



CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

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TO: Ande Banks, City Manager
FROM: Keith Thomas, Sustainability and Environmental Manager
DATE: June 26, 2024
RE: Eateries Acting Towards Sustainability (EATS)

Summary:

The Public Works Department will present an opportunity for local businesses to engage in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP).

Background:

This certification program is designed as a voluntary initiative for proprietors within the food service sector to opt into. The objective of this certification is to recognize the dedication and efforts of these establishments, rather than enforce more stringent regulations on business owners. The aim is for the Eateries Acting Towards Sustainability (EATS) program to serve as a valuable tool in steering sustainability efforts within food service operations, potentially igniting further environmentally friendly business endeavors.

The EATS Program aims to prioritize waste reduction and position the Harrisonburg restaurant industry and broader hospitality sector as pioneers in sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. By fostering a culture of practical sustainability, this initiative not only benefits the environment but also enhances the overall quality of life for all residents in Harrisonburg. Through public education on minimizing single-use waste and empowering restaurants to adopt cost-effective waste reduction measures, this program will tackle waste-related challenges effectively. This certification program has three levels to highlight everyone's level of sustainability. The first level, called the Sprout Level, is a very low-barrier entry to reward people for making the small but necessary steps towards sustainability. The second level, Bloom, pushes businesses to take an even bigger step to reduce their single-use plastic. The final level, Harvest, will show how businesses are putting sustainability at the forefront of their everyday operation. At the Harvest Level, businesses will hopefully be able to start reaping the rewards of their hard work and will be able to share their experience with others.

The points system is based on categories that align with the six focus areas of The City of Harrisonburg's Environmental Action Plan. The points spreadsheet for the EATS certification is broken into each of those focus areas with multiple options in each focus area.

The Sprout Level requires two prerequisites: an Ask-First Policy, and an established Water Use and Fats, Oils, and Grease Policy. The Ask-First policy requires businesses to ask before they give

out single use items such as a glass of water, straws, plastic cutlery, and more. The Water Use and FOGS policy is to ensure that each business handles fats, oils, and grease in a legal and environmentally sensitive manner. There is also a requirement of 10 additional points in any category required for the Sprout Level. Throughout the certification, participating businesses will need to achieve a total of 70 points out of a total of 410 possible points.

The Bloom Level starts with continuation of all practices from the Sprout Level. Bloom requires a pre-requisite of phasing out single use plastic. To achieve the second level of certification, businesses will need to explore sustainable alternatives to items such as plastic straws, plastic bags, condiment packets and more. City staff will want to see five single use items that have been replaced to reusable, recyclable or compostable material. This level also requires achieving 20 additional points from any category of the businesses' choosing.

The Harvest level is the final level of the EATS certification. The same with the Bloom Level, Harvest requires that you continue all practices from the first two levels. There is no pre-requisite for Bloom. This third level requires that the business achieves 40 additional points with 10 of those points coming from the Energy Reduction category.

Key Issues:

Sustainability, Environmental Action Plan, Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Landfill Diversion

Environmental Impact:

Promote environmental action in our community.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

In 2020, City Council adopted Phase 1 of the Environmental Action Plan which includes EAP Focus Area 5, Goal 1, Strategy 1.2 – Create a Program that Recognizes or Incentivizes Businesses that Substantially Reduces Waste.

Alternatives:

N/A

Community Engagement:

N/A

Recommendation:

N/A

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. Eateries Acting Towards Sustainability Flyer

Review: