



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

July 2, 2019

Dear Chairman Dorsey and Members of the County Board,

We are writing to urge the County to step up its game on sustainability. On June 12, Dr. Neil Seldman gave a presentation to the Aurora Highlands Civic Association about its waste management practices. Dr. Seldman is a consultant who provides technical advice to cities, including D.C. and Baltimore, about sustainable waste management. His analysis was sobering. We have included a link to his presentation at the end.

The main takeaway points of his presentation are:

1. Arlington's adoption of a Zero Waste resolution (passed by the Board in 2015) is meaningless as long as Arlington is committed to incinerating its trash, including toxic plastics.
2. Arlington is needlessly throwing away valuable resources by its decision to cancel glass recycling, and Arlington could be making glass recycling financially worthwhile. There is a market for separated glass. There is also a market for recycled Styrofoam packaging.
3. The decision to incinerate rather than recycle glass adds hauling and sorting costs, and increases maintenance of incineration infrastructure because of the slag produced by incinerating glass.
4. Arlington's use of single-stream recycling is a major factor in the cost of recycling and in the reduction of material being recycled.
5. Arlington should be expanding its search for recycling markets, such as for construction materials by encouraging deconstructing rather than demolishing buildings.
6. More efficient and comprehensive recycling is a waste-to-wealth pipeline that could be providing jobs (see Second Chance LLC in Baltimore (<https://www.secondchanceinc.org/>)).

We agree that Arlington needs to be much more proactive about realistic zero waste goals and pursue strategies and policies to incentivize the creation of local and regional facilities that can make recycling markets more economically feasible.

Finally, perhaps it's time that Arlington demonstrate its commitment to sustainability by elevating the position of Sustainability Director. In Evanston, Illinois, for example, the Sustainability Coordinator reports directly to the City Manager. His policy and programmatic responsibilities include a broader view of climate-change responsibilities, including natural resource and the urban forest, in addition to energy, water, and waste management. A holistic, coordinated approach to climate changes should be a priority.

The link to Dr. Seldman's presentation is here:

[SustainableScoop: Neil Seldman Institute for Self Reliance, Highland Civic Association meeting June 12, 2019](#)

Sincerely,

/Scott Miles/

President

Aurora Highlands Civic Association