

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee

March 16, 2012 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Room
Next SWAC meeting – April 20, 2012 - 9:30-11:30

Meeting Minutes

<u>Members</u>
David Baker
Jerry Bartlett
William A. Beck
Tim Crosby
Bob Dixon
Jean Garber
Steve Gerritson
Sean Kronberg
Craig Lorch
Suellen Mele
Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann
John Taylor

<u>Others</u>
Candy Castellanos, Waste Management
Jeff Gaisford, SWD Recycling and Environmental Services Manager
Kathy Hashagen, SWD Staff
Kevin Kiernan, SWD Director
Josh Marx, SWD Staff
Yolanda Pon, Seattle King County Public Health
Grace Reamer, King County Council Staff
Bill Reed, SWD Staff
Kimberly Shanley, Waste Management
Stephen Strader, SWAC Applicant
Matt Stern, Waste Management
Diane Yates, SWD Intergovernmental Liaison

Call to Order; Election of Chair Pro Tem

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Yates called the meeting to order. She opened the floor for nominations of a Chair Pro Tem. Mele nominated Garber who was elected unanimously.

Approve November Meeting Minutes; Review Agenda

The group approved the February minutes as written. There were no changes to the agenda.

Updates

SWD

The Solid Waste Division has issued a Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS) for the proposed facility replacement project at Factoria. The public comment and appeal period on the MDNS runs from March 8 through March 29, 2012 at 4:30 p.m. Permitting will begin pending the outcome of the comment period.

The construction at Bow Lake is proceeding well and is essentially on schedule. The contractor has asked to add only two additional days. In May, the division will begin training employees in the new building which will be open in July. A tour will be available to see this phase of the project this summer. There will be an opening ceremony when the entire project is completed in 2013.

MSWMAC

In addition to the presentations SWAC members will receive today, much of the March MSWMAC meeting was devoted to an ILA discussion. The goal is to reach agreement in principle on the terms of an agreement in April.

SWAC news

SWAC members were asked to share information about an open position on the King County Board of Ethics with others that may have an interest. The same information that was contained in the news release distributed at the meeting is available [here](#).

Kiernan noted that a copy of Ordinance 16997 which addresses King County-provided email addresses was distributed to attendees. In part, the ordinance says, “the executive shall provide all members of county boards, commissions and committees with county-managed email accounts for use by members in the performance of their duties on behalf of the county.” A copy of the ordinance is available [here](#).

As a courtesy, Yates can email members’ non-King County email address with SWAC information. However, that practice will make the non-King County computer hard drive vulnerable to disclosure and/or discovery for SWAC related public disclosure requests or lawsuits. If you would like Yates to send email to your non-King County email address, you must respond to the email she sent on February 17 acknowledging your acceptance of that risk. Otherwise, SWAC related communications will continue to be sent to the email address provided by King County.

Gaisford noted that when curbside recycling began, residents separated materials into multiple bins and left them on the curb. Over time, with the intent of increasing the amount of material recycled, single stream recycling was implemented. With single stream, residents put all recyclable materials into one bin which is rolled to the curb.

Matt Stern, Waste Management's Area Director of Recycling Operations and John Taylor, SWAC member and CleanScape’s Government and Community Affairs Manager agreed to speak with SWAC about the benefits and drawbacks of single stream recycling.

Stern began by noting that the change to single stream was in response to residents who did not like the old system and did not participate as a result. More information was provided in his presentation which is available [here](#).

Taylor said that CleanScapes collects materials and takes them to be recycled. They were not in business when the change from source separated to single stream recycling occurred so do not have any specific comparative information to share. The proliferation of new materials like CFL bulbs, cooking oil and textiles added to the collection contracts sometimes requires additional handling by drivers.

Comments included:

- There is concern about contamination. “Glitter pack” (e.g., glass particles in paper bales) and plastics contaminating paper bales are of particular concern.
- Financial pressures move the industry. When a material is first recycled it is sold to available markets. Financial pressures encourage moving toward highest/best use markets.
- Ensure that the recyclables mistakenly put into yard waste bins are included when figuring residual percentages. There may be some confusion regarding compostable and non-compostable plastics.
- Waste Management has been working with Walmart and other companies, encouraging them to ask their suppliers to limit packaging.

- New technology and markets for recyclable materials will make co-mingled recycling more successful over time.
- Ecology’s report called “Beyond the Curb – Tracking Commingles Residential Recyclables from Southwest WA” identifies opportunities to improve the system; not to roll it back. An executive summary was distributed at the meeting. The summary is on page nine of “Beyond the Curb” which is available [here](#). Mele noted that the report was based on a number of conversations in southwest Washington. She would like to see similar conversations occur in other parts of the state.
- Glass collected in single stream recycling is not always used for its highest/best purpose. Waste Management is sending all their glass to eCullet which processes the material so it can be made back into bottles.
- Though new technology is decreasing the amount of glass contamination, it cannot remove all the glass.
- In Oregon cities where glass is not included in single stream recycling, the bottle bill resulted in more glass being reused/recycled. Over time the depots set up to collect the glass were expanded to include other materials.
- Waste Management is building a single stream glass facility in Spokane and is working on specifications for glass that match the needs of bottle manufacturers.
- Crosby said that landfilling will not be a sustainable business in the long term. There will be a number of changes in the industry. Increases and improvements in recycling will change the way solid waste is handled.
- An increased residuals percentage makes it more challenging to site and permit recycling facilities. Stern said that permits should “match the possible environmental impact” and that the industry will push against the definitions currently in use. For example Waste Management is piloting projects that convert plastics to crude oil. It’s not clear that this meets the current definition of recycling.

In response to a comment Gaisford noted that the division continues to talk with the hauler on Vashon Island to encourage them to move away from source separated recycling.

Zero Waste of Resources Grants

Gaisford said the division currently provides a Waste Reduction and Recycling (WRR) grant program that distributes \$1M to cities annually. During comp plan discussions MSWMAC and SWAC asked the division to prioritize voluntary approaches to maximizing diversion. There was particular interest in incentive-based strategies to encourage the desired behaviors. As a result, the 2012 comp plan includes a policy to establish a new competitive grant program in addition to the current grant to fund innovative projects and services that further the WRR goals outlined in the plan.

The new grant program will be funded for 2013-2016 for \$500k annually. It will be paid for through the tipping fee. The program will be written in a way that encourages partnerships among multiple groups. Eligible groups include cities and haulers in King County, materials and resource conservation businesses, and solid waste and resource conservation non-profits. Rural and unincorporated areas would also be included. Eligible projects would support the goals and recommendations of the 2012 comp plan or other projects that benefit King County rate payers. This will be further defined by the group that does the detailed design of the grant program.

That group will also define who would be a member of the selection committee. The intent is that the first grants will be awarded in the 1st quarter of 2013. Projects can be for one or two years; at a minimum grant of \$25k and maximum of \$250k.

Gaisford added that MSWMAC said it is important to ensure the application and evaluation processes are not too onerous. They recommended that the Recycling Coordinators from the cities be involved in the designing the grant program.

SWAC members asked if being involved in designing the grant program would preclude their organizations from eligibility to receive a grant. Gaisford said that is not the intent but the division will ask the King County Ethics Board for an opinion which will be shared with the committee. SWAC would like to hear that opinion before agreeing to be involved in designing the program.

Transfer Station Usage Analysis Report

The division proposed closing the Renton Transfer Station on weekends as part of the budget last fall in response to a significant and sustained drop in weekend use of transfer stations. That part of the budget did not move forward. Instead, the current hours were to be retained at Renton for at least the first six months of the year while the division completed an analysis of transfer station usage.

When considering changes in facility hours, only certain blocks of time make sense. Those blocks are defined by work shifts included in bargaining agreements. Also, changes must save enough money to be worth the decrease in service.

Kiernan provided the following additional information.

- Bow Lake, Factoria, Algona and Houghton are open seven days per week. These stations were excluded from deliberations about reductions in service hours because of the amount of tonnage they receive.
- Rural locations are open five days a week but are open on the weekends. Additional closures at rural locations may result in increased illegal dumping in those areas.
- The division considered an additional day of closure each week at Renton and decreasing the hours at Shoreline from 9 ½ hours each day to 7 ½ hours each day. These changes would save only 35-50 cents per ton.
- Tonnage is expected to remain flat for the next few years.

As a result of the analysis the division is not proposing a reduction in service at any location. Instead, the division will propose a rate that supports the current level of service. The division will also request an additional appropriation of \$250k in 2012 to pay for keeping the Renton station open on weekend days for the balance of the year.

In response to a question Kiernan said this proposal comes after there have been 20 percent reductions in tonnage over the past few years. He noted that King County continues to have annual three percent efficiency goals.

When asked the amount of savings associated with the previously proposed closure of the Renton Transfer Station on weekends, Kiernan said the change was expected to result in a savings of 50 to 60 cents per ton.

Rate Study

The division is in the middle of a one-year rate that was adopted to allow time for ILA discussions. Customers have told the County they prefer rates that change less frequently. Historically, SWD has transmitted three year rates. Next year SWD is moving to a two-year budget cycle and is looking at a multi-year rate that matches that cycle.

A new rate will be transmitted to Council not later than July 1. Council action is needed by the end of September for the rate to be effective January 1. This allows for the state's required 90 day notice period.

The most recent rate proposal addressed only the basic fee charged to customers delivering solid waste to the transfer stations and the regional direct fee charged to commercial haulers delivering waste directly to the landfill for disposal. The new rate proposal will address those fees along with Special Waste fees that apply to materials like asbestos that need special handling. It will also address fees for yard waste, clean wood and unsecured loads.

The new rate proposal will also recommend a framework for setting fees for other recyclable materials and will seek to include appliances in that framework rather than as a fee included in the code. The framework would consider cost recovery and recycling goals; setting fees that encourage behaviors.

The length of the ILAs impacts debt service. The debt service associated with Bow Lake will be included in the rate proposal. If the ILA extension is approved, decisions about a reserve for liability would also impact the rate.

The rate proposal will also look at the division's reserve funds. The interest earned by these funds has not been as high in recent years as it has been historically.

- The Landfill Reserve Fund provides cash to pay for the construction of landfill areas needs review in response to lower interest earnings.
- The Post Closure Reserve Fund needs review because in response to regulators, post closure care is being extended beyond the federal legal mandate.
- The construction fund which provides cash to pay for part of the expenses of capital projects will also be reviewed
- The emergency fund amount will be reviewed. The response to the relatively minor January snow storm cost approximately \$80k of the \$100k fund. The division will consider if the fund should only be large enough to pay for the smaller emergencies that happen most years or if it should also accumulate funds to prepare for larger scale emergencies.

Recent budget responses to reduced tonnage have cut back on recycling programs. The new rate will consider restoring some of those programs and add others consistent with the comp plan including the Zero Waste of Resources Grant. Other changes in response to budget challenges such as delaying customer surveys and waste monitoring data collection will also be reviewed to determine the correct frequency of those activities. The rate will include funding for those changes.

The rate proposal will reflect the expectation that tonnage will be flat for the next two to four years. Cedar Hills rent however is expected to decrease. In 2011 the rent was \$9.3M. It will probably be about \$2.5M going forward. In response to a question Kiernan said that the rent was based on a market appraisal and that the people planning the County budget are aware that the rent will decline since the landfill market has declined.

In response to a question Kiernan said that if there is no new ILA signed by July 1, the rate will be transmitted based on the ILAs currently in place. In response to a comment he noted that state law specifically allows cities to collect mitigation for solid waste facilities. Also, the BEW Landfill Gas to Energy facility continues to be upgraded. They expect to be online in May but pay the division for gas even when the plant is offline.

SWAC will receive another rate presentation when more information is available.

Open Forum

Gerritson commented that at the 2012 Globe Conference in Vancouver 25-30% of presenters were focused on waste handling and recycling. The presenters represented many technologies including multiple WTE options. Last year the focus was almost entirely on renewable energy. More information on the conference is available at <http://2012.globeseries.com/>

Mele said that SWANA hosted a technical session on March 2. The session discussed technologies where focused portions of the waste stream were used for fuel. Examples included plastics to oil and anaerobic digestion. Both options require a separated waste stream for clean feedstock. More information about the technical session is available [here](#).