

Item 24-0214: Approve the proposed modification to the Glendale and Whitman Yard Waste Site hours of operation

Common Council

Wed, Mar 06, 2024 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 44:02

First, we will take up item 24-0214 approve the proposed modification to the Glendale and Whitman yard waste site hours of operation. Need a motion. We have a motion and a second to approve. Alright. Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 44:31

Thank you. I want to start by thanking staff for all the hard work they've been doing on this topic for the past couple of months. I think that certainly we're at a point where our city is being challenged with efficiencies in operation and it's important to have these discussions. I can't support this proposal because my constituents have expressed to me that the maintaining weekend hours is important and the proposal would take away the weekend hours in the winter from the Glendale site.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 45:06

I want to just use this opportunity to say that as we continue to have to consider these things going forward, Appleton continues to grow, and while we're trying to look for ways to maybe consolidate things, the fact is that having two yard waste sites to serve this larger population is something that that makes a lot of sense and if there's a way to perhaps look at expanding those hours of accessibility, as counterintuitive as it is, just wanted to make a statement about that at this point in the discussion because our city will continue to grow, and we do need to serve all of our residents. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 45:45

Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 45:48

Thank you, Chair. I'd just like to echo the sentiments of my colleague. It's challeng—I mean, I do support what staff is trying to do consolidating hours and times at both collection sites, but I did find it challenging that we're reducing operation hours at—completely—at a site when there were some operation hours that could have been opened by another. I feel it's a little challenging for the community to adjust this quickly, particularly at a site that's used by members of Grand Chute as well. And so, I'm—I guess I would—I'm probably going to vote against this as well. I do appreciate staff suggesting at committee at least, that they would be open to revising the hours if they found some conflict, and anecdotally, that it wasn't used much to the weekend, but anecdotally, I'm hearing the same sort of concerns from my constituents. So, because it's in my district, I'll probably vote against this as well. And I do want to make a point that I appreciate what staff is attempting to do, consolidating hours, and making the most out of their man hours. So don't take this vote as anything against what staff is attempting to do.

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:03

Alder Hayden?

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 47:05

Yes, I just want to echo what my colleagues were saying. And I would also add that the feedback that I received was the biggest issue was the ending at 5 versus 5:45. When a lot of people get out of work, there's not much

time to get over to the site to dump things off if it cuts off at five, whereas that 45 minutes is a big deal to people in my district. Thank you, chair.

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:32
Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 47:33

Thank you, Chair. Um, I got fairly limited feedback when I asked folks in my district for input about it. But a lot of people are more in my demographic and have more time during the week. But I do have a question. Is there a possibility of getting like special—so during the holidays when people are dropping off trees and things, have we looked into maybe having some special days to help people out with that kind of situation? And that's for Director block or whoever would like to take that.

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 48:06

Thank you, Chair. We would certainly monitor the schedule as we have it proposed. If we're if we're getting feedback, if we're getting, you know, folks calling in and expressing, you know, an inability to be there, needing additional hours, we are always open to discussion of modification if necessary. Based on the trends we saw in tracking use of the sites, we feel this is an appropriate change. We currently average 13 customers per day on winter weekends, and we anticipate that some of this usage will go down with the elimination of the garbage dumpsters that was approved with last year's budget. So, the excess garbage being dumped is no longer a possibility because it's dumpsters are removed.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:06
Director Block.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:59
Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 49:01

Thank you, Chair. I guess before we come to the vote on this, I guess I'd direct a question to staff would they be willing to take a look at the hours again and see if there were some means of addressing constituent concern and finding some small windows through the weekend that they could adjust their proposed timelines and maybe come back with something? Maybe we send this back to staff to reevaluate, come back with some slightly changed hours. I'm just opening the question rather than just having the vote approving or denying.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:38

Well, in this case, now that it's before the Council it's really up to the Council to decide on the direction here. You have before you an item that's been reviewed and approved at committee, and it's now up to the body to decide what to do. So, to answer your question about willingness in this case, the staff will work with the Council in either case. So, if you approve this item, staff will work to implement. If you send this item back to committee or you modify it here, the staff as the executive branch will execute the council's direction. Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 50:17

Thank you. I just wanted to sort of reiterate what Director Block had said about the reasoning behind closing the [...] site in the winter was the minimal usage, and I believe in committee there was even discussion that what staff thought perhaps most of that usage was for the dumpsters rather than yard waste. And I know some of my colleagues have said that they've heard from some constituents with concern, but we've gotten information, I guess on numbers from staff. So, I guess I—and unless my colleagues are saying they're hearing from hundreds

of residents, I'm not sure that we really need to review this any further given the amount of input we've had, discussion, and research from staff on this. I think we should approve it at this point. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 51:06

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 51:08

Thank you chair. I agree with Alder Doran. Not only did we discuss this as an item on the agenda, but we discussed it as a byproduct of the previous Whitman yard site resolution. And it's doubtful that—to me, in my opinion—that the committee would find anything different. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 51:30

Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 51:31

Thank you. I just want to make it clear that the Whitman yard doesn't have any dumpsters and that that yard is used for waste—both trees and grass clippings. There aren't any dumpsters at that site. And that's the site that we're concerned about these weekend hours for use, not the Glendale site. So, I just want to make that point as we're having this discussion about reduced use of a site because of dumpsters. There are no dus—dumpsters at the Whitman site, which is the one where at least some of us are concerned about reduction of hours over the weekend.

Mayor Jake Woodford 52:04

Alder Meltzer,

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 52:06

I want to clarify that the proposal does reduce Glendale weekend hours and that is the concern in district two. So, I believe that the proposal is not actually changing anything for Whitman, because Whitman already is closed throughout the winter. I—thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 52:33

Any further discussion? Hearing none, we have a motion and a second to approve. Please cast your votes. Got you, Alder Croatt. Thank you. The motion fails six to six.

Mayor Jake Woodford 53:10

So, I do just want to say, now that you've handled that item, that I understand the concern about reducing hours or changing levels of service and certainly staff does, but we also have to recognize that we have serious resource constraint as a city, and we are going to have to grapple with—and we are constantly grappling with—that resource constraint. And so, my encouragement to the Council would be that when we have items that come before us that are trying to address that, recognize that it has to come from somewhere. And so, if we prioritize this, then something else will give, and that will always be the cycle that we're in.

Mayor Jake Woodford 54:02

And so, I just want to remind folks that by deciding to not make any modifications or changes does not mean that the budgetary constraints that were driving that conversation in the first place, just go away. They still exist. And we will have to pull resources from other places to continue to deliver that service. So, we will sacrifice other things.