

KING COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 18, 2009
Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance

David Baker
William A. Beck
Bob Dixon
Sean Kronberg
Joan McGilton
Suellen Mele
Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann
Max L. Pope
Ray Schlien
Judy Stenberg
Joe Tessier

Others in Attendance

Tamar Benzikry-Stern
Cath Brunner
Kathy Hashagen
Kevin Kiernan
Peggy Papsdorf
Grace Reamer
Marjorie Sutherland
Wendy Walkky
Diane Yates

Action Items

Line 9-10: Casalini nominated and elected as SWAC Chair
Line 12-13 Stenberg nominated and elected as SWAC Vice Chair
Line 19-20: Approval of July Minutes as revised
Line 103-104 Approved nomination of Hilary King for appointment to SWAC

1 **Call to Order and Introductions**

2 SWAC Vice Chair Judy Stenberg noted that the SWAC Chair Joe Casalini was unable to
3 attend today's meeting. She also noted that a quorum was present and called the meeting to
4 order at 9:37 a.m. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

5
6 **Nomination and Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

7 Stenberg opened the floor to nominations for the chair and vice chair.

8
9 **SWAC Member David Baker moved to nominate Casalini as SWAC Chair. *The***
10 ***motion was approved unanimously.***

11
12 **Baker moved to nominate Stenberg as SWAC Vice Chair. *The motion was approved***
13 ***unanimously.***

14
15 **Approval of July Minutes**

16 SWAC Member William Beck suggested that the July minutes be revised. He suggested
17 that the word "consensus" used in reference to the group approving a motion be changed to

18 “consent” consistent with Roberts Rules of Order. He also suggested that the second part of
19 line 55 be changed to read, “...will be available for discussion with...” **Baker moved**
20 **approval of the July minutes with as revised. *The motion was approved by consent.***

21
22 Intergovernmental Liaison Diane Yates reminded SWAC members that changes to the
23 minutes can only be made at SWAC meetings.

24
25 **Updates: SWD / MSWMAC / Other**

26 **MSWMAC Update**

27 Division Director Kevin Kiernan reported that MSWMAC received a presentation
28 regarding the Disaster Debris Management Plan. SWAC will receive that presentation later
29 in the meeting. In addition, MSWMAC received the presentation about Pharmaceuticals
30 that SWAC received in July. MSWMAC was supportive of the ideas presented. SWAC
31 Member Suellen Mele will send proposed language for a SWAC resolution about the
32 Secure Medicine Return bill to Yates who will distribute it to SWAC members before their
33 October meeting. Mele said a final report about the pilot project would be available before
34 the next SWAC meeting.

35
36 Stenberg noted that a pharmacist sorted medicines that she disposed at Bartells. SWAC
37 Member Bob Dixon reported that medicines were not sorted when disposed at Group
38 Health pharmacies. Mele said that screening allows medicines from the Bartells program to
39 be disposed at the lower cost hazardous waste incinerator.

40
41 SWAC Member Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann said that similar disposal methods are used in
42 Germany and that with few exceptions medicines are disposed in the solid waste incinerator
43 without adverse environmental impact. Mele asked for scientific documentation showing
44 that the German method of disposing of medicines would not conflict with EPA regulations
45 in the United States.

46
47 **SWD Updates**

48 Kevin Kiernan said the preliminary draft of the EIS for the Cedar Hills Site Development
49 Plan will be released shortly. SWAC will be briefed on the plan at its October meeting.

50

51 The preliminary draft of the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan is now in the
52 Executive's office for final review. The division expects the plan to be transmitted to
53 Council on October 8th. An email with a link to the plan will be sent to SWAC members
54 that same day. A limited number of copies of the plan will be printed. Please let Yates
55 know if you would prefer to receive a hard copy.

56

57 Since the plan will not be released in time to allow review and discussion of it at a joint
58 meeting of SWAC and MSWMAC in October, the division suggested that SWAC host a
59 joint meeting on its regularly scheduled meeting date of November 20th. To accommodate
60 MSWMAC members' schedules, the meeting would begin at 10:30 instead of 9:30. SWAC
61 agreed to a joint meeting on November 20th. The Solid Waste Division will notify
62 MSWMAC members of the change in schedule.

63

64 Kiernan said that the Landfill Gas to Energy facility is in start up mode. Gas is being sold
65 into the pipeline intermittently but adjustments are still being made. The division is
66 receiving payment for gas but receives a lower amount for gas used in testing than for gas
67 sold into the pipeline.

68

69 Beck noted that there was a discussion at a Cedar Hills Citizen Review Committee meeting
70 concerning perceived high frequency noises occurring when the flare at the landfill gas to
71 energy (LFGTE) facility is in operation. Kiernan responded that the flare is not intended to
72 be used as part of the normal operation of the facility. More information is available on the
73 Bio Energy Washington Web site at: <http://www.bioenergy-wa.com>

74

75 Kiernan said that phase one construction at Bow Lake, which is primarily earthwork, has
76 gone well and is ahead of schedule. Self haul service has not been impacted by the
77 construction. Contract provisions for control of contaminated water were efficiently
78 implemented after the heavy rains earlier in the month.

79

80 The division is quite close to notifying the short list of contractors for phase two
81 construction at Bow Lake. This phase is being done via a negotiated procurement which is a
82 unique process allowing qualifications as well as price to be considered. This negotiated
83 procurement process was approved by the King County Council and is allowed in the
84 Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

85

86 In response to a question Kiernan noted that construction at Houghton is expected to begin
87 in the spring or summer of 2010.

88

89 Kiernan reported that the division has been working with Washington State Correctional
90 Industries (WSCI) regarding mattress recycling. WSCI is siting a facility in Tacoma and
91 will soon begin accepting mattresses for recycling. The division will review the success of
92 the program before making changes to its acceptance policies. Currently the division
93 accepts up to six pieces of mattresses or box springs from residential customers per day.
94 Commercial customers may not dispose of mattresses at the transfer stations but must bring
95 them directly to the landfill.

96

97 **Membership: Nomination of Hilary King to Interested Citizen Position**

98 Stenberg reported that she and Casalini interviewed SWAC Applicant Hilary King and
99 recommend her nomination for appointment to SWAC. Stenberg said that King's
100 commitment to recycling education is impressive.

101

102 **SWAC Member Joe Tessier moved that King's nomination be sent to the Executive**
103 **for appointment. *The motion was approved by consent.***

104

105 In response to a question Yates noted that only one SWAC position remains open. That
106 position is for a manufacturer located in King County. The position has been vacant since
107 Don Freas left the committee.

108

109 **Transfer Station Hours**

110 Kiernan said that the division is continuing to experience tonnage that is approximately
111 fifteen percent below peak tonnage in 2007; yet operating hours have not changed. The
112 division needs to make some adjustments in the hours and will transmit its proposal to the
113 King County Council in October. The proposal will maintain operating hours consistent
114 with requirements in King County Code. Host cities will be notified at that time. Tessier
115 asked if there would be labor impacts as a result of this change. Kiernan replied that there
116 would be labor impacts.

117

118 In response to a question Kiernan said that commercial haulers are able to access transfer
119 stations in rural areas on days when they are closed to the public. This is done to support
120 collection in those communities. Only one staff person works at the transfer stations on
121 those days.

122

123 **Washington State Performance Audit Report of King County Utilities**

124 Kiernan said that the utilities audit covered the county's Wastewater Treatment, Transit and
125 Solid Waste Divisions. Below is a link to the utilities audit that was sent to SWAC
126 members. Copies of part of the Executive Summary and Enclosure A have been provided
127 with today's handouts.

128 <http://www.sao.wa.gov/AuditReports/AuditReportFiles/ar1002103.pdf>

129

130 Kiernan said that audits can be an opportunity for a fresh set of eyes to review an operation
131 and point out potential areas of improvement. The division is disappointed in this case with
132 the process and with many of the audit's findings.

133

134 Ernst and Young completed their work with the Solid Waste Division on March 11, 2009.
135 The draft audit report was delivered to the state auditor's office June 22nd. The division
136 received the draft audit report on August 14th and was given ten days to respond.
137 Unfortunately, the draft received by the division did not include the methodology used for
138 calculating potential savings. The division asked for that information, which further
139 reduced the time available for response.

140

141 The state auditor's office initially intended to issue their report only four days after
142 receiving the County's response. However, issues in the auditor's office postponed release
143 until September 16th. The final document released on that date is significantly different
144 from the draft sent to the division for review.

145

146 In addition to concerns about the process used in the audit, the division has concerns about
147 the recommendations contained in the report. For example, the audit report presents
148 income from selecting and implementing a landfill alternative from the Cedar Hills Site
149 Development Plan as a recommendation of the audit. That landfill alternative was not
150 identified by the auditors but was provided to them by the division and, along with five
151 others, is currently being reviewed in compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act
152 (SEPA). Accepting the recommendation prior to completion of the SEPA process is illegal
153 under state law. Additionally, the five year savings identified in the report would not accrue
154 until after 2028. However, the savings were presented in current dollars and not discounted
155 to show the time value of money.

156

157 The audit identifies leachate recirculation as an area for significant savings. Leachate
158 recirculation has been used in dry area landfills so moisture is available to enhance waste
159 decomposition. The Cedar Hills Regional Landfill receives over sixty inches of rain
160 annually. Lack of moisture is not a limiting factor in decomposition. Additionally, though
161 the audit reports savings, it does not report associated costs for leachate recirculation. To
162 follow this recommendation, a \$24.7 million cover on Area 4 would need to be removed
163 and replaced. That cost and the cost of pipes, pumps and electrical controls are not
164 considered when reporting the savings. If there would indeed be savings from initiating this
165 project they would not occur until after 2018. Again, the savings were presented in current
166 dollars and were not discounted to show the time value of money.

167

168 The audit identified overtime as a potential source for savings. Ninety four percent of the
169 division's overtime costs are used to backfill operations staff when they are on vacation, on
170 sick leave or at mandatory training. Unlike most office positions, where the work can wait
171 for a day or two, these positions must be filled if an employee is absent.

172

173 There are areas identified by the audit that the division will closely review. For example,
174 the division has been changing maintenance practices to increase the percentage of
175 preventative maintenance. The division will also study the potential benefits and costs of
176 leachate recirculation and has changed how overtime is budgeted in 2010.

177

178 Kiernan said that the audit asserts that general overhead charges should not be assessed to
179 utilities. The funds from these charges support the Executive's Office and the King County
180 Council. King County disagrees with that assertion. The audit also asserts that the county
181 should reimburse the utilities for the difference between the dollars budgeted for overhead
182 and the amount actually spent. The county agrees with those findings.

183

184 In response to a question, Kiernan stated that though the auditor specifically identified rent
185 for Cedar Hills as an area of study, no mention of the rent appears in the report.

186

187 Stenberg asked if a letter supporting the division from SWAC including members' names
188 and affiliations would be of value to the division. Kiernan suggested that SWAC members
189 take some time to review the audit and decide if the committee would like to send a letter at
190 a later time. Mele suggested that individual members could write letters to the editor.

191

192 Kiernan noted that the Executive discussed the audit when it was reported to the Council.
193 He noted that several council members issued a press release in response to the discussion.
194 King County will be responding to the audit at a meeting of the Washington State
195 Legislature's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee in Olympia on September
196 23rd.

197

198 Stenberg questioned why the wastewater and solid waste utilities were included in the
199 same audit; stating that the utilities are very different. She said she found the report to be
200 confusing. Kiernan responded that though he has no knowledge of the intent of the
201 auditor's office, both the Solid Waste Division and Wastewater Treatment Division are

202 utilities operated as an enterprise fund within the county and both are charged overhead fees
203 in a similar fashion.

204

205 **Disaster Debris Management Plan update**

206 Wendy Walkky, division staff, introduced herself, and said she is the division's
207 representative on the Seattle Urban Area Strategic Initiative (UASI) which includes the City
208 of Seattle, King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

209

210 Walkky said that SWAC was briefed last September about the UASI and the need to
211 identify potential sites for disaster debris management. The UASI is developing a regional
212 disaster debris management plan, which will include King County.

213

214 Since the last SWAC briefing on this subject, King County has experienced two
215 presidential level FEMA qualifying disasters – last year's ice storm and the January 2009
216 flood event. The flood event resulted in damage to the Howard Hanson Dam in south King
217 County. These storm events presented the division with tangible experiences for disaster
218 planning. In particular, the division has decided to prepare contracts for anticipated
219 emergency services.

220

221 The division has been working with Auburn, Kent, Tukwila and Renton in south King
222 County to prepare for debris management in event of major flooding of the Green River this
223 storm season. The Army Corps of Engineers predicts a one in three chance that flooding
224 will occur.

225

226 In the event of significant flooding in south King County, most impacted properties will be
227 within incorporated areas. There are approximately 2550 residences in those areas. That
228 number may be understated because the data does not consistently differentiate between
229 single family homes and condominiums and apartments. As a result, the actual number of
230 residences that may be damaged by Green River flooding in incorporated cities is not
231 known.

232

233 The county's GIS office has determined that there are only 78 residential parcels in
234 unincorporated King County that may be impacted by flooding and many of those are
235 undeveloped. Because of the relatively few residential properties in unincorporated King
236 County and the scattered location of these properties, the county is encouraging those
237 residents to take their residential flood debris to the closest transfer station and then submit
238 a reimbursement claim to their insurance company.

239

240 The county is encouraging all residents of the potential flood area to take out flood
241 insurance so they can be reimbursed for flood damage that is not covered by most standard
242 homeowner's insurance policies.

243

244 Walkky went on to explain the development of the UASI disaster debris management plan.
245 She said the federal government has asked that 100 acre sites be identified for debris
246 storage and sorting; however, few jurisdictions have that kind of undeveloped land
247 available. It appears that the county will be hosting cities for most of the large debris
248 storage sites.

249

250 Kiernan said that, frequently, the division has waived disposal fees after storm events. Fee
251 waivers are not eligible for FEMA reimbursement and the division has absorbed the losses.
252 However, an event of the magnitude of this season's potential flooding could have a
253 significant impact on future rates. To mitigate that impact, it would be more prudent for
254 cities to qualify for FEMA debris disposal reimbursement, and to encourage residents to
255 obtain flood insurance to cover flood losses, including debris disposal costs. It is in the
256 region's interest to take steps to give us all the best chance for FEMA reimbursement for
257 costs, rather than bearing them regionally.

258

259 Walkky went on to announce that the storm debris voucher ordinance was recently adopted
260 by the council.

261

262 Kiernan said that preparation for Green River flooding is a high priority for King County.
263 In a worst case scenario, both I-405 and Highway 18 would be closed. If that occurs,

264 transfer trucks from south King County would have to use alternative routes to get to and
265 from the landfill. This rerouting of transfer trucks would happen at the same time as a major
266 disruption of the region's passenger and freight transportation system. Additionally the
267 underground pipeline that provides fuel source for SeaTac Airport is in the potential flood
268 area as are other outlets for diesel fuel. Manufacturing and distribution centers are also in a
269 potential flood area. Telecommunications, power, wastewater and other utilities would be
270 impacted in a flood. Up to \$3 billion of economic damage could result.

271

272 McGilton noted that preparations for the flood could negatively impact salmon restoration
273 work that has already been done.

274

275 McGilton said it is the responsibility of the Corps of Engineers to fix the dam. Kiernan said
276 that though temporary repairs will be in place, the Corps will not have time to test them
277 before the rainy season. Walkky noted that levees were built assuming the dam would be
278 functional and are not sufficient to contain the additional water that may be released.

279

280 **Bow Lake Recycling and Transfer Station Update: One Percent for Arts; 4Culture**

281 Cath Brunner, public art project manager from 4Culture, discussed the public art work to be
282 installed at the Bow Lake Recycling and Transfer Station.

283

284 4Culture is a public development authority chartered by King County. 4Culture manages
285 selection, contracting, purchasing and installation of public art as well as maintenance of
286 the collection. Funding is provided through King County's Hotel/Motel (Lodging) tax as
287 well as by King County's One Percent for Arts program, in which one percent of the cost of
288 eligible design and construction expenditures on capital projects are allocated for public art.

289

290 Brunner presented information about the work at Bow Lake by Andy Cao, the artist hired
291 by the selection committee eighteen months ago. Stenberg was the SWAC representative
292 on that committee. Stenberg noted that her experience working with 4Culture was very
293 positive.

294

295 Brunner said Cao was selected because he has been a pioneer in the use of recycled
296 materials – particularly recycled glass. His first proposed design used cast glass trash bags
297 at the entry and along a median to remind the viewer of the quantity of trash created each
298 day. Casting glass trash bags would be very difficult and 4Culture sponsored Cao to a
299 residency at the Pilchuck Glass School to acquire the necessary technique.

300

301 During the residency, Cao learned that creating cast glass trash bags would result in about
302 50 pounds of waste per bag. At the same time, he discovered the onsite glass landfill
303 containing approximately eleven tons of broken art glass. Cao revised his design and, using
304 the recycled art glass from Pilchuck, will instead create a 20 by 50 foot cloud of glass and
305 stainless steel mesh that will be suspended from five structural poles. The cloud will be lit
306 across the top and situated near the scale house.

307

308 Brunner introduced Tamar Benzikry-Stern who is 4Culture’s project manager for the public
309 art at the Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station project.

310

311 Benzikry-Stern presented photos of previous work by Al Price, the artist chosen to work
312 with the design team at Factoria and create artwork for the new facility. More than forty
313 artists were shortlisted from the 4Culture Artist Registry to be considered by a selection
314 panel for this project. They were chosen based on their experience creating work that is
315 displayed outdoors, complicated in scale and scope, and demonstrative of environmental
316 awareness. A committee comprised of two representatives from the community, and three
317 art and design professionals - a landscape architect, an architect, and the artist from the
318 Vashon Recycling and Transfer Station - participated on the selection panel.

319

320 In response to a question Brunner said that the budget for the art at the Bow Lake Recycling
321 and Transfer Station is \$430,000. The design budget is \$110,000 (including the Pilchuk
322 Residency); with the balance to be spent on fabrication. The Factoria project is currently
323 budgeted for \$275,000.

324

325 Kiernan said that the photo created by the Shoreline Recycling and Transfer Station artist
326 was applied to billboards throughout the county on Earth Day. Examples of the billboard
327 installations are posted on the wall of the Solid Waste Division's reception area.

328

329 **Open Forum**

330 Schmidt-Pathmann disclosed that he is a representative from the waste-to-energy industry.
331 He said that though waste avoidance and recycling efforts appear to conflict with
332 waste-to-energy, that is not necessarily accurate. He offered to provide information on the
333 subject to any interested SWAC member.

334

335 Mele said that legislators asked the Department of Ecology to provide a recommendation
336 for recycling fluorescent bulbs. The stakeholder process began last Wednesday.

337

338 In response to a question from Baker about overweight vehicles, Kiernan said that fewer
339 than ten Solid Waste Division trucks have been stopped and weighed. He said that properly
340 loading trailers at the older stations, which are top load facilities, continues to be
341 challenging. However, data shows there to be far more underweight loads than overweight
342 loads at those facilities. He said that though overloaded trailers may exceed the permitted
343 weight of 87,500 pounds for road wear, they do not approach the 133,000 pound weight
344 limit that similarly equipped tractor trailers use safely and legally in other areas.

345

346 **Adjourn**

347 The next meeting is scheduled for October 16.

348 The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

349

350 Submitted by:

351 Kathy Hashagen, SWD Staff