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Council talks trash, city can try new cans for free

By Nancy Powell
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(July 29, 2003) New trash cans could make it possible for Ocean City to collect waste and recycling materials at the same time plus make money from advertising on them.

The bins would be free, they are well made and they would generate revenue for the resort, Bruce Gibbs, superintendent of the Maintenance Division of Public Works, told the City Council at its work session on Tuesday. The resort could also advertise itself as an All America City or its special events.

The trash cans would cost the resort absolutely nothing during the one-year trial period, which would begin in March 2004. The vendor, Outdoor Partner Media, would make money from advertising and Ocean City would get a portion of that revenue.

Gibbs proposed that the new cans be placed on Baltimore Avenue from the inlet to North Division Street, at the Transit Center, on side streets from Baltimore Avenue to the Boardwalk, on Chicago Avenue from 2nd Street to 4th Street, at City Hall, at the airport, at the recreation department, the Public Safety Building, Public Works and possibly other locations.

The bins have a cover that prevents rain from entering the can and helps keep waste inside. Each bin is valued at \$1,500 and has side panels for advertising.

They are very heavy, weighing 480 pounds, and could not be easily overturned.

Outdoor Partner Media would supply 20 trash/recycling bins during the trial period. The firm would also handle the production, installation and maintenance. The sales and place-



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The new trash cans proposed for use in Ocean City.

ments of advertisements would also be the responsibility of Outdoor Partner Media.

The advertisements, however, would be subject to the approval of the resort. Eight panels would be reserved for use by the city.

During the trial period, Outdoor Partner Media would pay the city \$20 per unit per month. If the project continues beyond the one year trial, the company would share 10 percent of the monthly advertising revenue generated by each bin.

If the trial period is successful, the company would put additional bins around the resort.

Councilman Joe Hall questioned whether the advertisements would violate the city's ordinances restricting off-premise signs.

Mark Brodtkin, CEO of Outdoor Partner Media, said such ordinances generally restrict billboards, but the bins are not an unsightly sign.

"We're replacing a litter receptacle," Brodtkin said.

Councilman Vince Gisriel said the exclusivity clause concerned him and perhaps other companies should be allowed to bid.

Councilwoman Nancy Howard said the

council had gone to great lengths to avoid eye pollution and she would like for the advertisements to be standardized so some ads won't get busier and splashier."

Brodtkin said his company did not like visual pollution either.

"We think we're taking away visual pollution, not adding to it," Brodtkin said.

Mayor Jim Mathias was concerned about the bins being vandalized. A favorite night sport in Ocean City, he said, was tipping 55-gallon trash cans into the bus lanes at 3 a.m. He did not want the large, heavy bins turned over into the street.

"This would take more than one person to get them out of the bus lane," Mathias said.

That potential problem could be solved, Brodtkin said, by bolting the units into the ground. Other vandalism problems could be corrected by a maintenance crew the company would hire. The crew could take care of graffiti and other problems within 48 hours.

That was much too long for Gibbs. "We're not going to tolerate that," he said.

The maintenance division does not permit such things as graffiti to be present nearly that long. Almost as soon as it is noticed, someone is sent to clean it up.

Mathias and Gibbs suggested that the company make arrangements for the maintenance division to be a backup to the hired crew to maintain the bins for a fee.

Council President Rick Meehan suggested that Brodtkin, accompanied by Gibbs, make his presentation to the Ocean City Development Corporation and then return to the council.

The council then voted, with Gisriel opposed, for the presentation to be made before the OCDC.