

Hall, Renee

From: Tim Shuck <shuck.tim@gmail.com>
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To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Ames trash collection

[External Email]

It is disappointing to read that the resource recovery process in Ames does not actually result in as much 'resource recovery' as I assumed, though not entirely surprising. I've been in Ames long enough to remember when the plant first opened.

It is also disappointing to read that the council is apparently considering creating trash collection zones, in which one, and only one, provider is the only option for residents within that zone. ***I am strongly opposed to this idea; it limits choice and provides no recourse to address customer dissatisfaction.*** We recently switched from a large, nation-wide provider to a local company because the "service" we were getting was unacceptable: missed pickups, late pickups, not providing timely information when service was delayed.

I think a zone system would end up giving most of the trash/garbage collection business to one or two large providers. I would rather the City move to a municipal collection service; if you're going to kill the smaller companies, just do it quickly rather than pretending a zone system will preserve competition.

The arguments about having multiple trash collection vehicles on Ames streets (less efficiency, increased road repair costs, higher carbon output) are non-starters for me. From Cy-Ride busses running mostly empty, most of the time, to heavy construction vehicles and haulers (such as the dirt transports currently running on University for the construction of the Ruby City), this argument seems incredibly selective in application.

I doubt a mandatory recycling program will work. We recycle glass and have done so for about as long as Ames has had that program, but I have no interest in expanding this personal effort to include cardboard, metal, etc.; been there, done that, when Ames first moved in that direction many years ago with a temporary facility that was located in the ISU stadium and Reiman Gardens area. It is also naive to think that separate recycle bins for different materials won't also require subsequent hand sorting after collection.

If I understand correctly, Ankeny has an optional recycling program, one container in which all commercially viable recyclable products are deposited, and then collected every two weeks for (presumably) sorting by the collection company. This makes more sense and would likely have a greater chance of getting resident participation.

Increasing natural gas costs should not have come as a surprise to anyone. Mandated use increased demand and prices went up. Perhaps Ames moved too quickly away from using coal? Wind and solar are 'green' only in the sense that neither produces electricity by burning hydrocarbons at the site location, but the production of the devices needed for wind and solar power generation can hardly be considered a 'green' process. And, when solar and wind systems reach the end of their lifespans (which of course they will) disposing of those worn-out components is also unlikely to be 'environmentally friendly'; rare earth metals in solar panels are toxic and not easily recovered, and how will the very large epoxy/fiberglass parts of wind turbines be disposed of?

I know many people in this area scoff at the idea, but a regional nuclear power system would be a much more long-term, sustainable, reliable, and 'green' choice instead of building additional solar and wind installations. For those very hot and humid Iowa summer days, and very cold winter days, reliability is critical.

I would rather see Ames 1) move to an optional recycling program such as Ankeny has, while preserving consumer choice for trash collection, or 2) build a new state-of-the-art resource recovery plant, where combustible materials are burned and recyclable materials separated, or 3) completely abandon the concept of resource recovery and just bury everything. Maybe the landfills of today will become resource 'mines' in the future, when improved technologies make recovery of those buried materials possible, desirable, and cost effective.

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