

**Chester Trash and Parks Maintenance/
Grass Cutting Issues Discussion
Part 3 – Plan Moving Forward**

MFRAC Committee Meeting

July 13, 2021



THE KAPOOR COMPANY
ADVISORS & CONSULTANTS

Presentation Background

- On June 8, 2021, the City and the Receiver jointly presented the current situation facing the City as it relates to trash and basic parks maintenance/grass cutting
- On June 22, 2021, the City and Receiver jointly presented options to address the problems described in the June 8th presentation and requested the public to comment on options presented
- This presentation will recommend specific actions to take to improve the situation
 - The City and the Receiver are already in the process of implementing changes

What Have We Learned?

- The Public Works Department as constituted and managed cannot keep up with all of the job responsibilities that we are asking of them and we need to prioritize those responsibilities
- Improving the situation will require a comprehensive effort from many different groups including:
 - Other City departments including the Codes Department
 - Other governmental entities and authorities such as Delaware County, PennDOT, the District Attorney's Office, the Stormwater Authority, the Chester Economic Development Authority and the Chester Redevelopment Authority
 - The public and community groups
- With respect to bulk trash, Chester's system of using its own employees to pick up bulk trash (up to 5 items per week and without a fee) while a private contractor picks up residential trash is very unusual. Every other city that we looked at charges some type of fee (either per item or in the annual rubbish fee) and most include the cost of 1 bulk item in the regular trash fee

The Plan

- The Receiver and the City will work together to improve the City's trash and grass cutting situation by implementing the following three "E's":
 - **E**ducation
 - Ensuring that the public and businesses know the rules
 - Updating the public regarding service problems or disruptions
 - **E**nforcement
 - Enforcing the rules on the public, businesses and vendors who provide services
 - **E**xecution
 - Getting the job done
- The remainder of this presentation will provide more detail and specific actions for each of the 3 "E's"

Education



Education

- The City must ensure that residents know the rules regarding residential trash pick-up, bulk trash pick-up and codes issues
- The City must provide timely information to residents regarding problems with trash pick-up, what the residents and businesses should do, and how those problems will be fixed

Education

- To address “education,” the following actions should be taken:
 - Ensure that the City’s website has accurate, easy to find information regarding the rules for residential trash pick-up, bulk trash pick-up and codes
 - In the event that the vendor cannot complete a trash route, post that information to the City’s Facebook page by 3pm. Include:
 - Reason for why the route cannot be completed
 - When the trash will be picked up
 - What the residents or business should do
 - If residential or bulk trash cannot be picked up because the trash does not comply with the rules (e.g., too many pieces of trash, building materials, etc.), place a placard on the residence that explains why
 - A concerted public education strategy should be implemented so that residents are informed about the rules regarding residential trash pick-up, bulk trash pick-up and codes issues
 - Post street sweeping schedule for Stormwater Authority on City’s website and Facebook page

Enforcement

Enforcement – Trash Contract

- The City's trash contract with its vendor provides for liquidated damages in the event that service not appropriately provided
- To that end, the City shall enforce these provisions in the contract

Liquidated Damages Provisions for Trash Contract

Violation	Amount
Failure of a truck and crew to operate over and finish a regular route	\$500/day
Failure to collect refuse properly and in specific spots	\$125/location
Using or maintaining trucks in a leaking or unsanitary condition	\$100/offense
Damaging or carrying away permanent receptacles – repair, replace or repay	\$25/offense
Failure to clean up any materials spilled or draining from equipment	\$100/offense
Collection of waste outside of the City of Chester’s service population specified in the contract for solid waste collection and disposal	\$500/collected stop
Failure to submit weight slips/quarterly reports within the specified time	\$500 for each report not made
Mixing recyclables with refuse	\$50/occurrence
Landfilling recyclables	\$50/occurrence
Inclusion of outside-of-City waste in weight slip	\$2,500/occurrence
Changing routes without proper notification	\$50/incident
Failure to deliver any waste materials to the appropriate designated facility as approved by the City of Chester	\$500/incident
Failure to comply with the hours of operations as required by this contract	\$100/incident
Failure to have vehicle operators properly licensed	\$100/incident
Rubbish and garbage dumped on private or public property without permission of owners of such property	\$500 per load or part of load, plus cost of removal

From p. 8 of Specifications and Bid Documents.



Enforcement - Codes

- The City's Codes Department's six nuisance inspectors must aggressively pursue property owners who refuse to comply with the City's ordinances
- To that end, the following actions should be taken:
 - The Codes and Public Works department leadership must meet weekly to discuss issues and coordinate efforts
 - Representatives from the Receiver's team should also attend and help facilitate these meetings
 - Execute a "clean sweep" in parts of the City
 - A "Top 10 Violator" list should be identified and a report to City leadership should be provided for how those properties will be addressed
 - District Attorney's office should also be notified
 - Codes department should provide weekly reports to City leadership on the number of nuisance violations written by nuisance inspector
 - City leadership and Receiver should meet with magisterial district judges to inform them of City enforcement efforts in these areas

Enforcement – Illegal Dumping

- The City and stakeholders must aggressively identify and pursue individuals who are illegally dumping trash in Chester
- To that end, the following actions should be taken
 - The City and the Receiver’s team should speak with contacts in other jurisdictions, such as Philadelphia, who are facing this same problem to learn what has and has not worked
 - Cameras need to be installed in areas where illegal dumping is happening frequently
 - City and Receiver’s team need to identify the appropriate type of camera/system and pursue grant funding for it
 - The City should partner with the District Attorney’s Office of Environmental Crimes to hold accountable those who are illegally dumping trash in Chester
 - The City should create an anonymous tip line/system for residents to provide information/photos of those illegally dumping (perhaps piggyback on police system). The City should contact residents and businesses in areas where there is frequent illegal dumping to ask for their help

Enforcement – Illegal Dumping

- We have spoken with the Delaware County District Attorney's Office who is very supportive of having its Environmental Crimes Unit prosecute illegal dumpers.
- DA Stollsteimer provided the following statement:
 - “I am proud to join Receiver Doweary and Mayor Kirkland in this effort to seek environmental justice for the people of Chester by holding polluters accountable.”



Execution



Execution – Staffing and Equipment

- The City needs additional resources to assist with its public works responsibilities in the summer months. Additionally, the City and Receiver need to make sure that the public works department has adequate equipment to do the job
- To that end, the following actions should be taken:
 - The Receiver shall approve the hiring of three per diem employees to assist through August 31st per the Teamster Collective Bargaining Agreement
 - The City and Receiver will create an equipment inventory list with photos of public works equipment
 - They will identify equipment needed and will request ARPA money for it

Execution – Bulk Trash

- As we have seen from prior presentations, the City’s system of collecting and managing bulk trash is very different than that of other Pennsylvania cities.
 - With respect to bulk trash, Chester’s system of using its own employees to pick up bulk trash (up to 5 items per week and without a fee) while a private contractor picks up residential trash is very unusual.
 - Every other city that we looked at charges some type of fee (either per item or in the annual rubbish fee) and most include the cost of 1 bulk item in the regular trash fee
- We are not recommending a change to the current bulk trash system for this summer, however we are recommending that the City conduct a request for qualifications or information from vendors who could potentially provide both residential trash pick-up and bulk trash pick-up in order to explore options and cost

Execution – Request for Help from Other Stakeholders

- The Receiver and the City have or are in the process of making the following requests for help and have received responses from some stakeholders

Stakeholder	Request	Response
Stormwater Authority of Chester	Assistance with emptying trash cans across the City in order to prevent trash from clogging storm drains	Stormwater Authority has agreed to help
Delaware County	6 rounds of grass cutting for all City parks this summer	County Council has approved 1 round of grass cutting
Widener University	Cut grass in Washington Park which is next to their campus	Awaiting response
SCI Chester	In process of requesting assistance for grass cutting along 291	Request in process

Execution – Placement of Dumpsters

- In the past, community groups and others have strategically placed dumpsters in parts of the City so that residents can dispose of bulk items. Residents have responded positively to these efforts.
- To that end, the following actions should be taken:
 - The City should reach out to groups who have assisted in the past with placing dumpsters for residents and ask to do so again
 - Such an effort could be coordinated with a “clean sweep” project whereby a clean sweep could be conducted in an area after the dumpsters have been provided

Execution – General Litter

- City residents also suffer from general litter around the City
- To that end, the City should take the following actions:
 - Publicize the efforts of groups who are doing litter pick-up across the City in order to get more volunteers to help
 - Post on Facebook when litter pick-ups are occurring and how people can get involved
 - Reach out to appropriate individuals in the court system to have individuals who are required to provide community service pick up litter in Chester
 - Reach out to community groups/block captains to organize block clean-ups or adoption of parks/areas

Execution – Make Sure Property Owners Maintain Their Own Properties

- The City Public Works Department does not have the resources to maintain non-City owned properties. Therefore, property owners need to be responsible for maintaining their own properties
- To that end, the following actions should be taken:
 - The City and the Receiver must identify which properties the City's Public Works department is maintaining that are not actually owned by the City
 - This inventory is already in process
 - The City and CEDA/CRA leadership must develop a plan for how CEDA/CRA will take over maintenance of the properties that the City currently maintains or develop another arrangement
 - Receiver will speak with PennDOT regarding its responsibilities for maintaining its properties

Conclusion

- Chester residents deserve to live in a City with clean streets, clean neighborhoods and clean and maintained parks and this is a top priority of City officials and the Receiver
 - The Receiver's team has assigned two internal resources specifically to this issue
- Everyone recognizes that this is not happening right now and this must be addressed immediately. The plan that we have provided is the first step to improving the situation. That plan requires:
 - Education
 - Enforcement
 - Execution
- We will continue to periodically update the MFRAC Committee and the public on progress towards improving the situation