

Monroe County Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
Monroe County Fleet Center, Building 1 Conference Room
January 12, 2023 (3:00 – 4:30 p.m.)
Drafted: January 13, 2023
Approved: February 9, 2023

Members: Haines Lockhart, Ciaran Hanna, Ram Shrivastava, Todd Lewis, Chris Foote, Enid Cardinal, Theo Maxey, Jeff Meyers, Nicole Simonetti (for Jeff Richardson), Duane Beckett, Morgan McKenzie, Barbara Carlson

Staff: Tina Stevens, Yasmin Guevara, Megan Evans-Saurini, Stephen Peletz, Clement Chung

Guests: LaShana Boose, Larry Lazenby, David Wetter, Bill Parkhurst, Peter Tagliente, Mike Scroggins, Paul Johnson, William Santos, Burt Gorton, Tom Dooley, Dan David, June Summers, Daniel Moore, Mark Gaull, Steve Olufren, Steven Rutherford

Introduction & Business (Jeff Meyers):

1. Meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Chairman Jeff Meyers.
2. Minutes from the December meeting unanimously approved as written. Motion to approve by Ram Shrivastava; second by Duane Beckett.
3. Jeff welcomed new RAC Members (pending Legislature appointment): Morgan McKenzie (Foodlink) and Barbara Carlson (Monroe County School Boards).
4. RAC member Haines Lockhart gave a brief overview of the Environmental Management Council:
 - The EMC was created in the 1970's by the Monroe County Legislature. There are many similar groups across NYS
 - Membership is comprised of residents who are members of their respective Town Conservation Boards, at-large members, and representatives of various not-for-profit organizations.
 - Starr O'Neill is the County /EMC Liason. EMC meets monthly and strives to have various meeting topics of interest
 - The committee strives to be informed and educated on regulations, issues and trends to act as consultants to their municipal governments.
 - In 1989, the group held the first Household Hazardous Waste collection in Monroe County, with 450 cars served

Monroe County (Yasmin Guevara):

1. Monroe County was awarded a Climate Smart Communities grant for \$100,000 that will be used to develop an Organics Management Plan. This material was not a part of the County's original SWMP in 2015, and will require a study and its own plan.
Barbara Carlson asked if the plan would include a comparison with other communities. Yasmin stated that the plan may include case studies. The intent of the plan is to comply with New York State law. Solid Waste is partnering with a St. John Fisher class to research case studies in similar communities.
2. Governor Hochul signed a Carpet Extended Producer Responsibility Law – synopsis attached. Currently, only 1% of carpet sold in New York State is recycled.
3. Bids will be opened for the bathroom renovation project at the Monroe County Recycling Center on January 20.
4. County received an inquiry from the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency for information regarding the municipal use of totes. Since the County does not provide collection services, the request was referred to the City of Rochester. Theo Maxey indicated he had replied, and based on the City's experience, a pilot and education were critical.

City of Rochester (Theo Maxey):

1. City of Rochester is undergoing an overhaul of their website, including the recycling and solid waste portion.
2. Compost collection program has been expanded to an additional site at Maplewood Park. The site has been slow, but is expected to pick as the weather begins to improve.
3. City is hoping to meet with their neighborhood service centers at least monthly to educate around solid waste and recycling.
4. The City has implemented the use of Rubicon to track collections. Using this system, immediate feedback is obtained to supervisors and the 311 centers regarding collection and improper tote usage. The system was piloted for three months earlier in 2022.
5. Christmas tree drop off sites are still active and receiving trees.

Haulers / Markets (Jeff Meyers):

1. Haulers are grateful for the mild January weather.
2. Companies are again challenged by staff shortages. One reason is the yearly reset of vacation/sick time hours available. This was cited as one of the reasons for attendance issues that are causing delays in residential collections.
3. Questions were asked about residential toters being available and the automatic collection systems on trucks. Dan David stated that not all haulers have completely switched to toters. This may be due to financial considerations.
4. Todd Lewis asked if there had been any further hauler consolidation. The only consolidation the committee was aware of was the purchase of Lilac by Casella in mid-2022.

New Business:

Stephen Peletz, Environmental Compliance Coordinator, and Tina Stevens, Waste Diversion and Education Coordinator, gave the 2022 report on ecopark volumes and recycling education efforts:

- A snapshot of items collected at the ecopark in 2022: 788 20-pound and 7,742 -1 pound propane tanks; 2,100 gallons of cooking oil; 4,631 pounds of sharps; 22,425 pounds of rechargeable batteries; 2,240 pounds of Covid Tests; 197 tons of scrap metals; 1600 tires; 2081 freon-containing devices; 11,000 pounds of plastic bags/film (in cooperation with Wegmans).
- Flags: since 2019, 13,000 pounds of American Flags have been collected for proper disposal. With the advent of nylon being used in flag production, they can no longer be burned without significant health risks, so many local community groups are now using the ecopark as an outlet for correct disposal.
- Through ten years the ecopark has served 364,700+ recycling customers; 66,000 HHW customers; 26,750 Pharmaceutical customers, collecting 38 tons of pharmaceuticals (In 2022, an additional 15,000 pounds were collected at local police stations, mobile collections & DEA Take Back Day); 3,250 tons of electronics; 1,017 tons of mixed recyclables; 1,200 tons of scrap metal; 677 tons of cardboard; 182 tons of bulky plastics.
- HHW for 2022: 7,304 appointments; 6,459 residents served; 1,405 walk-ins; 957 no-shows.
- Three mobile pharmaceutical collections were held in cooperation with Wegmans in 2022: Webster, Chili/Paul and Greece. It is important to note that these collections, as well as the pharmaceutical collections at the ecopark, could not be held without the cooperation of the Monroe County Sheriff. The Sheriff actually assumes custody of all pharmaceuticals collected by DES throughout the County.
- Five Mobile HHW collections were also held in 2022: Gates/Chili; Perinton; Westside- Hilton; Webster/Penfield and Irondequoit.

Stephen also gave an update on other topics of interest:

- Monroe County partnered with the American Lung Association and the Monroe County School Boards Association to institute a takeback program for Vapes, E-Cigarettes and E-Liquids from residents and school districts
 - These devices not only contain nicotine, which is classified as a hazardous waste, but lithium batteries, which can cause fires when compressed during the collection process
 - Program is the first of its kind in NYS and many Counties and agencies have reached out to Monroe County for guidance in starting their own programs
 - These materials have also been found in the storm sewers, making them a wastewater contaminant as well
- NYS Drug Take Back Program mandates the manufacturers establish, fund and manage a state-approved drug take back program for the safe collection and disposal of unused covered drugs
 - NYSDPS and NYSDEC partnered with Imar and Med-Project (mail-in) to make the disposal of pharmaceuticals easier for residents.
 - This development has led to some local law enforcement agencies no longer accepting pharmaceuticals, as it is easier for consumers to return to point-of-sale outlets
 - No changes to the Monroe County ecopark pharmaceutical program as a result of this legislation
- PaintCare is another Extended Producer Responsibility program established in New York in 2022. This program provides for the recycling of paints, stains, etc. through various retail outlets.
 - PaintCare is funded through a fee on purchased paint products.
 - The Monroe County/Waste Management ecopark does not currently participate in the PaintCare program.
 - Not all retailers participate. A map of retailers who accept materials is available on the PaintCare website.
- New York State Electronics Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act went into effect on 1/1/2023.
 - Provides for "free and convenient" recycling of electronic waste, funded by manufacturers
 - Ecopark now accepts all televisions for free, including CRTs, flat screens and monitors

Tina Stevens reviewed the County's Recycling and Education Outreach efforts:

- On November 15, Monroe County launched an Alexa app for Monroe County Recycling:
 - 95 million people in the US own a smart speaker device; 70% of US users use Amazon Alexa
 - Working with Pittsford-based Civic Voice, Monroe County DES developed an Amazon Skill Store app to provide residents with answers to questions regarding curbside recycling
 - Open the Alexa skill store and ask Alexa to “*Open Monroe County Recycling*”
 - Alexa can play the latest recycling e-news, find hours of operation for the ecopark and answer nearly 300 common recycling questions
 - DES joins a handful of municipalities throughout the US that utilize Alexa to communicate recycling information to residents and businesses
 - Video demo of the Alexa app is available on Monroe County website
- Press Conferences/Events with County Executive Bello:
 - August 8: Vape Take Back Announcement
 - August 24: End of Summer Recycling
 - November 15: America Recycles Day – Alexa App, re-release videos, 30th Anniversary of RAC
 - Significant media coverage from television stations / print media
 - Both are available on County Executive's Facebook Page
- Press Releases from County Communications:
 - Rochester Americans Ticket Giveaway at ecopark
 - Mobile Collection Scheduled
 - Vape Take Back Program
 - End of Summer Recycling
 - America Recycles Day
 - Holiday Recycling / Christmas Trees
- Mike Garland was the recipient of the NYSAR3 Public Sector Award for Recycling Leadership in November
- Connections with Evan Dawson:
 - May 26 - Environmental Services Director Mike Garland and Tina Stevens – Electronics and other recycling
 - December 13 - Mike Garland and Tina Stevens - Holiday Recycling
 - Both broadcasts archived <https://www.wxxinews.org/show/connections>
 - Also available via Alexa app
- Mike Garland was the recipient of the NYSAR3 Public Sector Award for Recycling Leadership in November
- In-Person Events – beginning to return to pre-Covid levels:
 - Farmers Market Week, Brighton Eco-Fair, Mill Seat Landfill Open House, Scout Day at High Acres Landfill
- Videos: Recycling Right Begins with You! and ecopark:
 - Originally produced in 2018; Recycling Right awarded a national Telly Award for outstanding production
 - Videos needed updating: needed to MCRC video to reflect change to Optical Sort technology: ecopark needed to reflect program updates, including free electronics; both updated in 2022
 - available on County Website - English, Spanish and Closed-Captioned
 - 2018 – present: Recycle Right: 13,900 views; ecopark: 10,943 views; These are individual access numbers that do not reflect group viewings
- Waste and Recycling Workers Week – third year in 2022
 - Began as an effort to honor “unsung heroes of waste” during early days of 2020 pandemic
 - Residents enter their nomination through form on County website
 - Joint project with SWANA; Wegmans is major sponsor
 - 10 recipients selected each year, strive to be diverse by haulers and geography
 - Honorees visited on routes to receive recognition
 - Promoted through ecopark FB page

- Collateral – cards: New developed for Vape program; ecopark revised to reflect in the electronics recycling law; minor changes to bags/film and residential cards; all reprinted.
- Cards and Magnets distributed to municipal town halls; cards only to all libraries
- Magnet requests (all mailed to constituents): 2017- 339; 2018-343; 2019 – 735; 2020 – 1,793; 2021-2,088; 2022-583
- Sign requests November 2018 launch – December 2019: 970; 2020 -186; 2021-290; 2022-175
 - Downloads from across the United States and the world
- 909 phone calls (average 18/week): 340 for Hazardous Waste (need appointment); acceptable materials – 169; Electronics – 163
- 976 total emails – new: “Ask a Question” on the ecopark website. 11/22- 12/31/22 – 189 emails
- Facebook statistics: 2017-62 likes; 2018-723 likes; 2019-1,505 likes; 2021-1,687 likes; 2022-1773 likes(followers).
 - 2022 saw addition of Instagram page
- Electronic Newsletter: **19,637 subscribers**; +/- six editions a year; **average open rate 60%** (industry average 35%)

Discussion:

1. Duane Beckett stated that flat screen TVs are currently taking over CRTs in tonnage.
2. If a notice is received from a hauler, does a resident follow their guidelines – yes. Haulers may not necessarily bring materials to the Monroe County Recycling Center and may take them other places for processing.
3. How does a homeowner need to prep paint if taking to a PaintCare site? Stephen stated that Paint Care does not want anything added to the containers. Containers must be rust-free and have the label intact.
4. Jeff Meyers asked about technology and its use in educating the public. Yasmin Guevara replied that since the public seems to have become more comfortable with being online since Covid-era lockdowns, it has become more useful and more accepted.
5. Chris Foote gave kudos to Monroe County Solid Waste for their website, and easy-to-access recycling information that is readily available.

Materials Recycling Facility (Marc Porray):

Fiber

- Fiber prices remained generally flat to start the new year
- OCC pricing held for the second straight month, after falling the previous four
 - OCC at \$35/ton
 - For reference, OCC was selling at \$145/ton in Jan. 2022
- Mixed Paper held for fourth straight month
 - Mixed Paper selling at \$0/ton
 - Was selling at \$75/ton in Jan. 2022
- Drop in pricing for fiber YOY is reflective of the weak economy and inflation
- Some fiber experts are speculating the market has bottomed out and pricing may slowly start to tick back up, which is a good sign

Containers

- Container pricing has remained stable and consistent across the board for last three months
- Aluminum is selling at \$1400/ton (Jan 2022 - \$1680/ton)
- PET is at \$260/ton (Jan 2022 - \$400/ton)
- HDPE Color at \$210 (Jan 2022 - \$500/ton)

MRF

- The MRF had a great production run through the holidays at finishing at 91% uptime and 22 tons per hour processing
- With the two week collection cycle from the big haulers we are still seeing holiday volume, which should fall off by the end of this week and return to seasonably normal levels
- Some high level numbers to wrap it up
 - Total inbound volume to the MRF in 2022
 - 41,500 tons - down from 44,000 and 48,000 in 2021 and 2020, respectively
 - Decrease of inbound volume can be attributed to a number of factors such as many people returning to work over the last two years (less WFH = less volume at the curb), a weakening economy and inflation for much of 2022 resulting in less consumer spending
- Top three commodities for Inbound volume:
 - Residential single stream ~31,500 tons
 - Commercial Single Stream ~6200 tons
 - Commercial OCC ~ 3150 tons
- Hoping 2023 will bring a return to strong inbound volume and rebounding commodity pricing!

Public Forum:

No correspondence or requests to speak were received.

Motion to adjourn by Nicole Simonetti; seconded by Enid Cardinal. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.

NYS CARPET RECYCLING LAW – STATUS SUMMARY

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul has passed legislation that establishes a carpet collection and recycling program for the state. The legislation, [S05027-C/A09279A](#), requires carpet manufacturers to establish a program for the collection and recycling of discarded and unused carpeting.

Specifically, starting in January 2026, carpet sales in New York will be prohibited unless the producers are participating in an approved industry-wide plan for recycling or have established their own program for carpet collection, approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

In addition, the new legislation establishes carpet-recycling performance goals that the industry is required to achieve over time. The goals of the legislation are to achieve:

- 30% carpet-recycling rate in five (5) years with at least 10 percent of the recovered materials used as recycled content for new carpets.
- 75% carpet-recycling rate in 15 years with at least 40 percent of recovered materials used as recycled content for new carpets.

In addition, the legislation bans polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances from carpeting sold in New York starting in January 2025.

The legislation does not prevent landfills and transfer stations from accepting carpets for disposal; however, new NYSDEC regulations might come later, though. In addition, the law does not establish a clear mechanism for financing, which will likely translate into higher costs for consumers.

In California, where a similar law has been operating for 10 years, carpet companies operate collection sites though the state. Consequently, commercial and residential consumers are encouraged to take carpet waste to the specific collection sites. CARE operates the California's carpet recycling program. (CARE: Carpet America Recovery Efforts). The recycling carpet operator for NYS will be known once NYS DEC approves a plan.

CARE has stated they have operations through USA and expect to be involved in the NYS program sometime along the way.

FAQ

1. *How is this a good program for Monroe County and the environment?*

This law/program will increase waste diversion from landfills. In NYS, carpets are mainly disposed in landfill or incinerated.

According to EANY¹, 515 million pounds per year of carpet are disposed at NYS landfills. Although the national average for carpet recycling is 5%, the rate in New York is 1%, and local governments and businesses spend in excess of \$22 million annually to dispose of it.

2. Will Monroe County accept used carpet at the ecopark?

Probably not at this time. The “organization” handling carpet collection/processing would need to pay fees to Monroe County. In addition, carpet disposal is a very voluminous operation. As we know, space at the ecopark is limited. However, the County will need to evaluate the feasibility of the ecopark being a residential collection location for waste carpet.

3. Can residents dispose of carpet in the trash?

As of today, the legislation does not prevent residents from disposing carpet in the trash. Commercial removal companies tend to handle large area carpet removals due to prevalence high volumes. For instance in California, residents are encouraged to take their waste carpet to designated collection sites.

4. When does the program go into effect? January 2026 (in three (3) years)

5. How is Monroe County preparing?

The County will update its education material and provide information on collection sites once these start operating. In the meantime, MC will reach out to the NYSDEC for updates.

6. What products can be created from recycling carpet?

Recycled carpet is transformed into fibers or plastic pellets; these can be used to make a broad range of products, including carpet tiles, carpet underlayment, products for the automotive, and construction industries².

7. What are the next steps for NYSDEC to establish the rules & regulations and implement this law?

According to the law, carpet producers to either individually or collectively must submit a plan to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) outlining the establishment of a carpet collection program by December 31, 2023

¹ <https://eany.org/memo/carpet-recycling/>

² <https://carpetrecovery.org/california/products/>