For example, we identified new ways to achieve efficiencies in our operations by experimenting with different fleet assignments. In some districts, we had started collection on a twice weekly basis using dual bin trucks, with one side collecting refuse and the other collecting organics. However, we found that the side of the truck used to collect household refuse, was too small to fit couches, mattresses and other bulky items. This had caused a spike in missed collection complaints for bulky items and forced us to run several additional trucks a week dedicated to collecting these bulky items. Over the last year, we have refined what we call the quote, unquote "hybrid" collection model, which uses a dual bin truck to collect refuse and organics once a week on recycling day and a single bin rear loader to collect just refuse on the other collection day to better accommodate large items. This summer, we completed the transition of the four remaining dual bin

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

districts to the hybrid model. We have seen consistent reductions in costs related to the organics collection program in these districts as a result and we continue to evaluate other opportunities for efficiency. Since 2013, we have conducted regular surveys of participation in this voluntary program. As a result, we have found that providing once per week service does not significantly impact participation or diversion rates, since residents in neighborhoods with twice weekly service typically placed out their brown bins for collection on their recycling day only. In order to grow program participation, we have also distributed zero waste bags and thank you cards to recognize program participants. Residents who don't participate receive a card encouraging them to participate in the future. Our frowny banana. On average we've seen a 12 percent increase in participation from this strategy. In addition to the department's curbside organics collection program, the department continues to support food scrap drop off sites in all five boroughs where residents can drop off their organic waste at green markets, parks, gardens and other community spaces. We also continue

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

to support local, community composting in New York City and we are excited to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the New York City Compost Project later this year. The department also continues to work with businesses in New York City to encourage food waste reduction, reuse and recycling among New York City businesses. In accordance with Local Law 176 of 2017, the department is currently developing a food donation portal we expect to launch in March of 2019. The food donation portal is being built as a new component of DSNY's web based and mobile donation platform, donateNYC. The goal of the portal is to reduce food waste in New York City by increasing food donations from businesses with surplus edible food by matching donor food establishments with food rescue organizations. This portal will serve the dual goals of helping to feed our most vulnerable residents while also contributing to our zero waste goals. In the commercial sector, the department continues to implement and enforce requirements for food waste separation and recycling under Local Law 146 of 2013. Last year, we began enforcing organics separation requirements at stadiums, arenas, large hotels, large food wholesalers and large food manufacturers.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

Earlier this year, we adopted rules expanding these requirements to large restaurants and grocery stores along with chain restaurants. We are currently conducting extensive outreach to these newly designated covered establishments and will begin conducting enforcement early next year. The city is building a new way of thinking about food waste. we can, and we should be connecting edible food to people in need, and we can change the discarded banana peel from trash to rich soil and natural gas. And it's not just about preserving the environment, unnecessary food waste increases grocery bills and the costs to operate a restaurant. We will continue to explore ambitious and comprehensive sustainability strategies to divert organic waste, reduce methane emissions in landfills, create compost and generate local renewable energy. On behalf of the department, I thank this committee for holding a hearing on the important topic of our residential organics collection program today. I would also like to thank Speaker Johnson, Chair Reynoso and all the members of this committee for their continuing support of our residential organics collection program and the residents who participate in this important program.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

We look forward to working with you to continue to expand this program to meet our goal of serving all New Yorkers and we thank you for your ongoing commitment to achieving our zero waste goals. I am now happy to answer any question.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your testimony Commissioner. I guess the first question would be how long do you anticipate halting the expansion of the organics program?

KATHRYN GARCIA: We are still working through when we would begin again. I'm hoping that it will be... we will have an answer shortly, but I do not anticipate that we would start now this close to snow season... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...so the department is sort of in that mode of moving towards thinking just about being prepared for snow.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, so... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: It would not... I would not anticipate prior to spring.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay. And then prior to spring and then how long thereafter do, do

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

we feel that the rest of the city of New York would have access to organics recycling?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, if we started in April of next year we would be able to complete before the end of calendar year 2019.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: That is for all of the areas that we've identified that are low and medium density. Today in high density areas we ask that people apply, and we are still doing enrollments of buildings that are larger than nine units.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I guess a, a larger, bigger picture question, how does the DSNY propose to reach zero organic waste to landfill by 2030, do we have a, a... I guess a vision here that we can I guess hear today about how we really truly feel that we can get to zero waste I guess in the organics portion at least?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Absolutely, so really, it's, it's... the first step is obviously about both being able to provide the curbside service and encourage the investment required in the processing in the backend. We are seeing that happen but like traditional recycling it will not happen overnight,

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

we are seeing participation in all of the districts some more than others but we think the first step is really about making sure that the service is available and that we are doing all of the outreach required but just to give you a little bit of context, so we are often held up to some place like San Francisco, they started their pilot program in organics in 2001 and it took them about eight years before they really had everyone on board and actually participating and so I do not think that we need to necessarily take eight, eight years but just to give you some context around very, very successful programs and how they did it in a very stepwise, thoughtful way and I think it made it more successful as we move forward.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, so, let's talk about how far we've gotten so far, so what percentage of the city's residents currently have curbside collection?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, it's three and a half million of the eight and a half million residents in the city have access to it.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, and what percentage will have curbside collection once the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

expansion resumes and is complete, so is it all... it won't be all eight million residents... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Well I mean the... I guess it depends on how you define it, I mean there is also the... all of Manhattan technically if they will apply would have access to it today, I don't anticipate that they from our interactions with many building owners it's been primarily co-ops and condos, rental buildings have been a little bit slower to take up the service but... so, we would anticipate that, you know you could make the case that they already have the access if they wanted it but they have not yet taken us up on it. So, we think that it would make it so that there would be availability if you chose to participate by the end of next year if we started in April.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And then... so, who would be using the drop off locations versus the curbside collection?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, any building whether or not you are in a curbside district or in a high density district is required to enroll because we think that just providing them with the bins and not... because we are not interacting with the owner or the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

tenant who actually puts the waste out that we won't have success so where we've had success with larger building is when we've engaged with that building's management company and so those are what's available but right now your building management company could say I don't want to do it and so those... we want to make sure that there are drop off sites for those people who's buildings are not as supportive of the city's sustainability goals.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, let's talk about participation rates, our favorite subject when it comes to organics, what's the average in community board districts that have... that have actually participated in the program, what's been your... I have a 10.6 percent is that more or less what you have?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes, I mean that is more or less... I mean there are some that are participating over 40 percent but there are some that are holding us down a little more on the lower percentage and are not... are not participating as much as we would like and that's why we have been doing an enormous amount of outreach over the last few months because we rolled out ten districts in the last year so, you know it's, it's also making sure that we are

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

continuing to encourage people to be participants. We have had some people when we surveyed them say I eat out every day, you know I'm not going to participate or the very funny one of the chef who instagrammed us and said I have no food waste because I use all my food waste. So, you know you find out interesting things about New Yorkers but there are... we are having to overcome the ick factor, there are many people who think because it's in a different bin that it is in some way different than putting it in a black bag which it's really not and so once we sort of get folks to participate they usually stay with us, it's that first hurdle and you know the first... the way that they usually start is through yard waste because it... you usually are doing that not in your kitchen and you're already collecting it sort of separately as an activity and for most people they seem to be more comfortable starting... that's their first foray into the... into the program.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, because we always ask this... that question related to participating I guess, lessons learned, I think a lot of folks want to hear. From the last hearing we had related to organics which was kind of the beginning

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

of the whole... to the program to now just what, what have you seen that is going to be helpful long term for the growth of the organics program and also... I know you spoke in your testimony about the changes you've already made that you think can be helpful as well but I think folks want to hear more about what changes happened, what lessons were learned because the long term sustainability of this program is important to folks so if you could just really start like talking about that part of it?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Absolutely, so there have been a lot of sort of interesting lessons. One was the use of plastic bags and allowing people to use a clear plastic liner was very important to many residents, made them more likely to participate. Giving them the right number of bins, we were in some cases giving people too many bins and then they felt a little overwhelmed because we did it by number of units in the building. Looking at the routes, in some cases some of the organic's routes were too long and weren't achievable. Looking at... moving to the hybrid program and making sure that we were reducing the amount of bulk trucks. I think that we didn't realize how much bulk was really getting thrown out every

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

1 week, that... there was a surprising amount of bulk
2 and, you know sort of that... those were sort of things
3 that... both on the operational side but also on the...
4 on what the experience is for the resident. In
5 addition, we've been experimenting with a lot of
6 different outreach campaigns whether or not it's
7 around the fact that you have a sealed bin for food
8 you're more... less likely to have vermin or rodents
9 and actually making that case directly or the behind
10 the bin campaign where we, we talk about the
11 Sanitation Department and the people who work at the
12 Sanitation Department being the ones who are bringing
13 this to you which it can be compelling in certain
14 areas. We did a pun, I didn't create any of the puns,
15 I can read some of the puns later but that was a
16 social media campaign which engaged many people. So,
17 we are really trying to experiment with what our
18 messaging is, but this is very new, so our
19 participation rate is more or less on track with
20 where back long, long ago we started doing recycling,
21 the more traditional recycling.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And in that work
24 that you did since the halt; reduction in costs,
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

increasing inefficiency, just what, what did that look like?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I mean like just in the four districts we just completed we reduced the number of trucks we were using by 39, that is, you know approximately two million dollars.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And, and 39 out of how many trucks?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Oh, in that... in those couple of districts, I would have to go back and look at that, I was just looking at the delta but, you know that, that's a, a real dollar figure and so those were costs that we had not anticipated and so it was really about making it so that we were streamlining and getting back towards where we felt we should be on the budget.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, last year we asked the administration to put ten million dollars in the budget for marketing, it's a... the ten million dollars would have had you closer to the Vision Zero goal DOT has and I just don't feel that you're getting the same support as the Department of Transportation is getting, of course the ten million never went into the budget, you know can you speak to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

what you do... you've already talked about zero waste education and so forth, I really feel that television ads would go a long way but can you go down more into you're your public engagement looks like and... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: So... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...whether or not you think somebody... the money you currently have is enough when it comes to the education portion of it?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, and so... it's hard for a Commissioner to turn away ten millions dollars but I do think that one of the things that's slightly different about Vision Zero and, and position... and the zero waste goals is sort of more than one fold; one is that, you know you're talking about people who are getting killed on the streets and so I'm... I do believe... I actually do believe that that's a somewhat higher priority but one of the things that's also true about the organics program is how important person to person contact is in terms of your messaging that that's where we see the participation and we know on Vision Zero a lot of it's also driven by even stronger enforcement but just to show off some of our artwork and things so, we've been using

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

the links a lot and I also think that we've done some work with subway advertising, they're not with the organics and some other programs which we think made a difference and we continue to use social media but its, you know things like this send, send roaches and rats and mice somewhere else for dinner, these seem to resonate on the links so this is, it looks better at night and then the behind the bin, meet the people behind your brown bin, which we've been using. So, on links and on bus shelters and, and things like that and then this is... was our social, giving us your egg scraps, eggcellent [sp?]. Let us tell you about recycling food scraps, lettuce.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I feel like you had... you had something to do with a couple of these, I don't think you're telling us but I'd sure like you, you're enjoying... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Bin curious about composting.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Right.

KATHRYN GARCIA: No, no, I had nothing... I was... I am... I do not do puns or at least I don't intentionally do puns. So, you know I think that, that obviously education and outreach is a never-

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

ending part of our... of our program but the other thing that I do think has been important for New Yorkers who want to do it is seeing the close loop, so really seeing like... I gave you my food scraps and you gave me back compost so we've done a lot of giveaways of compost and, you know people see the difference, I've had people come up to me and say I didn't think the compost would make that much of a difference in my garden but either the vegetables were bigger, the flowers were bigger because of how nutrient rich it is and also because it holds water to the soil so obviously not a problem this year but in prior years where you've had very dry summers whatever moisture there is, is getting held to the roots of those plants and so that connection for New Yorkers has been very, very important.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, I have a lot... a lot of questions but I want to allow for Council Member Vallone to ask a, a couple of questions and then I'll, I'll get back to, to asking some so, Council Member Vallone.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Sure, just a few, thank you Chair. Good morning Commissioner.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 KATHRYN GARCIA: Good morning... [cross-
3 talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: ...and everyone
5 who's here. Congratulations for taking on this
6 ambitious project and you know we in this city have
7 to do better to try to figure out how the best way to
8 get this thing moving. My communities were one of the
9 ones that started in the pilot program and I guess I
10 got to see firsthand the neighbors that quickly
11 jumped in, neighbors that quickly were skeptical...
12 [cross-talk]

13 KATHRYN GARCIA: Yeah... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: ...and came up
15 with the old, you know raccoons everything else
16 that's going to be a problem with the community
17 boards... [cross-talk]

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: ...and... but in the
20 end I think everyone realized it's a, a noble and
21 worthy topic and we should approach it but it began
22 to like wear down and I think now as I look in my
23 community I don't see the brown bins out any more so,
24 I think there's... part of the pilot is, is
25 understanding how we launched it, how we can make it

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

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2 better, how we can assist with some of the homeowners
3 and, and concerns were and how we can make it a
4 little bit better. I don't have the answers to those
5 questions because we, we were part of it, but I did
6 see that like with every family, the children are
7 really the bosses... [cross-talk]

8 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: ...and if the
10 children embrace the topic they can guilt any parent
11 into doing just about anything and I think when they
12 see the good of the... of this and how it impacts
13 because through our... their eyes we do everything. I
14 think there might be an opportunity to work with DOE
15 and our public schools, in our schools to maybe take
16 a new look at expanding the, the knowledge of the
17 program into the schools and have children take
18 ownership of it then they will be the ones to say hey
19 mom, dad why aren't we throwing out this in a
20 separate bag, I do it at school, I do it in my...
21 [cross-talk]

22 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: ...parks because
24 even parks could participate with how many different
25 things we're doing in the parks from the sports games

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

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2 and community activities, people bringing things
3 there, we can separate there. I think we can expand,
4 it's not just on your shoulders is what I'm saying,
5 again everyone should be part of this otherwise
6 change is difficult and, and sometimes, you know
7 folks are just going to say it's very easy to do what
8 I'm doing, throw it in the garbage and not do it. So,
9 I'm looking to try to maybe help in expanding the
10 program to additional areas and, and, and agencies
11 and I think the schools would be a natural area for
12 us.

13 KATHRYN GARCIA: Right, no we are in... we,
14 we are not able... in, in your school district, we are
15 in about... a little over 800 schools get organics
16 collection and we do try and match that with where we
17 are doing the residential program because I agree
18 with you, the children are very good advocates and I
19 would like to think of them as my secret weapons with
20 their parents... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: They're very
22 good at that.

23 KATHRYN GARCIA: Yeah, I know. I actually
24 did one... a litter thing and I was like... you know it
25 was... they were like three and four year olds and I

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

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2 was giving a poster prize and I was like, do your
3 parents litter, they go oh yes and I was like okay,
4 you're going to work on that for me aren't you; they
5 came clean right away but I do think that they're
6 about making sure that we're both getting their
7 parents and that they're ready to be the future
8 recyclers, they're ready to be the folks who really
9 are in the know and we would love to work more with
10 you and with your civics and your community boards
11 and engage with residents in your neighborhoods to
12 see, you know how we can do better, what would make
13 it... what would make it more effective for them.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, I think
15 that would be a great place to start and to... after
16 the initial entry of the program there was a lot of
17 support to the homeowners and... [cross-talk]

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: ...information and
20 people came to the door and then it kind of stopped
21 so I, I think everybody needs a gentle re-kick to get
22 the thing going and to, to say hey, have you had any
23 issues in the beginning, I see you started but I
24 don't see the brown baskets out anymore, what can we
25 do, I, I think there was definitely a good push and

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

then I think there was some concerns and then folks kind of just faded away with it so we need to get them back on track so, understand it shouldn't all fall on your shoulders, I think we should try to get as many different agencies and folks in schools and kids involved in it.

KATHRYN GARCIA: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you Chair...

[cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Thank you for your support.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you. Thank you Council Member Vallone. So, I guess what we're hearing and hearing from Council Member Vallone and his experience in his district, in my district it's the same thing, I think a lot of the brown bins were out early because a lot of folks didn't bring them inside the house when you dropped them off they just kept them out for decorations in front of their buildings and now I think folks either got rid of them or have them in their back yard, who knows but I guess the goal here is to get to zero waste, right...

[cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...and the halt of
3 the program is a big concern for folks because it
4 just delays the, the opportunity for us to be
5 citywide... [cross-talk]

6 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...first and second
8 to eventually get to a place where it's mandatory...
9 [cross-talk]

10 KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...so, the, the Mayor
12 did make a commitment that he... or not a commitment,
13 he just publicly said that organics should be
14 mandate... mandatory. I just want to know what is the
15 administration's take on this still, what is your
16 timeline I guess that's what people want to hear, a
17 timeline as to how we get to mandatory collection
18 because then we can really start I guess
19 understanding how, how we're going to get to zero
20 waste?

21 KATHRYN GARCIA: Absolutely, no, I mean
22 I, I completely agree with the Mayor, I do think that
23 mandatorily will be a key tool, I just don't think
24 we're there yet and I know you want specifics on
25 exactly when I think I'll get there and I just don't

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

1
2 have that yet but I think we should be continuing to
3 work together because I'm going to need your help if
4 we're going to do something like mandatory, that
5 would be a big change for the city of New York and I
6 think as I've said to you before it's like, you know
7 there are New Yorkers who will do things because its
8 very environmentally sustainable and they are very
9 committed, there are New Yorkers who will do things
10 because it's the coolest thing to do and then there
11 are New, New Yorkers who will do things because
12 there's some sort of financial penalty involved and
13 obviously mandatory programs would increase
14 diversion, we're just... we're just not quite there yet
15 and I think I want to continue to work with you to
16 figure out what exactly that timeline is over the
17 next few months.

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I just think folks,
19 you know and, and I don't... I'm not saying that you're
20 not being honest but for transparency purposes folks
21 really need to hear that their administration has a
22 plan, that they have a, a goal, it's been... it's been
23 quite some time since zero waste has been put out and
24 it, it still feels like there's a peace meal approach
25 to trying to get something done. I know we do it with

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

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MANAGEMENT

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zonings and, and other... rezonings and other things

3

here in the city but I, I really think it comes...

4

there comes a time when we just need a plan, a

5

comprehensive... [cross-talk]

6

KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

7

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...plan on how we're

8

going to get it done and it just seems like we can

9

never get there and I'm always getting answers not

10

only from you but other commissioners that, you know

11

we, we don't know yet or we're kind of playing it by

12

ear or we'll know soon but eventually you just need

13

to sit down and have it... have it together... put

14

together and we're very in the waste community I will

15

call us, we're very patient, understanding and want

16

to be helpful to the city in making this happen. I

17

don't think if you put a schedule or a timeline

18

together that we're going to have you here the day

19

after you said you were going to do something and say

20

you're the worst people in the world just we want to

21

understand why it took longer or why its holding you

22

back, we really want to be partners more than

23

anything else and I think not having a timeline puts

24

us at a disadvantage as to when we expect to be

25

helpful, when we can show up, when we can push things

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

so I just really want to urge that we get to a place where there is a timeline and, and I think that that could help us because... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: No, I... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...I'm, I'm not... it's just not... I don't know how I can help if I don't know when you're supposed to be doing things.

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I really appreciate your comments and the... we could not be doing this without the support we've had from the City Council or from the entire advocate community, it would not be happening today as big as we've gotten and I appreciate your desire to continue to be supportive and your need to have more information in order to do that and I will work very hard to get that to you to make sure that you can hold the administration accountable for meeting its goals.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, hopefully this will be the last organics committee hearing where we don't have the timeline.

KATHRYN GARCIA: This will be the last organics committee hearing where we don't have a timeline.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, that's great,
3 thank you so much for that. Now that I will hold you
4 to though, I'm not going... [cross-talk]

5 KATHRYN GARCIA: That's... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...to lie, I said I
7 would be... but not that one, I think it's important, I
8 think a lot of people are here and just want to get
9 to the next level.

10 KATHRYN GARCIA: We're not having a
11 hearing next week, right?

12 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: No. No, next month...
13 no, we... we'll... but it, it is... [cross-talk]

14 KATHRYN GARCIA: No, we have a snow
15 hearing next month I'm sure... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes, I know...
17 [cross-talk]

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...it's, it's October come
19 on... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: It's not going to
21 snow but... so, and we know... we know that these things,
22 getting to zero waste, you know that it's not an
23 independent thing they all have partnering
24 initiatives that are extremely important. The Save as
25 you Throw program, just would that help increase

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

participation and maybe something that comes prior
to... comes prior to mandatory...

KATHRYN GARCIA: At this point we have
not been focused on Save as you Throw obviously the
research shows that diversion rates go up in cities
that use an approach like that, but New York is very
different than, than other cities where it's been
successful but it hasn't been our focus right at this
moment.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, I just want
to for the general public, Speaker Cory Johnson had
made a comment after getting caught at the lobby I
think with misinformation or maybe a lack of
information about what Save as you Throw is and said
oh, I would never have the city of New York residents
pay for their trash, that's not exactly what we're
doing so I've had a conversation with him since then
and I won't... I don't want to speak for him but there
is an openness to have a conversation about what Save
as you Throw really is and, you know not having be
bombarded at a lobby about, you know oh, we're going
to pay for our trash so, I just wanted you to know
that moving forward we're having a more serious
conversation in dialogue about what Save as you Throw

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

is to see if we can be supportive of that program as well because if the city council is not on board I can see how that makes it difficult and it, it may... and if it becomes difficult then we can't get to zero waste by 2030 which is everyone, everyone that's here today their goals so, I just want to make sure the public knew that. Yes. Do you have the cost per ton of the program currently, do you have information as to what that cost so that we... so that we can I guess put it in play as in, in the program where it's mandatory what the cost... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: I don't have the cost...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...per ton... [cross-

talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...per ton and the cost per ton for mandatory would be different than what the cost per ton is now because you'd achieve more economies of scale and it also has to do with the balance of projecting what the cost will be on the regular refuse side on the offset, but we can definitely get you that information.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, so the next part of it is the budget right now for, for the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

program is currently at about 15.7 million, there's no one in this room that thinks that that's the amount of money that's going to be necessary for, for rolling this out maybe the pilot program it makes sense but long term we know that that's not sufficient we just wanted to know what costs I guess or, or what the budget would be to, to play this out longer term and whether... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: So... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...or not you have that?

KATHRYN GARCIA: You're correct, it would require more, we are in negotiations with our oversights about exactly what that number is and then I assume they would bring that number to the council, but it would... it will be higher.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay and is there... is promising conversations related to an increase in the budget for that?

KATHRYN GARCIA: There are a lot of conversations.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: A lot of conversations but not necessarily promising?

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

KATHRYN GARCIA: I have my good days and my bad days.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well just know that from our part we're going to do a lot of work here because we know that it's not where it needs to be and that the city needs to pony up and do a lot more so where you can't advocate we can just a, a heads up and we know that there's a lot more that needs to be done, done there. Does food struck... food scrap drop off program, sorry... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...food scrap drop off program, say that five times fast. There was funding included in FY '18 to expand it... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...is there going to be more of an expansion I guess or, or, or are we going to continue the expansion to fiscal year 2019?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes. No, we... so, we are at about 134 sites in... actually in the next... very, very shortly we're going to add another 12 sites. We continue to think that that's an important component of the program, it's also an opportunity for us to engage with the public on a day to day basis whether

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

or not they are actually dropping off, it's a, a physical presence where someone will come up and ask what is going on here and that is, you know part of the outreach, why are these people coming and bringing you food waste like what is happening and so there's often a lot of interaction at these sites so we think that it's an important component of the program going forward.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, you're saying we should get thousands and thousands of more of these drop off locations and just the... being able to see them people ask questions and they all participate?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright. Let's talk about the schools, Council Member Vallone mentioned about schools, educating the children related to organics would be helpful but the schools themselves are supposed to be participating in this and folks feel that the school environment is a controlled environment and in... because it's controlled we should... if we can't knock them out of the park in, in a school, you know the city doesn't bode well so I just want to... your experience in schools how are we

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

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2 doing, what are the obstacles and are they also
3 assisting you in doing a better job at the... at the... I
4 guess at the residential portion of, of the... of the
5 program?

6 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, there are about... a
7 little bit over 800 schools that are participating in
8 the organics program, I mean the schools made a
9 commitment to remove their Styrofoam trays, to make
10 sure that they were using compostable ware and so
11 there are many schools that are doing very, very
12 well, the ones that have green teams and really
13 committed people particularly in the cafeteria and
14 with food service they have been the most successful.
15 We have targeted about 100 schools to not only
16 increase their organics participation but also their
17 paper and their metal, glass and plastic
18 participation and we've seen both changes in their
19 diversion rates but also some real creativity, we run
20 an awards program for them and so they, they actually
21 will incorporate the whole concept into their
22 curriculum and those have been the most successful,
23 you know this is an ongoing conversation with the DOE
24 because just like with a large residential building
25 there are a lot of people who are touching it so it's

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

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2 the food service people, it's the students in the
3 building, it's the teachers, it's the custodial staff
4 before it hits the curb so we have seen some real
5 commitments in many of the schools, the elementary is
6 a little better than the high school but, you know we
7 continue to work very closely with the Department of
8 Education and they have actually committed resources
9 and hired people on the sustainability front, I have
10 actually personally met with their custodial union to
11 talk through how to improve the program, what do
12 their custodians need, how... what trainings do... can we
13 help them with so this is an ongoing, real commitment
14 to try and make the schools sort of the shining light
15 so to speak.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: What is their
17 participation rate, are they doing well?

18 KATHRYN GARCIA: In terms... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Well, well not...
20 diversion rate, I'm sorry, the diversion rate?

21 KATHRYN GARCIA: No, their diversion
22 rates... I mean their diversion rate, they're, they're
23 sort of hard to do a comparison because their waste
24 is different than a residential building, but I think
25 that they are usually over 50 percent in the ones

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

where we have done the survey before and after so we're getting much of the material into the program.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: But we need to get to zero waste, right, so 50... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: I know we're... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...percent doesn't work so, it... are we making progress... I guess... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...year to year... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...so, basically, they were lower and they're getting... they have gotten better particularly in the zero waste schools.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Are they going... are... when are we going to go to all the schools, again I am... I understand the pilot program being halted and, and it being difficult to, to citywide but again the schools, these are our buildings why are we not in all schools, why are we not doing this in all schools yet?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, I think that we will... we will be trying to pair that with the rollout

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

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2 next year but the, the real question is whether or
3 not I need to just... in order to make sure I can get
4 enough people to talk to everyone that we need to be
5 talking to whether or not they follow or come before
6 the residential program but they're... we, we view them
7 as being integral to move together but you know we
8 are in all of Manhattan, we are in all of Staten
9 Island, we're in a lot of Brooklyn and Queens
10 already, we just haven't made the jump to the next
11 round yet.

12 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, the, the, the
13 schools move with the program I guess as the
14 implementation happens you, you take on the schools
15 as well?

16 KATHRYN GARCIA: In certain cases, there,
17 there's a little... it's, it's a little more
18 complicated only because the school collection trucks
19 are crossing district boundaries many times so
20 there's not always a pair but what we try and do is
21 bring on the route of schools which may or may not be
22 in the district, they may cross the line.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, then I guess
24 what about private collection, how has that program
25 been so far, I know there was some, some businesses

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

that gave me a call about wanting to postpone it, I just want to know how... has it been successful, have you gotten reports back from, from folks... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, so, we... the first 300 which are required as of now many are doing very well, some... there is a small subsector where we have done enforcement action against them and have had to do multiple enforcement actions against them. On the other hand we are... we are in the outreach for the next cohort which is about 1,800 businesses, we are trying to make sure that we physically get everywhere before enforcement starts in January but they've had 18 months to prepare so, we notified them of the rulemaking, we did the rulemaking, we waited six months for the rule to go into effect, we're waiting another six months for us to do any enforcement so I'm not sure that delaying means they're going to do any better.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: One of the concerns that a business owner gave me was they don't have a basement and when they're separating their trash it kind of gets done like on the spot and then they just throw all their trash out to the... to the curb I guess

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

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2 for collection whenever it's going to be collected
3 but they said not having a basement makes it harder
4 for them to continue to, you know be creative about
5 how they separate their trash and that the square
6 footage that is using the program for diversion only
7 speaks to like... I guess... I guess if they're a
8 business that has let's say 10,000 square feet of
9 which none of it is basement space they're competing
10 against maybe a 5,000 square, square foot business
11 on... like a first floor and 5,000 square feet like on
12 a basement and that makes it more easier, easier and
13 more convenient, have you seen an issue with like
14 actual access to like trash... a trash facility I guess
15 or, or, or refuse space... [cross-talk]

16 KATHRYN GARCIA: So, so... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...in buildings...

18 [cross-talk]

19 KATHRYN GARCIA: ...in most... we have not
20 seen anything particular like you're describing, I
21 can go back and ask the outreach folks for that
22 specific scenario, but you know we're talking about a
23 restaurant that's 15,000 square feet, we're talking
24 about a grocery store that's 25,000 square feet those
25 are pretty big. The concept that they don't have

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

space, they've got to be putting it somewhere, it's not different than what they have now so the volume should be the same, we're not adding waste we're just making it so that you... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Just another step... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: ...can... right, you just can't put everything in the same bag.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, good, good to hear that. How many composting facilities do we have within like a 50-mile radius in the city I guess?

KATHRYN GARCIA: Of the... besides the one that we own on Staten Island and the New Town Creek facility based on our research, there are 11 facilities that are either within a, a hundred miles or have arrangements with a New York City transfer station.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And long term there's capacity?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, that represents over 400,000 tons per year of capacity, obviously that will have to grow but that is higher than it was two years ago.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: 400,000-ton
3 capacity?

4 KATHRYN GARCIA: 400,000 tons.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And that's a, a
6 year I guess?

7 KATHRYN GARCIA: Per year.

8 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, alright,
9 sorry. How many carters are there that do specific
10 organics carting, carting of organics, I guess that
11 work with DSNY or... [cross-talk]

12 KATHRYN GARCIA: They don't... they don't
13 report to us necessarily on organics, I know that
14 Action provides it, I know that Mr. T provide it...
15 provides it and I believe ISI provides it, I'm not
16 sure... beyond that I have not looked at that.

17 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, maybe that's
18 a BIC question.

19 KATHRYN GARCIA: I think that they would
20 be the one who would regulate it and they would know
21 whether or not they were providing the service from
22 their customer service registry.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And then maybe
24 Harry would be happy to hear this, head count, we're
25 going to need more people to move... to, to pick up

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

more trash or, or dive... sorry, well just... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: To run different streams.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes, there you go, to run different streams so are we going to need an increase in head count, do we need to start advocating for more sanitation workers?

KATHRYN GARCIA: So, that goes along with the question on how much... the money is equated to people so... that is... that is the conversation we're having.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And you... is there a number... are you negotiating with Harry already, do you know how... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: No, no... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...much... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: We are not directly negotiating on a head count number with Harry, no.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright but you are working on... you have to have a meet... [cross-talk]

KATHRYN GARCIA: He... we are working with him closely on how to make the program effective and he has been very helpful, but we don't... we don't... we,

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 we wouldn't... we wouldn't negotiate a head count
3 number, we would negotiate a program and then it...
4 that would derive from there.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright, but you're
6 I guess internally you're in the works of
7 understanding what capacity you need related to head
8 count to do this work?

9 KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay and that
11 would... that would be tied to the increase in the
12 budget that you would get year in and year out to,
13 to... [cross-talk]

14 KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...to completely fund
16 this program?

17 KATHRYN GARCIA: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, so, so, that...
19 I have a couple more questions, but I think we're,
20 we're okay, I kind of want to get to the advocates
21 and the folks in the room to ask a few questions, we
22 would love for you of course for DSNY to stay...
23 [cross-talk]

24 KATHRYN GARCIA: We'll stay... [cross-talk]

25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...but I really thank
3 you for your time, I'm looking forward to seeing what
4 the program looks like after it's citywide and then
5 I'm looking forward to a timeline so that we can
6 start being helpful in helping you push this long
7 term so thank you again for your work... [cross-talk]

8 KATHRYN GARCIA: You were very clear on
9 that... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...and thank you
11 Bridget, thank you.

12 BRIDGET ANDERSON: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright. So, we're
14 going to call the first panel; Eric Goldstein, Mark
15 Shifflett, Melanie Weniger and Melisa Iachan. Eric
16 you're not supposed to drop off paperwork in, in
17 front of me like this you could... you could attack me,
18 I feel... I feel very unsafe.

19 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: My apologies.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: It's okay, it's
21 okay, this will be the last time though. I know Eric,
22 very scary. Self-identified tree hugger though but
23 you guys can start where... however you want to, we're
24 going to give you three minutes just because there's
25 another hearing that's coming shortly after this one

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

but if you need a little extra time we can... we can work it out just... right, Eric you want to start?

ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Sure. Thank you, good morning Mr. Chairman. Eric Goldstein from the Natural Resources Defense Council. Thank you for your leadership in calling this important hearing. The city's residential organics composting collection program is one of the most important efforts ever undertaken by the Sanitation Department in terms of the potential it holds to reduce global warming emissions, enhance sustainability and ultimately reduce the cost of collection and disposal to city taxpayers but we're concerned that several aspects of the implementation of this essential program are not meeting standards and believe that city council action is necessary to continue the momentum moving forward. The Sanitation Department's commitment to provide curbside recycling was the single most important waste policy reform advanced here since the adoption of the recycling program 30 years ago and this program along with commercial waste zoning can be the two outstanding legacies of Commissioner Garcia and you and your committee. Commissioner Garcia has recognized the importance of composting

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

since the very day she was named Commissioner and deserves credit for that, nevertheless the residential organics program needs help. For one thing the program has suffered from communications shortfall, homeowners and apartment dwellers in already served districts need more information regarding how and why to participate. Second, the curbside collection schedules need to be at least as frequent as traditional trash collections so that they're convenient for participants. We've heard from some members that participation increased... decreased dramatically when organics collections were cut from twice a week to once a week. Third, some residents have complained that brown organics pails are not racoon proof and that racoons have knocked over and gotten into these pails and that cuts participation. As a result, as you've indicated participation has fallen off and although 3.5 million are eligible perhaps ten percent of the residents are participating now. These facts should not be grounds for pessimism because major programs like this often encounter start up difficulties but it's going to take some significant action by the council to right the ship. Here are five recommendations. Today's

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

hearing is a good start, but the Sanitation Department needs to complete a detailed assessment of what's working and what is not regarding implementation and submit this assessment to the council within we recommend four months. The document should have as you've indicated an implementation plan for actions the Department will take in 2019 to address the problems now facing the program. Second, the De Blasio administration also a point you've indicated, should fund the multi-faceted public education initiative informing New Yorkers about this program. The Department knows how to do this, they can get help from Grow NYC, but the program needs funding. Third, the committee needs to advance legislation that would require all city agencies and city owned buildings to separate their food waste for collection. Public Advocate Tish James has introduced legislation along these lines and we encourage city employ... and this would encourage city employees to set the example for participation and boost the capture rate. Fourth, the Sanitation officials need to cooperate with the department and the administration to pave the way for organics collection vehicle route adjustments with the goal of

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

maximizing program effectiveness. Those conversations are ongoing, but we need continuing cooperation. And fifth, the committee should advance legislation that expands this voluntary program citywide by 2020 and makes the program mandatory by 2022. This would be consistent with city's like Seattle and San Francisco that have taken ten years from the beginning of their program, ours started in 2013, to implementation full citywide mandatory. Again the, the Commissioner, we believe and her staff are interested in advancing this, they need action by the council to make mandatory... city wide and ultimately mandatory collection happening and finally we'd also like Council Member Vallone's idea of targeting the schools, we all agree that schools are where kids learn and bring those messages on sustainability home and so when the Commissioner indicates that 100 schools have these strong zero waste programs, that's terrific but there are a thousand schools so we, we've got 90 percent of the schools that aren't getting the message and we would encourage you to consider legislation along those lines as well to get the school kids participating and understanding this

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

program and bringing it home. Again, we thank you for your leadership.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Eric, I just wanted to say two things, it's almost like a, a double-sided sword, right, when we have two day collection we lose a lot of money in the city of New York, right but participation is higher; when we have one time collection it saves us money and the trucks are fuller and so forth. So, we're, we're just...

[cross-talk]

ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Go ahead.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN: If I can just respond in 30 seconds, ultimately we need to adjust collections so that if you have recycling collections and you have composting or organics collections you are able as almost every other city that's done this has been able to do, you cut back the number of regular waste or traditional trash collections as you've indicated. So, it's the same amount of trash you're just collecting it differently, it requires some cooperation and some negotiations with the union but there's no reason why we need to keep adding additional collections when it's the same amount or

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

even a little less waste than New Yorkers are generating.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: And that sounds like a solution... a more long-term solution and I understand that, if they do that now and the trash will be in the streets and we'll be in big trouble but you're right, I get... I get what you're saying long term reducing general waste because there should be less of it and increasing the organics waste collection program makes a lot of sense. So, I hear that and there was one other thing that you said... yeah, so we have a testimony from Tish James here that she's going to speak, well her representative is going to speak on behalf of, of Tish so, we're going to hear what they have to say about the legislation and if pushing the legislation through the council would encourage people to participate or, or make it so that the city has to take it a lot more serious then it's something that we would do. So, we're going to let Melissa go first and then Tish, Tish's rep will go next and, and... but thank you again Eric for your support on this matter.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Thank you for your leadership.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

MELISSA IACHAN: I might actually also have some ideas to address the concerns so. Thank you for letting me speak. Good morning, my name is Melissa Iachan, I am a Senior Staff Attorney at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest in the Environmental Justice Program. I'm here representing NYLPI and the Transform Don't Trash NYC Coalition to underscore the importance of insuring... ensuring that our city diverts waste from landfills and continues to make the necessary investments in a robust organics program to achieve the Mayor's zero waste goals. I'd like to thank Chair Reynoso for holding this important hearing today and the opportunity to testify. We strongly support DSNY's organics program, which diverts food waste from landfills. Organic matter decomposing in anaerobic conditions in landfills is a major source of methane emissions and recycling this material via composting or controlled anaerobic digestion processes is essential to reducing our city's greenhouse gas emissions. We also understand that DNSY faces significant cost related challenges with the current curbside organic waste recycling program which have caused the concerning pause in the program's expansion to every

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

neighborhood in the city. While we are sympathetic to the difficulties the department faces in ramping up participation rates and tonnage on the relatively still new curbside collection routes, we believe that there are creative solutions that would increase the efficiency of the residential program while tackling the even larger problem of commercial organic waste. The commercial waste stream is estimated to be about equal to the residential one, about three million tons of putrescible trade waste per year and about one million tons of this huge stream are organic material. Troublingly, private transfer station reports filed with the DEC show that very little of this material is diverted to compost or digestion facilities. We also hear from business owners who want to participate in composting programs that commercial waste haulers simply do not offer this service at a scale or a price that makes sense, particularly for small and medium sized food businesses. We believe DSNY could substantially increase small business participation in organics recycling and improve the efficiency of existing compost routes by offering brown bin organics service to small businesses in communities where DSNY already

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

operates residential organic service. Such a program would allow workers to fill existing organics trucks, allow small business owners to divert far more of their waste from landfills, and boost participation in a meaningful recycling program in advance of the new commercial waste zone system. DSNY could help to offset the cost of such a combined residential commercial collection program by charging a modest competitive price to participating businesses for brown bin service. This would accomplish the goal of increasing the volume of organic waste we divert from landfill by including commercial waste and also address the efficiency obstacles that have caused DSNY to pause their expansion of curbside organics collection. This would also provide expanded options to small businesses and commercial enterprises who would like to reduce their carbon footprint and reduce landfill bound waste. we know that Commissioner Garcia and DSNY share our desire to make strides in the push to zero waste, and hope that together with the City Council, you will all seriously consider this idea as a possible path forward towards expanding curbside organics. Thank you.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So, Melissa you were very detailed so I'm not going to ask any questions, but this is the first time that I've heard of this idea so I'm going to mull it over, talk to the Commissioner about it but very interesting and creative to say the least.

MELANIE WENIGER: Good morning Chair Reynoso and Council Member Vallone and members of the committee. My name is Melanie Weniger and I am Policy Associate for the New York City Public Advocate, Letitia James. Thank you for convening today's hearing and allowing me the opportunity to present testimony on her behalf. As the former Chair of this Committee, Public Advocate James has long been motivated to improve organics diversion in New York City. In the past five years, the Department of Sanitation under the leadership of Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, has significantly expanded the residential organics collection program, which now serves over 3.5 million residents in all five boroughs. Approximately 100 public schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan also participate in the collection program as part of the city's zero waste school's initiative. When Public Advocate James was

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

Chair of this Committee, she sponsored and ushered the passage of Local Law 77 and 146, which laid the groundwork for the organics collection program. Those bills were passed with the understanding that food waste is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and therefore a significant factor in climate change. Chair Reynoso, the DSNY, and Commissioner Garcia deserve significant credit for expanding the collection program so widely as part of the city's efforts to achieve greater sustainability. Despite this progress, the organics collection program has experienced some challenges. Earlier this summer, the department announced that it would be halting its planned expansion of the program pending further study. And this is of great concern to both the Public Advocate as well as many of the others in this room who believe in its importance. We have seen critical environmental programs like this be undermined before. In 2003, Mayor Bloomberg attempted to eliminate the city's metal, glass and plastic recycling program, citing inefficiencies and eventually suspended the plastic recycling program for one year and the glass recycling program for two years. It took significant pressure from this

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

committee and environmental advocates, some of whom are in this room today, to restore the city's full recycling program. Our office understands that inefficiency is a real concern. Last month, we released a policy brief that analyzed the city's organics collection program and found that many of the collection trucks are operating well below capacity. Collection trucks can typically carry about 12 tons of waste but in fiscal year 2017 we found that the trucks were carrying an average one-half ton of waste from their routes. As a result, Public Advocate James recently introduced legislation aimed at improving the efficiency of this vital program by including city owned administrative buildings. Specifically, this legislation, Intro 1075, mandates that these city owned buildings participate in the source separation and collection of organics by July 1st, 2019. The Public Advocate believes that a mandate of this kind is critical to improving the efficiency of the current program. It will increase the amount of organic waste that can be collected by DSNY without adding an excessive burden to the agency since these locations could be accommodated by existing routes. We believe an initial pilot or roll

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

1
2 out could target buildings in districts that are
3 already being provided with curbside organics
4 collection. This legislation will also help to
5 encourage greater behavior change among residents.
6 Educating and training our considerable city
7 workforce on the proper methods and benefits of
8 organics collection can lead to positive ripple
9 effects across the city, as employees take that
10 information and replicate it in their homes and share
11 that knowledge in their communities. If this model
12 proves successful, the city should consider expanding
13 organics collection to other institutions like CUNY,
14 Health and Hospitals facilities which also generate
15 food waste. we hope that the city will continue to
16 grow and not stall its organics collection program
17 and our office is very committed to supporting this
18 endeavor. Thank you for letting me testify today.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your
20 testimony and, and we might not have Tish much longer
21 in this position so... you know maybe a going away
22 present.

23 MARC SHIFFLETT: Good morning Chair
24 Reynoso. Thank you... [cross-talk]
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Good morning...

3 [cross-talk]

4 MARC SHIFFLETT: ...for allowing me to
5 testify this morning. I'm Marc Shifflett, I'm the
6 Chair of the Organics Committee for the Manhattan
7 Solid Waste Advisory Board or Manhattan SWAB. I'm
8 going to bypass the introduction in the interest of
9 time and just go right to the recommendations. One,
10 improve and... efficiency of existing curbside
11 collection program. It is no secret that the city is
12 spending millions of dollars to divert a tiny
13 fraction of residential organic waste. According to
14 analysis of DSNY's 2017, 2017 Waste Characterization
15 Study by the city's Independent Budget Office, more
16 organic material is collected as contamination of the
17 metal/glass/plastic stream than it is in the curbside
18 collection bin program. Curbside collections must be
19 made more efficient if it is to become economically
20 feasible. These are some potential ideas we ask the
21 city to consider in order to improve the efficiency
22 of the city's curbside program: reduce weekly pickups
23 within the curbside collection program; establish
24 centralized block collections where feasible like
25 consolidating curbside pickups within difficult to

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

traverse neighborhoods; contract micro haulers to move and consolidate residential organics using low or no emission vehicles such as pedal assist electric cargo bikes; connect smaller residential buildings with nearby local processors and increase drop off locations at convenient locations such as subway stops; and encourage bin sharing. Two, create and distribute best management practices and residential user guides. It goes without saying that just like for mandatory recycling, organics diversion participation could be increased significantly behind a mass scale awareness building campaign. Until those funds could be allocated, perhaps its most feasible to leverage outreach opportunities that exist intra buildings. According to the DSNY research, misperceptions about the issues associated with organics collection represents a significant barrier to uptake of the curbside collection program. But strategies for overcoming the challenges along with BMPs and user and design guides exist and are an essential part of envisioning a new road ahead. With the input of building staff and residents, BMPs will give clear guidance to building managers and co-op/condo boards to more effectively develop their own

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

unique sustainability programs. It is beyond critical that everyone be engaged in the process and understands their roles. Capitalizing on MSWAB's experience studying high rise, high density buildings in New York City we can highlight some key learnings from our own use case studies: educate residents about the benefits of organics collection, including climate mitigation and soil remediation, deal head on with the barriers to uptake by underscoring the unique design features of the brown rolling, rodent free carts; establish new habits by providing residents with kitchen collection caddies and a starter set of compostable bags; and schedule launch events and workshops to underscore social norming. Three, support and expand existing small scale, scale organics programs. We recommend that the city look for ways to build on the successes of existing small-scale organics programs. It can do this by expanding managed community food scrap drop off sites through DSNY as well as organizations like Grow NYC and New York City Compost Project, assist in increasing the capacity of local community garden processors through the New York City Green Park... Parks Green Thumb Program, partner with groups like Green City Force

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

and Harlem Grown to tap into a youth recruitment base to educate and conduct outreach in low income neighborhoods and NYCHA residents, and finally study ways to develop additional small to medium scale organics processing sites on city owned property.

Many such programs exist. For example, in three years of accepting organics inputs from the community, the Pleasant Village Community Garden in East Harlem has increased its processing capacity to approximately three tons annually with the potential to easily double that amount. Though still a small fraction of New York City's overall organics output, with over 700 plus gardens citywide, community processors can make a significant impact on diversion rates. These programs should be encouraged to grow, and funding should be a... made available for this purpose. The Manhattan SWAB in collaboration with Citizens Committee has been awarding community composting grants since 2011. We have distributed over 100,000 micro grants to hundreds of community and school groups throughout the five boroughs. The number and types of composting projects grow each year. I'll just skip to the conclusion at this point. Community engagement and education is crucial to moving the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

city to a mandatory residential organics program. Public education in particular is needed to raise awareness for and an understanding of the critical importance of organics diversion and to have any hope of meeting zero waste goals. Much like the city's blue and green bin cartoon characters and other citywide recycling campaigns, we feel public awareness is essential if we are to have a successful citywide organics diversion program. Though we like to call ourselves New Yorkers, we are really a city of many small towns. We should be exploring ways to capitalize on that rich diversity and the competitive nature of our neighborhood affiliations. The savings gained through rationalizing the inefficiencies and improving upon... and improving upon existing programs can make the process less, less taxing and allow for greater experimented, experimentation through innovative pilots, best practices, private-public partnerships and borough wide community education campaigns. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your testimony. I just want... I think we have Council Member Chaim Deutsch who has joined us and wants to ask a few questions from Brooklyn.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah, thank you
3 very much, thank you Chair. First of all I want to
4 thank Commissioner Garcia and I think that the E-
5 waste expansion is amazing and it's, it's, it's
6 really, you know helping people especially seniors or
7 people with disabilities, the... who have... up until now
8 don't have to schlep their launched television that
9 they had from the 1960's or 70's, I don't know when
10 television was first... T.V. was first created but it's
11 very difficult to carry that into a car and then to
12 bring it to a drop... a dropping center so thank you
13 Commissioner for that and also on the expansion of
14 corner waste baskets throughout my district and as
15 well as other districts and as a community... you know
16 on my environmental scoreboard I have 100 percent and
17 I'm all for protecting our environment but we also
18 need to take a look on individuals, I know that trash
19 has become a full time job here, I know for me I've
20 been... I'm, I'm in charge of the recycling at my house
21 and I have four kids, five children with my... with my
22 oldest daughter who's married and two grandkids
23 usually running around the house and throwing cans
24 and plastic all over the place, I have to separate
25 them and I really give sanitation... the sanitation

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

workers a really easy job by separating them properly and placing them outside so we all know how difficult it is to recycle which is... it is important to make sure that we all do recycle but on another note I just want to mention that when we're talking about our, our environment we need to look at ourselves and look at other areas such as illegal dumping and the fact is we need to increase the amount of enforcement offices in sanitation to go after those illegal dumpers whether it's household trash being put out in corner wastebaskets as well as people just dumping out loads of trash from their truck after picking up a demolition job and just dumping them under a train truss or a dark area that... in the middle of the night where no one really could, could see so we need to enforce the sanitation and go after these people because keeping our streets clean is part of our environmental obligations so I'd like to make... I'd like to see that sanitation enforcement for illegal dumpers, we, we should have that throughout the city especially now that we raise the fines on illegal dumping but without enforcement those illegal fines... raising illegal fines really don't mean anything because you need to catch those people, so I just

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

want to... I see the Commissioner here so I just want to ask you if you could... if we could, you know really step up on the enforcement, I know we only have 15 enforcement officers in the city for illegal dumping and if some of them are on maternity leave or paternity leave or out sick or on vacation then we're left with almost nothing in the city in five boroughs, 8.6 million people. In addition to that, like I always mention, I will mention again and again and again that when it comes to holidays when people have their pickups on the holidays, you have 12 days throughout the year that there should be, be able to pick up the sanitation... department should pick up trash the next day after a holiday, we're not going to ask them to work on a holiday but at least the following day all trash should be picked up keeping our streets clean. I know when I sit out in my back yard; you have raccoons, you have possums and they surprise me when I'm out there sending emails at one o'clock in the morning and... or speaking to some of my colleagues you have... you know so when trash cans are left outside even though they're secure but eventually if they're left out too long they get knocked over so we need to make sure that sanitation

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

is funded 100 percent, not 50 percent, not 90 percent but 100 percent and I know it's a budget issue and we need to make sure for the next budget that we fully, fully, fully fund our sanitation department who does an amazing job by picking up our trash 100 percent of the times and without delay and this way we can hold everyone else accountable by setting a good example. And finally I just want to end up by saying that now that you have... you have regular trash recycling and organics so those dual trucks are a big help because... especially seniors and people with disabilities they have to place their trash out while they do everything at one time but picking up the trash, I don't want to see them, you know having to worry about the trash cans, you know pulling them back three times, three different times during the day on, on, on their pickup days so if we have the dual trucks it'll help and make people's lives easier so that's very important so I just want to say that for the record and once again I want to thank our Chair for his advocacy and Commissioner Garcia, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you Council Member Deutsch, thank you to the panel for your

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

testimony and I think we got one more panel left. So, we'd like to call up Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli, Vandra Thorburn, Myron Alexander, Christine Datz-Romero and Steve Newman. And can the Sergeant add another chair to the... to the panel... I think, no. So, let's... yeah, so Steve Newman... actually... so, this is... this must be Myron?

MYRON ALEXANDER: Yes...

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Myron you're going to be the last person to speak but we only have space for four so can you just wait... thank you, I apologize for that.

[off mic dialogue]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Oh, okay, alright, sounds good. There you go Myron, welcome back. Alright, we're going to start from my left or your right to left. Thank you.

MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: Can you hear me? Yes. Hi everyone, thank you for holding this hearing. I apologize, I'm going to have to get up and run because we're running a zero-waste event in Union Square today, so I have to get back there... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: That's a... [cross-
3 talk]

4 MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: ...and...
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...yeah, good job...
7 [cross-talk]

8 MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: ...separate
9 trash so if you're in Union Square and you see a
10 giant tent I'll be by trash can...

11 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: You should have let
12 us know earlier we would have brought you up right
13 away.

14 MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: That's okay,
15 I wanted to hear what everyone else had to say. My
16 name is Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli, I am the Director
17 of Common Ground Compost and I have been a resident
18 of New York since 2007. I work in the... in the
19 recycling industry as a consultant, setting up
20 composting and recycling programs and running an
21 electric assist bike powered compost collection
22 program here in Manhattan. Our services focus on
23 education and awareness about waste and the small
24 changes we can make in our daily lives to reduce
25 waste and act as more environmentally responsible

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

individuals and businesses. This always includes composting, whether it's in a commercial kitchen, an office building or the home. During my time with Common Ground Compost I have led trainings for more than a thousand people and I can tell you; people are genuinely interested in trash. They want to know where their garbage goes, they are curious about how recycling works, they're intrigued and sometimes shocked to learn about the conditions and tasks of the workers that collect and process their waste and they want to participate in organics recycling once they learn that it can reduce the exorbitant costs that we currently face to ship our waste and organic waste to landfills outside of the city. I'm glad to see the city adapting to the challenges of high collection costs due to a lack of participation in the brown bin program, I have seen DSNY trucks tipping organics at a transfer station for pre-processing I noted that the loads tipped did not come close to the trucks' capacity... to meeting the truck's capacity. The current focus on a distributed network of residential drop off points for DSNY brown bin collection is a great approach and I have enrolled in the program through the community garden that I help

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

run in the East Village. At this site, the small compost collection program that I run already operates a free compost drop off program for residents and my program staff process these organics in the garden. This program has a few corollaries across the city, but it is not common. In fact, the majority of gardens not to mention community spaces like churches and other organizations, do not have the capacity or the dedication to manage a compost bin, even if they are not processing the materials themselves. Enrolling in the brown bin program was straightforward, a Department of Sanitation staff person met me at our garden, walked me through the options and made sure that understood the caveats of the program. But we are an outlier, already operating a compost program and willing to internalize the human resource costs associated with stewarding a brown bin. Sure, other organizations... some other organizations will do the same, but this decentralized community drop bin program assumes that community organizations are capable of managing public infrastructure, something that the city should be funding as yet another element of the organics program expansion. We face the question of systems

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

change and the costs associated with wide scale behavioral change. We're halfway up the mountain now, the New York City organics residential program is already the largest in the country, but we face an issue where only early adapters are using the program. I understand that brown bins stand at curbs unused or seriously contaminated. I've heard many times of supers and landlords removing the bins, hiding them from residents or even taping them shut to bar residents from using them. many people do not understand why they should use their brown bins. And I hope the city continues its support for the program. Additional efforts need to be made to educate and engage with residents not only about, about how to recycle and compost but about the importance of waste reduction. People react to different things and the same narrative and explanation will not work for everyone. I'm not going to read all the details but some of these different approaches include looking at long term economics, the idea of diverting from landfills and processing nearby and improving the processing capacity nearby by increasing demand for that capacity. Pest mitigation, this question of black bags versus,

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

versus brown bins that I know you've talked about but as far as I know there was no formal study conducted, being able to provide data really helps people. Food and nutrition; our soils are less healthy than they were 70 years ago, we've broken our food system and we need to close that loop again. And resource allocation; just generally the idea that land is finite, and landfills are not a good use for our material. We've received feedback and comments from residents that have received bins without any advance warning, we understand the Department of Sanitation sends mailers out and has outreach staff on the road during the day. Neighborhoods that... with high rental turnover generally those people, you know they're not going to be there a few years later but what about wall murals, street signs, social media, bigger and bolder signage and a giant URL printed on the bin for more information. We need to pull out all the stops. Thank you, thanks for your time.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you for your testimony.

MEREDITH DANBERG-FICARELLI: Thank you, I've got to run.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Yes, yes.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

STEVE NEWMAN: The fifth person ought to come join us. Hi, my name is Steve Newman, I live in Councilman Vallone's district, unfortunately he has.. unfortunately he had to leave. I used to be the former.. I used to be the First Deputy Comptroller of the city actually twice and its relevant because if you go back to the original recycling law in the mid 1980's and look at it you will see it was introduced at the request of Council Members Messinger and Ferrara at the request of City Comptroller Harrison J. Goldin, I spent a fair amount of my time negotiating with the Mayor and the staff, the passage of the original city recycling law. I was also the former Chair of Community Board 11 and I'm presently the treasurer of an Environmental Foundation, I've retired from the work world. I'm here to tell you why it doesn't work in my community. my community is 500 homeowners, when this first began my estimate would be that three to 400 of the homeowners complied and happily did it. Slowly they dropped off, they dropped off each time a racoon would open the brown bins, the brown bins don't work in my neighborhood and it doesn't work in any other neighborhood which has racoons because they're pretty smart and they use

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

their claws to open cans. There are cans that are racoon proof, every one of the residents in my community has them, those... they were sold by the local... designed and sold by the local hardware store. The sanitation wanted to learn how to keep that from happening and at least in my neighborhood it would dramatically increase the participation, I'd be happy to describe of ones that, that do work, theirs doesn't, they're, they're easy to open. The second killer for our community was the switch from twice a week collection to once a week collection meaning that you have to keep smelly food in, in your house, the biodegradable bags leak. So, the present outcome... and today was a collection day so between 25 to 40 homeowners still do it, the ones who do it are either so highly motivated, they get up early in the morning to put it out... put their... they may have put the rest of the trash out the night before as I did but I was up at 6:15 this morning so I could get the composting out by 6:30. The people who still do it are either people like me who want to do it enough that they do that or they're people who are going to work and are willing to spend the time doing it before they head out and it's all... and that's all designed to beat the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

1
2 racoons basically. I can tell you on my... on... my
3 regular garbage was knocked over this morning but
4 it's... by a... I'm sure by a racoon and my across the
5 street neighbor's garbage was knocked over this
6 morning and neither had a problem because they're in
7 these racoon proof garbage cans. The brown bins just
8 don't work, they need to be replaced, replaced with
9 things that do work and probably a significant
10 percentage of homeowner communities, any places near
11 water or, or near passive parks. So, thank you for
12 your time and...

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I appreciate... I
14 appreciate that. They, they work... I think they work
15 against the city rats but maybe not the racoons...
16 [cross-talk]

17 STEVE NEWMAN: They, they may... [cross-
18 talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: So... [cross-talk]

20 STEVE NEWMAN: ...work against the rats but
21 racoons one, are smart and two, more importantly
22 their claws operate like fingers and so they're... they
23 quickly learn how to open the latch.
24
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, so you have the ear of the Commissioner here so we'll, we'll see where it... where that goes.

STEVE NEWMAN: I'll be happy to tell you what does work.

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Okay, well thank you for your testimony.

CHRISTINE DATZ-ROMERO: Thank you. My name is Christine Datz-Romero, I am the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Lower East Side Ecology center and I've been involved in community-based composting since 1990. Currently our organization runs a collection and processing program that handles about 500 tons of organics a year and in full disclosure we also partner with Department of Sanitation and part of... part, part of the Manhattan... of the New York City Compost Project and we handle outreach and education and collection in Manhattan. I wanted to talk a little bit about comments that we have and we are very thankful to, to Chairperson Reynoso to hold this important hearing today and I want to first talk about the curbside collection program of course, it is a very ambitious program that really got rolled out on... in a very short time

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

frame and I feel the emphasis was on rollout not so much on really studying or understanding what works and what doesn't work and I would really like to recommend that there will be resources allocated to really find out what works in neighborhoods, what are the barriers, why people are not participating and a hearing like this today also brings up people that come for this testimony but I think it also needs to be more scientifically documented to really find answers of how we can get people to participate in this important program. The second point I want to talk about is to find more capacity for the ever-increasing amount of organics that we of course are going to collect. When I heard the testimony from Melissa when she said there were one million pounds of organics ripe for composting in the organic waste stream alone and then you think about the 400,000 tons in capacity that DSNY has currently identified we're heading definitely into a problem, I think you alluded to that too with a question and I would really recommend... I would really urge the city council to start thinking about siting of compost facilities within New York City. I have some ideas, I've put them out there. For example, Hunts Point

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

Terminal Market has a lot of organics already there from the vendors, its city owned property, I just think we need to find a political world to push that. There're also other large areas in the city, I just singled one out, Floyd Bennet's Field for example in Brooklyn, Queens neighborhood that at least from a perspective of having land at their disposal and also being a public land should be something that just needs to be explored also, maybe DSNY facilities that are not... could be retrofitted to, to office space for composting. I think it's just really, really important and lastly, I also think that we need to create incentives for the finished compost. So, it's not enough to just collect and then to have capacity, we also have to have incentives to use the finished product because again we need to really talk about how we're going to have more and more of this material to handle and I would recommend that there is procurement created where... that really creates incentives for any city contract to use locally made compost. So, really thinking about composting holistically, it's collection that's important but then also the processing and then the end use and all of that needs to really grow over time for us to have

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

a successful program. Thank you so much and I'll punt it to the next... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you... [cross-talk]

CHRISTINE DATZ-ROMERO: ...person... [cross-talk]

MYRON ALEXANDER: Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, for your time and Council Members. This has been a... an education for me and I appreciate it and I want to learn more about the council and some of the things they're engaged with and also to share some information about what we do and what we have to offer to New York City and DSNY. My name is Myron Alexander, I am the Senior Vice President of a company on New York, a... we're a... we are a New York... New York City based MWBE which provides a line of onsite food and organic waste reduction systems. We have provided systems to government agencies, businesses, institutions and municipalities across the country. We provide an onsite solution which does not involve the use of water, enzymes, chemicals just a power source and a drain and we, we produce two, two ecofriendly products from it which is a dryer biomass and condensate and since that time we have...

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

we have provided our, our technology to the U.S. military across the country, 29 Palms, Fort Lee, Fort Hood, Camp Pendleton, Quantico and we've helped them reduce their waste on site there across the country. We have also supplied our technology to educational institutions, hospitals, correctional facilities, convention centers, hotels and casinos even as far as Las Vegas. The reason why I'm here today is we began our contact with DSNY in 2014 under the advisement of Mr. Ron Gonen, Mr. Gonen suggested that... at that time that we submit a proposal to DSNY to explain to them how we could be of service to the city and of supporting the agencies of which we have supplied. In that time, we were selected as one of only two companies statewide to conduct additional research with the Rochester Institute of Technology under New York State Pollution Prevention Institute to examine the efficiency of the systems and also to look at how to upcycle those materials into other environmentally friendly products. Also, at that time we have gotten the support of... actually we have... also have a unit available and on display use... working at the Golisano Institute for Sustainability in Rochester, we have gotten the support of Senator Kevin Parker from

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

MANAGEMENT

Brooklyn and also Mr. Espinal, also we have met with to talk about the system... the systems. The reason why I'm here essentially is to say how we can be of service to reach out to DSNY and other departments; we reached out to BLE, DCAS, NYCHA, DLCCS and CUNY to look at how we could help them develop programs some of which have already actually been in use across the country and since I heard you talk about the schools, there's one where the schools have actually used the machine, they've created the, the amendment that's gone to a compost facility, the school has a slight buyback program with them, they actually used the money that's been raised for a rainy day fund, buy a kid a coat who doesn't have a coat, get books, help kids on the lunch program that kind of thing, we think it's been a great program. So, what we want to do, we know there's very few MWBEs involved with DSNY in the city in terms of organics, we'd like to extend a hand to help, we're here, we have a wealth of knowledge, we're engaged with bioengineers and other research institutes around the country and doing some really exciting things that are working out quite well that I think the city could use.

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1 MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I'll be sure to get
3 the contact to DSNY so that you can engage... pass Ron
4 Gonen, it's... [cross-talk]

5 MYRON ALEXANDER: Ron Gonen... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...been a while since
7 he's been here so, we'll, we'll get you on board with
8 the folks that you should be talking to and we'd love
9 to see if we... being creative is the most important
10 thing that we have... one of the most important things
11 that's... [cross-talk]

12 MYRON ALEXANDER: Yes... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...helping us
14 accomplish our goals so I don't think that they would
15 be against some... you know... [cross-talk]

16 MYRON ALEXANDER: And I've supplied...
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: ...having... [cross-
19 talk]

20 MYRON ALEXANDER: ...you supporting
21 materials as well... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Alright,
23 absolutely. And I got to go vote in a Land Use
24 hearing...

25 [off mic dialogue]

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE

1

MANAGEMENT

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CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: There is one more,

3

is there a person? No, I think the fifth person

4

concede... they, they said... what, what did they do,

5

they... yeah, they said that they're not going to...

6

they're not going to speak so that we can allow

7

someone else to speak, I'm going to have to vote in a

8

Land Use hearing now so I'm going to run out so I

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apologize to everyone but this meeting is adjourned.

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[gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

October 11, 2018