

# King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee

March 18, 2011 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
King Street Center 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Next SWAC meeting – April 15, 2011 - 9:30-11:30

## Meeting Minutes

<b>Members</b>
William A. Beck
Tim Crosby
Jean Garber
Steve Gerritson
Jerry Hardebeck
Matthew House
Joan McGilton
Suellen Mele
Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann
Judy Stenberg
John Taylor
Bill Ziegler

<b>Others</b>
Dale Alekel, SWD Staff
Ed Davis, Public Health Seattle King County
Jeff Gaisford, SWD Recycling and Environmental Services Manager
Prajakta Ghatpande, AECOM Environment
Kathy Hashagen, SWD Staff
Preston Horne Brine
Kevin Kiernan, SWD Director
Donna Miscolta, SWD Staff
Thea Severn, SWD Staff
Diane Yates, SWD Intergovernmental Liaison

Due to Chair Casalini's absence, Vice Chair Judy Stenberg chaired the meeting.

### **Approve February Meeting Minutes; Review Agenda**

The February minutes were approved.

### **Updates: SWD/MSWMAC/Membership/Other**

#### **SWD:**

King County continues to work collaboratively with the cities regarding InterLocal Agreements (ILA). The current ILAs extend through 2028 and guarantee that tonnage from those cities will come to the King County Solid Waste System. The length of the ILAs impacts financing choices.

In the mid 1980's, solid waste law changed. The ILAs were written to pay for the improvements required by the new laws. At that time, the City of Seattle's agreement included an ability to opt out of the system after a period of time. They chose to implement that option and now have a separate solid waste system.

Kiernan noted that ILAs are used in relation to many services and that it is challenging to write agreements that are robust enough to stand up over time while still meeting the differing needs of various cities.

The King County Solid Waste Division is hosting a Cedar Hills Regional Landfill Community Meeting. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 6, 2011 from 7-9 p.m. at the King County Library Service Center, 960 Newport Way NW in Issaquah.

This meeting is part of the division's ongoing commitment to meet with landfill neighbors on a regular basis to discuss conditions and activities at the landfill. Solid Waste Division staff will provide updates on operational, construction and environmental monitoring activities at the

landfill. Representatives from Bio Energy Washington, the company that owns and operates the landfill gas-to-energy plant, will provide an update on noise mitigation measures they have taken.

The division is just finishing updating the comp plan to reflect the proposed new rate. A copy will be sent to Ecology for official review for up to 120 days. Then the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) will hold a hearing. After final comments have been received and final revisions have been made, the comp plan will be sent to Council for approval.

Membership:

Suellen Mele has been reappointed to SWAC.

### **State Legislation Update**

The bills that have been discussed at MSWMAC meetings did not move forward in this legislative session. Those bills included product stewardship legislation on carpet, pharmaceuticals, and sharps, a phonebook opt out program, and an expansion to E-cycle Washington that would make technical changes to the program and allow it to accept peripherals as well as computers, monitors and televisions.

Each of these bills stopped at different points in the process. The Secure Medicine Return bill moved the furthest. It was only one vote short of moving out of the Senate. There will be discussion later this year about legislation priorities for 2012.

Gaisford noted that the voluntary pharmaceuticals take back program is still in effect but is dependent on funds being available. That program accepts over the counter and prescription medicines that are not controlled substances.

In response to a question, E-Cycle Washington's 2009 Annual Report and 2010 data is available at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/eproductrecycle/>.

### **Rates Presentation**

The committee received a presentation on the proposed approach for determining the new rate at their last meeting. Using that approach, the Solid Waste Division has proposed an increase in the basic fee for disposal from \$95 to \$108 per ton, effective January 1, 2012. The impact of the proposed increase on the average residential customer with one-can collection service would be about \$.076 per month. Even with this increase, King County's basic fee for disposal would remain among the lowest in region.

The current rate of \$95 per ton was intended for 2008, 2009, and 2010. The rate was extended through 2011 but cannot support the expenses of the system beyond this year. The division was able to extend the rate though 2011 by instituting efficiencies and budget controls and by responding to declining tonnage; cutting total expenditures by about \$39 million.

The proposed one-year rate for 2012 will provide funds to operate the system at its current level of service. It will also begin collecting about \$2 per ton to fund construction and closure reserves for the already approved extension to the life of Cedar Hills.

The proposed one year rate will provide time for the cities and the county to discuss ILA related issues; including funding for the new stations identified in the [Solid Waste Transfer and Waste Management Plan](#) which was developed collaboratively by the cities and the county.

The term of financing for bonds to fund the investments in new stations is linked to the term of the ILAs, which currently end in 2028. The region faces the choice of financing these capital improvements within the next 17 years or less, or extending the life of the ILAs to allow longer term financing.

A multi-year rate will be proposed next year. The current rate proposal assumes that payment of debt is within the length of the current ILAs in accordance with council direction.

In response to a comment Severn said that the forecasting method used in the past was effective until the economic downturn in 2007. Since then, the division has begun to use a more short term forecasting method. SWD does not anticipate further drops in tonnage but also doesn't expect a rapid recovery. Tonnage is forecasted to remain stable throughout this one year proposed rate.

In response to a question Kiernan said that the proposed one-year rate funds the recycling programs that are currently in place. It does not bring back the programs that were cut in response to tonnage decreases. The following multi-year rate will need to be ready by the end of the first quarter in 2012 in order to be in place by the beginning of 2013.

Referring to the graph on the final page of the rate handout from the Fourth Milestone Report written in February 2006, Kiernan noted that the cost increase for 2016 covered the increased cost of export as forecasted at that time. Since the capacity of the landfill has been extended, that no longer applies.

The committee moved and unanimously passed a motion to alter the agenda; moving the Houghton/Bow Lake update item to a future meeting in order to provide more time for discussion about rates.

The committee moved and unanimously passed the following motion.

“I move that SWAC support the current rate setting process, as well as the Division's recommended rate of \$108 per ton for a term of one year, provided sufficient time is allowed for notice to ratepayers; and that the Chair of SWAC prepare and sign a letter to the County Executive and Council expressing SWAC's support.”

### **Schools Recycling Programs**

MSWMAC viewed a presentation on the Schools Program. A copy of this presentation including speaking notes is available

[http://your.kingcounty.gov/extranet/dnrp/swd/MSWMAC & SWAC/SWAC school programs 03.18.11.pdf](http://your.kingcounty.gov/extranet/dnrp/swd/MSWMAC_%20SWAC/SWAC_school_programs_03.18.11.pdf).

There are two major parts of the School Program. One is School Education which teaches students about waste reduction and recycling, encourages them to change their own behaviors, and to share that information with others.

It does this through an assembly program, classroom workshops that involve students in hands-on activities, project focused workshops called Green Teams, information available via social media, and the Earth Heroes recognition program. More information about the School Education Program is available at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/education/index.asp>.

The other School Program is Green Schools which provides King County schools and school districts with tools and support to initiate or expand conservation practices, involve the whole school community in environmental stewardship, and operate environmentally efficient facilities.

Green Schools does this through a three level program focused successively on waste reduction and recycling, energy conservation, and water conservation. Each level has a checklist of actions to complete in order to receive recognition at that level. The Green Schools Program provides hands-on assistance, recycling containers and stickers, and ongoing support for school Green Teams. The program is currently assisting eight school districts and 114 schools. Of the 114 schools, 75% have reached recycling rates of 40% or higher. More information about the Green Schools Program is available at [www.kingcounty.gov/GreenSchools](http://www.kingcounty.gov/GreenSchools).

Comments included:

- Schools have been reluctant to move away from single serving milk containers. To assist with recycling, Green Schools programs can provide buckets for students to dispose unwanted milk and then the containers can be recycled.
- Some schools have found that participating on a Green Team can help to address student behavior problems.
- The Washington State Green Schools program is separate from the King County program. The Washington State program is entirely web-based. King County Green School participants are not automatically included in the Washington State program.

### **Open Forum**

Schmidt-Pathmann reported that some experts in Germany have become concerned about the impact of compact fluorescent lamps saying the blue light they emit disrupts the body's production of the sleep hormone melatonin. In addition, they contain mercury to the point that consumers are advised not use them in children's rooms. They state other concerns including that the majority of the bulbs are made in China where safety standards are lax and workers suffer from mercury poisoning. Also, in Germany the compact fluorescent lamps are classified at special waste.

In addition Schmidt-Pathmann reported concerns held by experts in Germany about the environmentally disposal of (H)CFC blown insulation and foams. Because neither the producers nor the consumers were aware of the potential environmental impacts caused by CFC or flame retardants, disposal requires a common economically suitable solution.

Hardebeck noted that the current CDL contracts will expire in 2014 and reminded the division of the time required to site and build a private facility if needed.

Mele said that she spoke with Councilmembers Phillips and Lambert as part of the re-appointment process. She passed on Councilmember Lambert's suggestion that SWAC look at Waste to Energy (WTE) for after the closure of Cedar Hills. Lambert suggests that SWAC

consider the facility in Hamburg and the good science. Mele said she told Councilmember Lambert that WTE is not on SWAC's current workplan and that Mele's organization is not in favor but will continue to look at information.