



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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MEETING MINUTES December 9th Solid Waste Fee Meeting

CM Matt Carlucci called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM and invited the guests to introduce themselves. He distributed two proposed ordinances: one to establish a new solid waste fee and provide assistance for those most affected by the change. He then asked Kim Taylor, Council Auditor, to explain the first ordinance and how the proposed solid waste fee was determined.

Ms. Taylor reviewed a handout detailing the history of the solid waste loan and the Council Auditor's projections over the next seven years if no action is taken. If the solid waste fee remains at \$12.65, the loan is projected to grow to over \$500 million. She explained that CM Carlucci requested a fee that would stop the loan from growing without addressing the existing debt. After working with the Office of General Counsel, they identified the sole cost of residential pickup as \$30.40, the amount outlined in the ordinance. Although the focus was to halt the loan's growth, the loan balance would decrease over time due to other revenues in the fund. CM Carlucci confirmed that franchise fees could be used to pay down the loan if the new solid waste fee covers the cost of residential pickup.

CM Jimmy Peluso praised the second ordinance, which provides protections for low-income households, calling it a brilliant proposal. He asked when the new fee would take effect, to which Ms. Taylor replied, October 1. CM Peluso also asked for clarification on the "loan" and the legal implications of eliminating the fee and moving its cost to the General Fund. Ms. Taylor explained that Dylan Reingold, from the Office of General Counsel, could address interlocal agreements, but eliminating the fee would add the \$43 million currently collected through the fee to the already projected \$70 million budget deficit next year.

CM Peluso confirmed that the legislation eliminates the maximum rate cap, sets the current year's rate, and allows the City Council to set future rates based on available information. He asked if the proposal considered changes to commercial pickup or other revenues. Ms. Taylor responded that this approach was the cleanest option to ensure the fee equals the cost of residential service. CM Peluso inquired about increasing landfill fees, but Ms. Taylor suggested addressing landfill fees in separate legislation since they involve separate customers. He also asked about the legal implications of eliminating the fee. Mr. Reingold explained that doing so would require renegotiating interlocal agreements and addressing the \$100 million project loan.

CM Carlucci asked Mr. Reingold to elaborate on the low-income assistance ordinance. Mr. Reingold explained that the proposal utilizes the existing process for the stormwater fee

exemption and directs the Mayor's Office and the Office of General Counsel to include the Beaches cities and Baldwin in the exemption. CM Peluso asked about the level of poverty required for exemption eligibility. Mr. Reingold and Ms. Taylor reiterated that the legislation would follow the existing process for the stormwater exemption, which is administered through the Social Services Division. Ms. Taylor estimated that the solid waste exemption could cost around \$2 million. CM Carlucci added that, if the first ordinance is approved, the net impact would remain overwhelmingly positive while supporting those in need.

CM Carlucci emphasized that his initial goals were threefold: to align the fee with the cost of service, protect low-income households, and address the loan. He stated that this proposal accomplishes all three objectives.

John Nooney provided public comment, asking how the solid waste fee interacts with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Mr. Reingold clarified that the ordinance does not change how the fee is collected but only adjusts the rate. If a property with an ADU currently pays one solid waste fee, that would not change under the proposed ordinance.

CM Peluso asked CM Carlucci about the timeline for filing the ordinances. CM Carlucci responded that he intends to file them during the first week of January.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 PM.