

City Council Approves Funds For Composting Project

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Casey Kelly/KMXT

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The Kodiak City Council on Thursday approved a 110-thousand dollar contract with CH2M Hill for a pilot program that will test whether the city can compost biosolids, which is basically human waste in the form of sludge. KMXT's Casey Kelly has more.

Last year the Kodiak Island Borough informed the city that in two years it would no longer be able to accept sludge, or the solids left over from the city's wastewater treatment plant, at its landfill. Space is becoming an issue, as are environmental concerns.

CH2M Hill presented three possible options for sludge disposal to the city council in August. Cannibalism, which is essentially having tiny bugs eat the sludge, was ruled out because Kodiak's climate is too cold to keep the microorganisms alive. Another option, incineration, has fairly high up front and long term costs. The cheapest overall option is composting. But first the city has to find out if it's feasible. Councilman Tom Walters admits he's skeptical.

(Composting 1 :28s “…something soon about that.”)

Councilman Terry Haines admitted there are a lot of questions yet to be answered. He also wanted to remind citizens that in addition to sludge, the city needs a certain amount of other material, such as cardboard and yard debris, to mix with the human waste and make composting on such a large scale doable.

(Composting 2 :13s “…bring them in from off island.”)

Jack Maker said the big unknown for him is whether or not people in the community will be able to use the large amount of compost that will be produced.

(Composting 3 :41s “…l certainly hope it works out.”)

Outgoing council member Charlie Davidson has no doubt that the city will find a use for the end product.

(Composting 4 :14s “…that experiment be successful.”)

Work on the composting pilot project will begin immediately and take the better part of a year. It involves building a temporary composting site on city property adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant. If it’s successful, the city will likely spend money to build a full-scale composting site, which will be in the same location.

I’m Casey Kelly.

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