



Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee

April 23, 2019

Summary and Motions

Chair Bill Farmer, Jr. called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee Members Steve Kay, Josh McCurn, Jake Gibbs, Angela Evans, Preston Worley, Fred Brown, Jennifer Mossotti, and Amanda Bledsoe were present. Council Member Richard Moloney was absent. Council Members Jennifer Reynolds and Kathy Plomin were also in attendance as non-voting members.

I. Approval of March 12, 2019 Committee Summary

A motion was made by CM Evans to approve the March 12, 2019 Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee Summary, seconded by VM Kay. The motion passed by a vote of 8-1 (Voting yes: VM Kay, McCurn, Gibbs, Farmer, Evans, Worley, Mossotti, Bledsoe, Voting no: F. Brown).

II. Artwork on Utility Boxes

Angela Poe, Program Manager with Environmental Services, presented an update on the artwork for utility boxes. She explained that the traffic box wrap is an opportunity for citizens to propose and install art on traffic signal boxes which are located at every signalized intersection and we have approximately 400 of them in Lexington. She outlined the process to initiate these projects, which includes an online application. The staff reviews the application and then forwards the application to the Urban County Arts Review Board (UCARB), which reviews the art component of the project. She pointed out that there is another level of approval for projects along state roads. She explained that applicants bear the cost of these projects and said the estimated life of a wrap is seven years, and there is very little investment by the city as we are just enabling citizens and groups to do this art. She described how the cost of these has been reduced significantly because we have a local vendor who can do these.

CM Reynolds asked for clarification that anyone can apply as long as they pay for it themselves and Poe confirmed this to be correct.

CM F. Brown commented on the approval process and asked who the application goes through. Poe said it goes through Environmental Services initially; UCARB approves the art and Traffic Engineering and/or Kentucky Transportation Cabinet approves the location. F. Brown commented on the completed projects and asked how long the process takes. He asked if neighborhood associations could get involved in this and Poe said there is not a limit on who can apply but it requires the support of the community adjacent to the box. F. Brown asked which committee approves the content and Poe said that goes through UCARB.

CM Gibbs expressed his support and excitement for the project, saying he appreciates that the cost went down. He commented on the removal of the art and asked who within LFUCG makes the call to remove the project. Poe explained that it would depend on the reason, but Traffic Engineering provides the labor to remove it. Gibbs expressed concern that he might like one of these art projects and someone else may not so he asked for clarification on this part of the removal process. Poe said it is not preference-based so it would be for something objective; but if it is for a different reason, it should go through the UCARB approval process.

CM Evans asked if there is a list of locations for which these would not be approved. Poe explained that there aren't specific locations within Lexington that LFUCG would not allow the artwork, but she said the state has to approve locations along a state route. Evans asked for a list of requirements that she can provide to her constituents and Poe said there is a document online that lists the stipulations and requirements and she will send that to Council. Evans commented on an individual project and asked who the check is written to for payment of the project. Poe explained that LFUCG does not get involved in the payment side; the applicant pays the vendor (whoever prints and installs the wrap) directly. Evans asked how much work is involved for a neighborhood association when some don't have a lot more than 1 or 2 people involved. Poe explained that if a neighborhood association is interested, they would e-mail safestreets.ky.gov with a proposed location and a design concept. She said they have to take a copy of the art to UCARB for approval, but it should not be labor-intensive. Evans asked if there is stock art available to help with ideas to design the boxes. Poe said they can add links to the website that would provide examples.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

III. Recycling Thoughts and Ideas

Chair Farmer introduced this topic to generate discussion on the various recycling items currently in committee. He said this was placed on the agenda to begin a thought process on things we can do differently and how. He said the public is just as confused as everyone else when it comes to what we can or cannot recycle.

CM Gibbs expressed agreement that there needs to be a discussion and we need to explore if other communities have gotten away from single stream and are going back to separating to get a cleaner product. He said he would also like to see information on methane production and he would like to know how significant that is and if it is truly recycling. He also said he would like to hear expert testimony on what recycling means to the community and long-term effects.

CM F. Brown said we have been concerned with the idea of recycling having to pay for itself, but we might be beyond that. He said recycling has been a big hit in the past, but now they have narrowed down what you can put in the recycling bins versus the waste. He said even if it costs the city to do some of the recycling to keep it out of the landfills, we need to look at that because it is a big concern. He said if we are contemplating breaking even, we are looking at it from the wrong angle. He said we should explore whether there are grants available for this.

CM Bledsoe said we need to decide as a government what our policy is and what our goals are. She said we need to figure out at what degree these are priorities and what we are willing to spend, otherwise this gets lost in the framework. She said she feels we have spent a lot of time discussing these issues without deciding what the framework should be and we should approach this as a city moving forward to determine how we actually set recycling policy.

CM Evans commented on several different levels of education and different attitudes toward recycling. She referenced Miami as an example, saying people are taxed for recycling and because of that, everything is thrown in the trash regardless of the material. She said this is one way a city is handling it and we need to have the conversation; she added for clarification that she is not saying a tax on recycling is the solution. She explained that there is a need for us to expand the thought process and fully explore options to choose what is best for our community.

CM Worley expressed his appreciation for generating this discussion. He said when he surveyed his constituents, they did not know our recycling practices. He said CM Moloney feels strongly about potential profitability or use of glass and the reuse of what is sent to the landfill. There are other questions about preserving land in the landfill by expanding recycling practices and making it a longer, more sustainable process. He agreed with CM Gibbs that we should hear from an expert to explain methane gas production and what other cities are doing. He said it has to be a holistic study.

CM F. Brown said that the list of concerns by committee members included in the packet is an excellent start for appointing a subcommittee. He said it is important enough that we get more information.

A motion was made by CM F. Brown to appoint a subcommittee of the Environmental Quality and Public Works Committee to review recycling issues, seconded by CM Gibbs. The motion passed without dissent.

IV. Items Referred to Committee

No comment or action was taken on this item.

A motion was made by VM Kay to adjourn, seconded by CM F. Brown. The motion passed without dissent.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:46 p.m.
KT 4.30.2019