

## Assembly Fails Land Transfer, Composting Continues at Landfill

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A series of miscommunications led to a failed land transfer during last night's regular borough assembly meeting. The assembly was faced with a resolution that would lease 2.6 acres of borough property, south of active landfill operations, to the city.

Class B composting, which is a lower grade of compost not intended for use on food products, is currently being done in the existing landfill. The resolution before the assembly suggested those operations would be moved to the 2.6 acre site as soon as possible.

But during the borough manager's report on the matter, Acting Manager Bill Roberts said the resolution should be postponed and a new one brought forward.

"They should never have said that biosolids were going to be moved to the new site. If anybody read the entire resolution it was anything that was going to be moved over there was going to have ADEC blessing and approval."

Roberts said there had been miscommunication between the borough and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation about the movement of the compost. He said the original thought was to move the class B composting to the new site, and the borough thought the DEC had given the nod of approval. However, the DEC had actually given approval to moving the composting operations within the current landfill, not the 2.6 acres in the resolution.

"They meant the landfill site, the actual licensed site where we are monitoring the water. So we said, oh, we cannot move that B."

Roberts said the future resolution will have language that allows for the site disposal only if the city gets the proper permitting and DEC approval.

However, the city doesn't want to do anything if the land isn't guaranteed to it. Assemblywoman Louise Stutes said the city should have to prove it has done everything necessary for permitting before it can use the 2.6 acres.

"If the city wants to know whether or not we're going to make that land available, provided they do the preliminary checks, get whatever they need from the DEC, make sure

they know where that run off water is going to go, whatever it is. Bring us a resolution that says, if we do this, then we will make that land available, but that's not what this resolution says."

The failed resolution could have had some dire consequences. The temporary license to create Class B compost at the current landfill actually expired yesterday, but Roberts said some quick thinking on the part of landfill staff once again gave the city more wiggle room to figure things out.

"We actually deposited less garbage than was expected and also the crew at the landfill has come up with a way to work their way around what the city is doing now so they can give the city another 90 days probably to do that."

This isn't the first time the city has put the assembly in a bind with regards to compost. In fact, the city's continued last-minute problem solving was a point of concern for Monashka Resident Doug Pengilly.

"You know it really irks me, and it should irk you too to be put in this situation again of having to deal with this crisis. You know that you have to make this bad decision because there's a crisis. And if you don't do it, everything's going to go wrong, and it's up to you to accept it. And this is not a crisis that started this morning, you know a bomb didn't drop out of nowhere; this has been going on for years. And all you have to do is look in the packet."

Assemblywoman Carol Austerman agreed and said she hopes the city can get their act together and work in a timely matter.

As it stands now, class B composting will continue at the landfill, as has been done since December, and the assembly will address a new resolution regarding the land transfer at its next work session on August 29.