

Amy Johnson

From: Susann Kaltwasser <susann@kaltwasser.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 12:43 AM
To: citycouncil
Cc: CityRecorder
Subject: Garbage Fees

Categories: Follow-up

To: Salem City Council and Mayor Bennett
From: Susann Kaltwasser
RE: Solid waste collection service and update. Item 6.f.

I noticed that there was an update on the issue of Garbage fees on tonight's Council agenda. Apparently the haulers were willing to offer a reduced rate for reduced service. The reduction in fee amounts to about a 13% decrease for a 50% reduction in service. Frankly, I am disappointed in this proposal.

As a customer I look for value for my dollar and for convenience. I would be willing to get a reduction in my service to only every other week pick up, but I am also practical. Why would I pay a little less, for a lot less service?

As an example, in West Salem the difference in the cost for a 20 gallon can and the one for a 30 gallon can is less than a dollar. A reasonable person would order the larger can on the thought that 'well, you might not need it every week, but sometime you might, and it is nice to have for such a small increase in cost.' Unfortunately since you can get a larger can at this slightly higher price, there is less incentive to recycle and make less waste.

Our ultimate goal should be to move people away from making as much garbage, recycle more, and reducing the need to expand the incinerator.

The motivation for asking for an alternate to the 20 gallon rate was to help those people who are doing a good job of recycling and have very little actual garbage and reward them with a much reduced cost. Also, I think there was a desire to reduce the impact on the people who are low-income or on fixed income to be able to keep up their service.

The proposal is unlikely to attract many takers because it is so slight a reduction compared to what you get in return. Also, it is hardly any real help for the people who are struggling to meet their bills.

I hope that you will continue to pressure the haulers for more helpful programs to help meet the needs of the community.

Further, I hope that the City Council will continue to work on having a work session with Marion County on why the costs are so high at their end. We know that they are in the process of negotiating a new contract with Covanta. They have enlisted a consultant who has recommended that they not expand the incinerator at this time. This is wonderful news!

But in order to resist the urge to expand the incinerator, they will need to invest in a sorting facility expansion. Also, the pressure from China to have higher quality recycled paper and plastic waste will mean that everyone

is going to have to work very hard with the community to achieve necessary goals. I was unhappy to see that they were suggesting even higher fees. I assume that you all were too.

But none of us should accept increased fees without a clearer understanding of the true costs of service from the county solid waste services. Marion County has never done a Cost Of Service Analyses (COSA). You require this COSA from the haulers, and it makes no sense to not ask it of the County.

The incinerator is paid for, yet the tipping fees have never gone down. In fact they have gone up. The rationale is 'we not making as much money as we are used to.' Is that the benchmark? Shouldn't it be, you match the fee to the cost of service, not what you can squeeze from the system?

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Salem is the major source of waste to the incinerator. Why are you not at the negotiating table? At least, why aren't you consulted on major decisions that impact your constituents?

I noticed that the current Marion County Solid Waste Advisory Committee has 4 open positions. Perhaps it would be good for Salem to try to get some quality representation on that board. Also, it note from the minutes that Salem has no staff attending those meetings.

I look forward to a stronger partnership between the City, the City Council, and Marion County on this matter.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts on this issue.

Susann Kaltwasser
Ward 8