

UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County

Waste Reduction Forum

City of Dunedin – MLK Jr. Recreation Center

July 2019



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Forum Overview

A waste reduction community forum was held with residents from the City of Dunedin on July 31, 2019 at the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Recreation Center in Dunedin. This discussion program is based on an effective model developed by the Kettering Foundation for community deliberation in the National Issues Forum (NIF) program (<https://www.nifi.org>). Each year NIF frames three new public issues and offers issue guides to facilitate discussions in local communities. The issue guides contain background information and descriptions of alternative value positions and choices. Forums provide an opportunity to discuss issues and identify the reasons people prefer various solutions, which is an important step in finding common ground.

Before the forums began, participants were given a “placemat” tool describing possible actions and tradeoffs surrounding waste reduction that would be discussed during the forum. The programs began with a welcome and overview including the objective of the program which was to utilize the NIF tool to engage and foster dialogue about waste, and to gain feedback about possible waste management improvements in the City of Dunedin. A guiding question was used to familiarize participants with the forum format. Prior to the beginning of the discussions, the group worked to establish “ground rules” to guide the conversation.

Participants were then asked to review three broad options and to think about how the options could be applied in Dunedin. Notes were taken to capture the participants’ responses to the proposed sample actions and tradeoffs, and to document the flow of the discussion. After the discussions, a brief reflection exercise was conducted, and attendees were asked to complete a post-survey.

Ground Rules

Speak loudly

Everyone is encouraged to participate

Only one person speaks at a time

Focus on options

Open and respectful

Speak slowly

Target Audience

Partner Team and Facilitator Team targeted residents of the City of Dunedin by working in partnership with the Director and staff of the Dunedin MLK Recreation Center.

Guiding Question:

How do you feel about litter in your community?

- Moved to Dunedin from CA, and prior to that Boston – this is my first time in FL, where’s the recycling bins? I was shocked, disheartened, apartment complex does not recycle, it’s a huge complex. At festivals, it’s hard to find recycling container. I would love to see more recycling receptacles, for every garbage can, there should be a recycling can.
- Almost a year here, from SF area in CA, first experience in FL, similar reactions to previous person, recycling and composting, where are those yard bins?
- Dunedin is a pretty clean area, there’s not a lot of litter
- 20 years here, but lived in Costa Rica, people are not wasteful, people use things over and over. My neighbor eats on paper plates to avoid doing dishes. I’m involved in a variety of home biogas projects. Do a better job of single use plastics, and still working on teenagers (brought in a plastic container)
- Moved from Dallas, Dunedin does a great job of recycling, etc, there is nothing that incentivizes people to reduce overall waste, a single flat fee, people’s containers on the street are overflowing, the total amount of waste generated is high
- Similar experience, in Dallas, very few recycling options, not part of the mindset, so Dunedin is doing a very good job. At the causeway, community fishers, and trash collectors, the causeway is remarkably trash free. I myself pick up trash, I’m losing sight of how much better it is here than in Dallas. The beach goers are mindful, careful, but the trails are dirtier. The causeway mindset can be applied in other places of the city
- I’m here to listen, Dunedin does a good job but there’s more we can do
- We moved from WI, about 10 years ago, trash was audited in WI, lots of options. When came to FL, recycling was an extra charge. Annexed by City of Largo, it’s excellent service, they’re doing a great job! It’s similar to service level in WI.
- Why? Why do we have it? (litter)
- Native and local resident, 52 plus years, encouraged by communication and discussion about litter in our community. Dunedin is talking and implementing new plans, reduce single stream waste, streamline where possible, more volunteering.
- Elevate the general public knowledge about issues, there is still more to do with recycling, the market is drying up, things are going overseas, cannot recycle in our own backyard, more talk along the bigger issues. Dunedin does a good job locally. In the recycle bin, where does it really go?
- 8 years in Dunedin, people here “get it”, a lot of stuff is generated by people who come here and love us, destination location, need to eliminate the chances for littering, raise the consciousness, reduce single use so there is no litter
- Moved from Clearwater to Dunedin. What happens to our recycling? What happens after collection? Break down barriers, give more opportunity, recycling and not littering.

Placemat Introduction

LAND OF WASTE

How should we manage our trash to protect Florida's ecosystems and natural resources?

Introduction

Waste is produced in a variety of settings including residential, commercial and industrial – everything we use produces waste. The choices we make every day determine how much waste we produce. Our growing population requires many resources to sustain itself and although waste is at an all-time high, we all rely on the safe and effective disposal of waste generated.

Challenges

The landfill is the most popular destination for solid waste but these systems do not effectively capture and manage all the waste streams that are generated by different sectors. If waste is not adequately managed, it may harm the environment and human health e.g. water.

How should we manage waste? What new challenges may threaten waste management? How will people's jobs be affected if there are changes to waste management processes?

Today

We will use this "placemat" to talk about possible solutions to our waste issues. **Our goal is to hear everyone's opinion throughout the discussion. Thank you for your time!**



OPTION 1

Protect our natural resources.

More people means more trash. The amount of trash we produce per person has steadily been increasing. Even though we throw trash away, it doesn't go away! Managing the waste we use is resource intensive (financial, physical, human, etc.) Unmanaged waste can lead to pollution problems and landfill space is limited for waste disposal.

Examples of What Could Be Done	Some Possible Trade-Offs to Consider
All trash receptacles located outside are required to have lids.	Cost for purchase and installation; increased burden for staff taking out garbage/recycling; cleaner cities.
Invest more money in organizations like Keep Pinellas Beautiful to conduct cleanups and outreach.	Reduced services in other departments; job creation; increase in tourism due to cleaner parks/beaches; beautification.
Implement a required trash/recycling education program for new employees and residents of the city.	Program cost; difficult to regulate a required class; educated residents and workers.



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Option 1 Discussion Notes

- Why the lids?
- Wind, rain, animals impact the trash that is collected in the cans, garbage gets really nasty
- Dunedin used to have a volunteer coordinator, that position is lost, cleanups on causeway, trail, could be added to an existing position, part-time or recruit a volunteer person to help with this action (action 2)
- Our society is very monetary, increase the cost of collection but if you bring in bag of trash voluntarily, there is a cost savings to you, there is incentive to people to clean up! Go out to causeway before the folks clean up, it masks the problem, people do it out of the goodness of their heart but they could get a pay back too!

- There is no central coordinator, Kiwanis, church groups, everyone wants to pick up on the causeway, (he is on the causeway committee). Nobody wants to pick up at the marina, a coordinator can send groups to various locations, there is a waiting list for the benches on the causeway, donate \$100 for names on the bench, benches create headaches for maintenance, the city has to pay to maintain. Volunteers can be used to help a lot in the city.
- That is a good idea to use the volunteers
- I hate beach cleanups – absurd to pick up trash that other people put there. People get excited about cleanups at beach or trail. It is not a permanent part of our lives and what we do. There must be an end to that, no longer have to do it, there is education.
- Fix it at the source - visitors contribute to the problem, spikes in usage at the causeway, winds, birds, availability of everywhere you go with a garbage can and a recycle can, education is needed, if it is everywhere, it will help with litter polluting the environment. Plastic recycled and not end up in the water
- Can we work with local merchants? Can we get them to use bags that are rapidly broken down?
- Instead of relying on people to pick up, fix it at the source,
- Rely on ordinance
- I don't want a Styrofoam box. Where is the recycling? Avoid restaurants that don't have the right containers – biodegradable, compostable products.
- It will cost more!
- There is a tradeoff
- Trash per person is increasing, population is increasing, problem is multi fold, it has to hit home to many people. Can restaurants sell a reusable container? Customers buy it, and if I remember to use it, that can reduce the costs of providing the single use containers. Now you can pay for biodegradable containers, one less item that you have to give them.
- If you put the word landfill on the trash can, it makes people think twice about throwing items away
- City has been fantastic about trash on the causeway, if it is topped out, the bin is no longer useful (recycling)
- I have never seen a recycling bin at every location.
- Not at every location, costs for install pads
- More water fountains that are refillable, some people don't like to drink from the water fountains
- The message that says how many bottles you've saved today can encourage reduction of bottles
- Education – businesses, can we include education to get business license? Cork recycling from wine bottles? Local business didn't but Whole Foods did!
- Plastic bottles in trash, there was no recycling can! Visitors weren't aware, and the signage didn't help, it says Boat club members only!
- Make it easier for people, big signs, reinforce the message
- Highlight businesses that recycle, give a sticker to hang on door or window, link to businesses on the city website
- Nine businesses certified ocean friendly, business has picked up, patrons come because of their certification. They follow the guidelines, Ocean Allies in Clearwater does the certification program

- Beachcomber is a good example, connect with the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, trying to overcome obstacles of cost, there is a problem with suppliers if they don't have it, now you have to teach the suppliers as well. Working on a co-op to help other businesses.
- While recycling has been around, the real push is a short period of time, the push is intense in a short space of time (switch markets and mindsets)
- I don't want a recycling can every 10 feet, society is lazy, education, carry the bottle until you find the recycle can, "ethic"
- Does the city have a program to help fund the Ocean Allies program? Is there a study or data to support the savings in money? What will happen if Dunedin makes it required for businesses?
- Bottom up process versus the city mandates is a better or smoother process
- Do we need volunteers in city to help promote the ocean friendly business concept?
- Not a good idea to require education, government overreach...will cause people not to move to city or do opposite out of spite. (action 3)
- Education, information, publicize, etc. is good, but not REQUIRE

OPTION 2

Rely on innovation for waste management.

Solid waste collection and disposal is managed through complex and carefully coordinated systems. We must rely on a combination of innovations in solid waste management and emerging technology to address complex disposal issues (contamination). Technology innovations will support a closed-loop approach to solid waste management.

Examples of What Could Be Done	Some Possible Trade-Offs to Consider
Create a curbside composting program to reduce amount of food waste going to the landfill.	Cost to city and taxpayers; investment in large-scale composting facility; opportunity for gardeners and local farmers.
Set up programs to work with local industries to turn recycled materials into usable products.	Job creation; reduced carbon emissions; locally-made recycled products.
Install innovative self-compacting garbage bins that use solar power.	Initial investment; fewer collection trips for county/city; fewer emissions.



https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-07/documents/final_accessible_2018_infographic.pdf

Option 2 Discussion Notes

- Curbside composting programs are awesome, could be done in conjunction with encouraging homeowners to do on their own property and actually save the city money
- Rebate for buying own compost bin (this is done elsewhere) and opportunity for education since people are required to watch video before getting bin
- Someone asked what happens to yard waste? Yard waste gets turned into mulch. Private haulers will sort out

- There are three trucks that go by your house (waste, recycling, yard waste)
- System in Canada...they recycle everything
 - Had bucket to keep composting in and places you could put it in addition to curbside collection. They also had biobags – takes compostable materials but requires high temperature disposable system. There are companies that would take it, but it's expensive.
 - Composting can/should be used for peoples' gardens.
- Biobag is based here in Dunedin
 - Can they be innovators for waste management?
 - Has to come from politicians, governments, municipalities because it takes \$\$\$ and infrastructure. They have single-use biodegradable plastic bags for merchants.
 - It's not a priority in our state
- FL is the first place I've lived in where people pick up grass clippings
- Backyard system (Home Biogas – biogas digester), like composting system, but you can put all of your food waste with two beautiful outputs (liquid fertilizer and gas you can use for hot water heater, to cook on or whatever)
 - Mine connects right to my kitchen stove
 - Company is mostly in developing countries
- Suggestion that fire station go to biogas, just requires fireman to change the way they throw stuff away and they wouldn't do it. It shouldn't be a personal decision. I know they are unionized, but they are employed by the county/city.
- Bucket exchange program exists in OR...bring your compost and get something in return.
- Accumulate points for compost and you get mulch in return...another example from another city
- Second option is a really good idea. If we reduce waste, traditional jobs will go away. This would result in job creation.
- What local industries do we have?
 - Industries should be pushing it, not us pushing the industries
- Do an assessment to see what materials are ending up in the waste stream to see, okay, what can we do with it?
 - Mash, a waste product from breweries. They want to do something with it, but what are the options?
 - Dunedin has a lot of breweries, so we could work with them on this.
 - Oil from restaurant grease is also reused in other places
- I hate those (self-compacting garbage bins). They are always dirty and the mechanics of it. Just not a fan. They have solar power on top and they have a big silver mouth and they compact like once an hour.
- They are just making a smaller volume
- How can we move the items in the red over to the green side (referring to what can be recycled handout)? Every time I go to recycle my plastic bags in the bin at Publix, they are always full!
- Is plastic bag ban happening here?
- You're not going to like the answer.
- The state has a preemption, so the state has a ban on banning plastic bags. If you still try and do so you have to pay attorney fees for both parties.

- I thought there was a loop hole.
- There was a case in Coral Gables. People are waiting to see what happens with this.
- How do we take kitchen waste and turn it into compost? Supply has to be constant. Need technology. We know it's out there. If there was some type of exchange that used IT as a clearing house. e.g. I have mash. I need boxes.... a more formalized system of exchange. I have this, I need this type of thing.

OPTION 3

Sharply reduce waste generated.

We need to be more conscious of the items we purchase and the waste generated. If we do not manage these problems at the source, we risk impacts to current and future generations. The cost to reduce consumption and manage waste could limit personal choices and impact businesses and industry.

Examples of What Could Be Done	Some Possible Trade-Offs to Consider
Require code enforcement to hire dedicated positions to monitor for waste violations.	Costly, privacy invasion, impact to other code reviews, angry residents.
Provide incentives to companies (gas stations, restaurants, retail stores) to significantly reduce waste.	Cost to start/manage program; increase use of reusable materials.
Charge producers a disposal fee to support cleanup/waste management.	Costly to enforce rule; impact to economy; improved recycling efforts; cleaner communities.

Top 10 Items Collected

1. PLASTIC BOTTLES	2,127,565	11. METAL BOTTLE CAPS	424,934
2. PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES	1,024,470	12. GLASS BEVERAGE BOTTLES	402,375
3. BEER CANS	888,589	13. PLASTIC BEVERAGE BOTTLES	402,122
4. PLASTIC BOTTLE CAPS	861,340	14. METAL BOTTLE CAPS	381,669
5. PLASTIC WATER JUGS	439,571	15. PLASTIC CUPS	351,585

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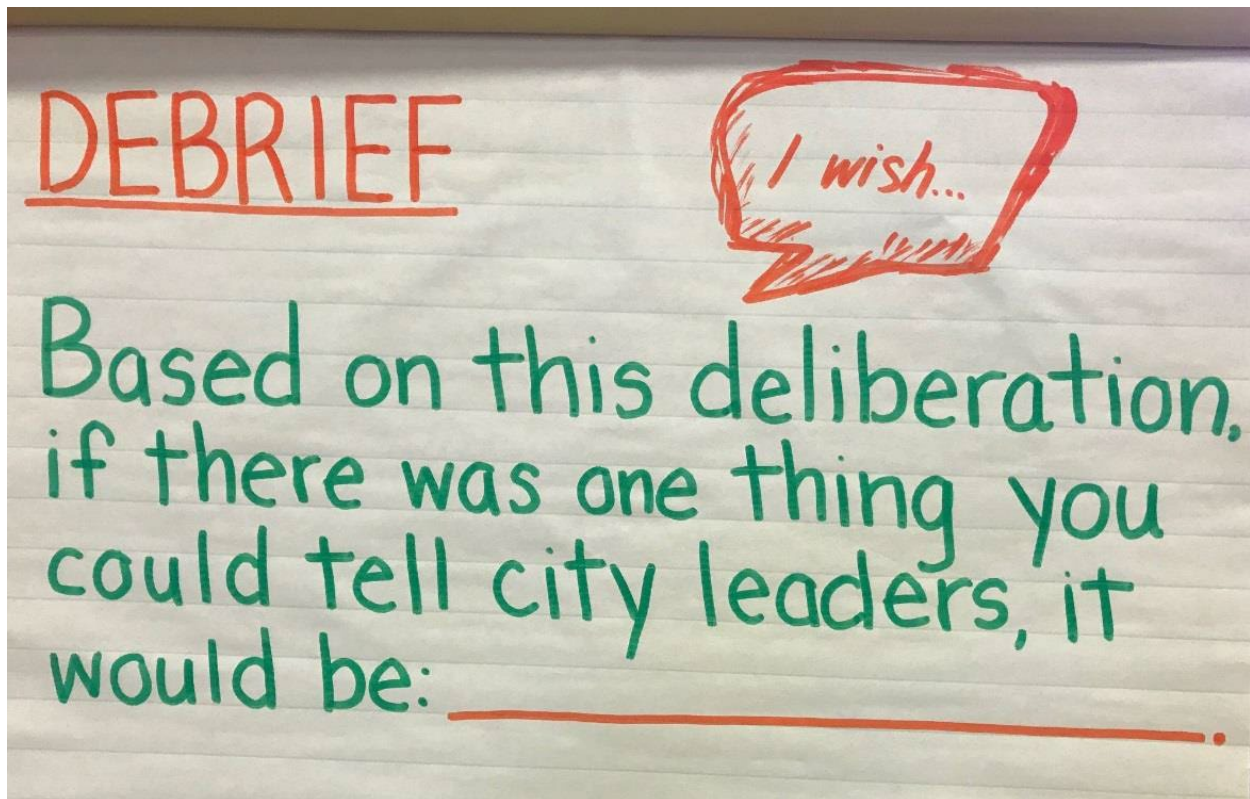
<https://www.oceanconservancy.org/publications/>

Option 3 Discussion Notes

- Red tag, spot checks on your trash, I like that process
- Encourage local production of food so it doesn't have to be packaged in a box. Furniture is another example, as we buy more things online, things are packed in containers and Styrofoam
- Companies seem to be reducing the packaging, more recyclable material, less plastic, more cardboard
- Don't put the plastic in the recycle because it stops the machine
- Incentives for local business not to use Styrofoam, they can be on a list to promote themselves
- Buy in bulk, use bags or glass
- The Refillery – reduce waste, bring your own containers, make your own products (place in St. Pete)
- Get a credit when you refill containers e.g. shampoos, use it and return it, have it refilled, e.g. Loop
- More incentives for event companies to think about the footprint at festivals, plastic cups, beer, wine, use an incentive to make money, charity, fund raising, e.g. Dunedin film festival, sell a souvenir cup/commemorative wine glass, \$10 includes 2 glasses of wine, etc.
- If you want an event here, bring a mechanism to reduce waste, that is your responsibility as a group
- Dunedin is a progressive city, promote recycling, use a dumpster, we collected two tons of plastic, it's a benchmark, hopefully it will be less, we will focus on recycling at this/next event!
- Can the city create a Dunedin cup that can be used at all events? Violations, police infractions, open container policy, alcohol consumption
- These reusable items are used at events all over the country
- Green events idea
- Create stuff locally, food, furniture, would help to reduce waste
- What we buy creates waste. Logistics of obtaining raw materials to create items locally, trucking costs, material costs,
- Edible yards
- Education on how to make it work in the city
- Cannot sell food outside of your house, business, cottage law
- How does cottage law work in the city?
- Can businesses charge for the plastic bag? 10 cents a bag, the merchant gets the money
- Groceries are selling reusable bags, we don't provide bags, but you can buy one for 10 cents, incentivize businesses
- Is it viable to charge a producer disposal fee? Would it run businesses out of town?
- We need to put more pressure on manufacturers
- I am resident, activist, bottom up response, yell, scream and demand change, it's directly related to Publix and the money for the legislature, they don't mention paper, and they get mad when you ask for it.
- What are they doing with the plastic bags? Publix!
- Change must come from us

- Be softer with the local merchant, they are getting it like that from the manufacturer, if you're selling things, it's sold the way it was received by the merchant
- Restaurants have more control on disposal
- Consumer vs producer
- Charge for trash disposal – small cans pay less money, large cans pay more, less pickups
- Dunedin, once a week pick-up
- Contract challenges, mixed recycling problem, contamination
- Local employers collect bags at work
- Work with vendors at the event to reduce single use plastic

Reflection



- City needs composing – organic, food waste, yard waste
- Solar – do more
- Reinforce businesses to charge for a bag
- Reinforce positive ideas for businesses e.g. marketing promotion, recognition, put on website
- Events* – reduce or eliminate single use
 - Monetary savings
 - Positive image

- Promote plastic recycling
- Solar for city hall

* Four attendees expressed support for this idea.

Results

A total of twelve (12) participants attended the program. After the forum, attendees were asked to fill out an 11-question evaluation to provide program feedback. Only seven attendees returned an evaluation (58% response rate).

Demographics (N=7)

- Ethnic heritage was 100% white/Caucasian
- 85.7% (n=6) were female, 14.3% (n=1) were male

Overall Program Experience

- 100% of participants were very satisfied with the facilitators, opportunity to talk, and the overall forum
- Attendees were very satisfied with meeting space (85.7%) and had mixed reactions to the placemat discussion tool (57% very satisfied; 43% fairly satisfied)

Additional thoughts or comments about this program by participants:

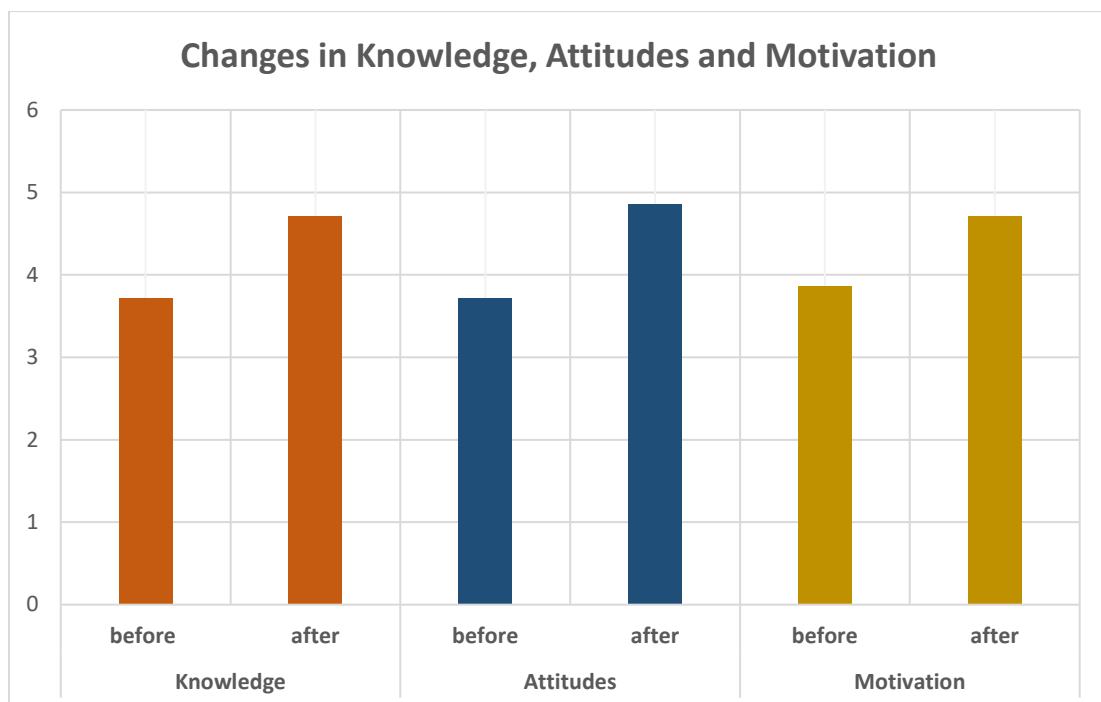
- Many businesses want recycling, can't we somehow make that easier for them
- This was fantastic! We need more of these to bring attention to important topics. I'm hoping the next session has more and more diverse attendees – if not, may need to look at ways to attract more people, thank you very much for having this!
- Thank you!

Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes and Motivation

On the evaluation, guests were asked the following questions:

Using the scale provided where 1 is very low and 5 is very high, how would you <i>rate your level of knowledge</i> about today's topic before and after attending this event?	BEFORE Attending the program Low High 1 2 3 4 5	AFTER Attending the program Low High 1 2 3 4 5
How would you <i>rate your likelihood of discussing</i> today's topic with others in your community before and after attending this event?	BEFORE Attending the program 1 2 3 4 5	AFTER Attending the program 1 2 3 4 5
How would you <i>rate your level of motivation to participate with others on projects</i> related to today's topic before and after attending this event?	BEFORE Attending the program 1 2 3 4 5	AFTER Attending the program 1 2 3 4 5

Below are the average responses to the questions before and after the program:



City Report

At the end of the forum, Natalie Henley provided a quick overview of ongoing city initiatives that were pertinent to the discussion:

- She is pursuing certification with Ocean Friendly to become a certifier for businesses within the city which will increase sustainability practices. These businesses will be showcased on the website.
- The city is working on a Green Event guide which will be shared with event promoters in Dunedin to promote the use of tips and ideas to support sustainable events
- Dunedin CEQ proposed a plastic reduction plan which will be implemented internally first before being applied citywide.
- The city recycling is managed through private haulers so if there is no market value, there are serious impacts to the bottom line.
- Be mindful of the terms that are shared, some are regulated, others are not, e.g. biodegradable, compostable, recyclable, be cautious about purchase and use
- As city employee, we want to hear your voice (public) all the time on city issues, ideas for how city should move forward. Use the Idea Share page where it's possible to rate ideas and prioritize the ideas for city work.

Conclusion

Forums expose participants to new ideas and knowledge. This group was knowledgeable about the issue and offered many interesting opinions. Results suggest there is a desire for a larger government and community effort, specifically from businesses, to address waste pollution. Attendees specifically wanted the City of Dunedin to promote “green “events which would address many of the items and issues highlighted at the forum. The main motivation for attending the program was their personal interest in the topic. Although an effort was made to reach a more diverse audience by hosting an event at the MLK Jr. Recreation Center, the desired target audience was not reflected in the forum results. More forums with diverse attendees will provide a broader base of input on ideas and issues surrounding waste reduction strategies in the city.

Follow-Up

A desire for additional programs or forums on other topics was expressed by attendees and partners. This need could be addressed by UF/IFAS Extension's existing and future outreach programs that support community education and awareness programs on important local issues.