

## Decision on curbside recycling initiative needs to go to Gallup voters

Written by Gallupsun Staff  
Friday, 25 March 2016 03:56

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### To The Editor:

There has been a lot of discussions on the curbside recycling program agenda item as to its implementation that was not approved by council. I want to set the record straight as to why I did not approve such a program through an ordinance. First and foremost, I made it clear in council that curbside recycling was coming, next year or the year after, but because it was a burden on the customer to pay for the service, I believe it should be the right of the customer to have an opportunity to vote for it through a referendum.

There were additional reasons for my decision:

1: The city was going to pay for the costs upfront and then amortize the initial upfront costs over 7 years by charging the customer \$1.00, \$3.00, or \$5.00 per billing cycle, it doesn't take into account that it may not cover the costs. Will the city subsidize that portion?, to what extent?, will the council approve additional fee's to the customer?, all this while we will be raising the utility rates to cover the costs of the additional cost of power over time as per our city power contract.

2: Environmental Surcharge Funds are right now being used for needed infrastructure improvements such as the curb and gutter programs which the city is taking over the responsibility for in existing areas (previously the owners responsibility), the wastewater treatment plant updates, clean and lien and demolition of dilapidated structures, and major wastewater and water conveyance system improvements. If I have a choice between curbside recycling or city infrastructure needs, I have to choose the latter.

3: Hold harmless is a threat to the city's future, incremental increases until the annual loss is at about \$3,000,000.00, as the amounts increase to cover the shortage from the state, there will

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be an opportunity for the council to implement an additional 3/8 sales tax to cover some of the loss. We are already one of the highest in the state.

The longer we can absorb the cost of the shortage the better it is for all the citizens, by approving programs that have a **reoccurring** cost associated with them is a burden for the city and the future of Gallup. Hopefully I was voted in to make fiscally responsible decisions based on my knowledge of the city's current financial situation and the impact it can have in the future.

***Yogash Kumar***

***Gallup, NM***