

Meeting Notes

“Zero Waste Businesses” Meeting

June 1, 2005, 2:00p - 3:00p

Il Fornaio, Bellini Room

520 Cowper, Palo Alto

Key Issues For Businesses

- Soaps etc. giveaway currently for reuse (Garden Court Hotel)
- Food-
 - ☐ Need to institutionalize system for managing excess edible and waste foods
 - ☐ 2nd Harvest - VISA Hdqtrs example for food donation program (Printers Inc Cafe)
 - ☐ Liability (ex. Trader Joes does not donate due to liability)
 - ☐ Education needed on Good Samaritan Laws
 - ☐ Rotary, other organizations have programs to serve meals to those in need (Walt Hays)
 - ☐ Need to know what food donation programs are available, the details (Garden Court)
 - ☐ Vermin issues (Village Stationers)
 - ☐ Storage constraints for edible/excess food (Village Stationers)
 - ☐ Coffee grounds separated and given away (Printers Inc Café)
 - ☐ Need for Organics curbside pick up – containers , collection frequency (Monday morning ugly)
 - ☐ Alley behind and shared by Garden Court and restaurants on University could be a pilot area for a shared collection program (Garden Court)
 - ☐ Cleanliness behind businesses an issue
 - ☐ California Ave a potential pilot?
 - ☐ Containers – labeling in English/Spanish critical (Village Stationers)
 - ☐ Menlo Park has a food collection program with BFI – separate bin for organics
 - ☐ Organics – what is included? Are meats ok? or vegetables only?
 - ☐ Procedure inside restaurant/hotel needed to get organics in central location for collection
 - ☐ Vegetable matter from prep easy, plate scrapings (meat) another story to collect internally; activity takes place in separate areas of restaurant
 - ☐ Bud Mission, Roche announced onsite cafeteria/kitchen compost pilot (Summer 2005); in vessel composting and the end compost product will be used onsite at the Roche campus
 - ☐ Grocer – storage space for through-put donation food-storage problem for food awaiting pick up (JJF Grocery)
 - ☐ Wholesaler of canned food has take back program (Piazza)
 - ☐ Tallow, meat easily collected (Piazza)
- Recycling

- ☐ In the past the vendors used to pay businesses for their recyclable material, now businesses have to pay to pick it up (JJF/Piazza)
 - ☐ Seeing less waxed cardboard than in the past (Piazza)
 - Waxy cardboard > compost
 - ☐ Need to look at issues from entire shopping center perspective – shared bins by several businesses; shopping center may have restrictions about bins and storage
 - ☐ Cost?
 - Service
 - Bin rental
 - 6 day/week pick up – need to reduce cost or a wash preferable, small cost increase may be acceptable
 - Reduce bin size may save money (Printers Inc Café)
 - Approach to recycling varies by type of business onsite
 - Note 80% of cost of service involves collection cost; reduction is best; if you don't produce it you don't have to manage (e.g., collect it)
- Centralized Organics Composting Options
 - ☐ Lease and manage equipment
 - ☐ Scale - stand alone business if they generate enough organics or could be shared
- Educate ourselves, our customers and buyers, purchasing
 - ☐ Packaging
 - ☐ Purchase differently
 - ☐ Food service
 - Too large portions = waste
 - Start with small portion and give more if they want it
 - ☐ Change the way business operates
 - Ex. Target – don't ship with hangers, reduce packaging
 - ☐ Create pilot projects
 - ☐ Forcible way to educate (e.g., S.F. bag fee) (Piazza)
 - (Piazza's sells canvas bags at cost
 - Fewer people using canvas bags than 5 years ago (Piazza)
 - See more people using canvas bags (JJF Grocery)
 - We have lost the “conservation” message. Need to start again with message. (Printer's Inc Café)
 - (Piazza) Health issues/regulations do not allow grocery store to use used bags from someone else
 - Safeway started reusable bag discount and others followed (Piazza)
 - Most people don't know California Redemption Value and people do not follow recycling like they used to (Piazza)
- Zero Waste campaign – reusable bags
- Other Zero Waste- beyond solid waste

- ☐ The Garden Court Hotel participates in buying energy from wind power through PA Green
 - ☐ Partner with other sustainability programs to “package” message (e.g., waste, energy) (Susan Arpan)
- Packaging
 - ☐ Plastics – polystyrene issues
 - ☐ Business education needed
 - ☐ Buyer perspective – don’t know what packaging is used until shipment received
 - China manufacturing-based packaging = bad (plastics)
 - Italy-based packaging = good (used shredded cardboard that can be recycled)
 - ☐ U.S. – how do we compare
 - Lacking – producer responsibility
 - Different standards for products shipped to Europe vs. products shipped to U.S. from same manufacturer
 - California ahead of rest of country
- Best way to reach business
 - ☐ Email
 - ☐ Newsletter
- Education
 - ☐ Recycling container labeling needed
 - ☐ Sign a “pact” with employees that they understand what is reuse/recycled (Printers Inc Café uses this method)
 - ☐ Employee turnover a challenge
 - ☐ Education brochure desired, laminated brochures
 - ☐ Check bins periodically to make sure they are being used properly by employees, catch neighboring businesses contaminating and make them pick up their mess (method used by Printers Inc Café)
 - ☐ Illegal dumping, locked bins may be necessary
- Creating Change
 - ☐ Influence vendors to change habits (need support to make it happen)
 - ☐ Backing of group/trade organization
 - ☐ Trade organizations- utilize to leverage purchasing standards

In attendance:

Walt Hays, Co-Chair

Bud Mission- Roche Palo Alto

Bob Davis, Cardinal Hotel

Steve Quadro- Piazzas

Mary Wolf- Printers Inc Café

Susan Arpan- City of Palo Alto Economic Resources Dept.

Annette Puskarich- City of Palo Alto Refuse

Gary Liss- ZW Consultant

Barabara Gross- Garden Court Hotel

Sandra Lonquist- Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce

Debra Love- Village Stationers

Julie Ann Hyde- SkinSpirit

John Garcia- JJ&F Market

Adam Hamdy- Palo Alto Cabana, Crowne Plaza Hotel