

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee

February 17, 2012 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Room
Next SWAC meeting – March 16, 2012 - 9:30-11:30

Meeting Minutes

<u>Members</u>
David Baker
Jerry Bartlett
William A. Beck
Joe Casalini
Tim Crosby
Bob Dixon
Jean Garber
Steve Gerritson
Jerry Hardebeck
Matthew House
Craig Lorch
Joan McGilton
Suellen Mele
Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann
John Taylor
Bill Ziegler

<u>Others</u>
Jeff Gaisford, SWD Recycling and Environmental Services Manager
Sean Green, SWAC Applicant
Kathy Hashagen, SWD Staff
Preston Horne-Brine
Lisa Huntley, SWD Staff
Kevin Kiernan, SWD Director
Julie Pond, Seattle SWAC
Thea Severn, SWD Planning and Communications Manager
Kimberly Shanley, Waste Management
Stephen Strader, SWAC Applicant
Diane Yates, SWD Intergovernmental Liaison

Approve November Meeting Minutes; Review Agenda

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

Updates

SWAC news

SWAC members were reminded to complete the financial disclosure paperwork if it hasn't already been completed.

Hillary King decided not to seek re-appointment to SWAC. Two applicants are awaiting appointment; Sean Green and Stephen Strader.

SWAC members are asked to update Yates with any changes in their contact information.

As a courtesy, Yates can email members' non-King County email address letting them know that a message is awaiting them at their King County email address. 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 email reminders to your non-King County email address it is necessary to send her a message with specific verbiage authorizing that practice. Yates will email the language to SWAC members.

SWD

SWD received 835,000 tons of waste in 2011. The division believes that tonnage is stabilizing. Changes in habits and patterns of consumption appear to have been internalized by residents and businesses during the economic downturn. The division projects that it will take approximately fourteen years to return to previous levels of disposal.

In response to a comment Kiernan noted that the Cedar Hills Landfill is currently expected to reach capacity and close in 2025. This is related to the revised Cedar Hills Site Development Plan which includes the planned Area 8 and to decreases in the amount of tonnage received. Decreased tonnage will not impact the contract with BEW which does not commit King County to providing a specific quantity of gas.

SWD is reviewing the Cedar Hills Appraisal report. Based on that report it is likely that Cedar Hills rent payments will be lower in the future.

SWD is working with the City of Algona to discuss next steps in evaluating mitigation for the Algona Transfer Station. In addition, the division has executed an option to purchase a property adjacent to the current transfer station site to preserve it as an option for development subject to the site selection and SEPA processes. The property is currently for sale, appears to meet transfer station development requirements and is priced significantly below the budget estimate for property purchase.

During the January snow division facilities with the exception of Factoria remained open although they often ran on emergency generators. Snow loads on the Factoria roof exceeded safe levels and the facility was closed temporarily. The snows also suspended solid waste collection resulting in low tonnage the week of the event and high tonnage the following week.

Free storm debris collection and recycling was offered over two weekends, Jan 28-29 and February 4-5 at the Cedar Falls, Enumclaw and Shoreline transfer stations. SWD will use chips from the Cedar Falls and Enumclaw sites in normal operations. Materials collected at Shoreline went to Cedar Grove Composting in Everett.

Because of service gaps a special recycling event for woody debris was also provided at Russell Road Park in Kent. Material collected from the 2500 vehicles that brought material to the Kent special recycling event went to Rainer Wood.

Both weekends brought in a total of approximately 1400-1460 tons of woody debris at the four locations. This amount is about one third the total tons of yard and wood waste collected at the Cedar Falls, Enumclaw and Shoreline transfer stations for all of 2010.

Consistent with the adopted budget, on February 1, the division discontinued free recycling of tin, plastics, glass, aluminum, paper and cardboard at most transfer stations. Service had been maintained at Skykomish, Snoqualmie pass and Vashon due to rural service concerns.

The discontinued service was restored at Enumclaw and Cedar Falls in response to concerns raised by rural residents in those areas about the lack of available alternatives and problems associated with accessing curbside recycling service. This will result in an estimated added expense of \$200k annually or about twenty five cents per ton system wide. There are no plans or funds available to restore the free service at the urban facilities.

In response to a comment Kiernan said that recycling services are provided by a public and private partnership. The goal of the division is to “fill gaps” by cost effectively providing recycling services that are not readily available; not to provide duplicative services.

Kiernan said the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) Evergreen Chapter is hosting a technical session called “Waste-to-Energy / Fuels, MSW as a Feedstock for our Renewable Fuels Future” at the King Street Center on Friday March 2. Information about how to attend the event is available at the following link.

<https://www.regonline.com/custImages/238492/AgendaMarch2012.pdf>

MSWMAC

MSWMAC is focusing on working on the Interlocal Agreement (ILA.) Only one item remains to be addressed before a draft ILA is sent to the thirty seven member cities. MSWMAC expects to see the draft agreement in March.

Cities have been working diligently to get to consensus language. Eleven cities on the ILA Committee set the framework for the revised agreement. Five cities on the ILA Drafting Committee have been working on language. The members appreciate what the division has done to support the process. The facilitator has been very helpful.

In response to a question Kiernan noted that the deadline initially set for cities to approve the ILA has passed. The division will be making decisions about bonding and the rate proposal by mid-year based on the ILAs currently in place at that time.

The current ILAs expire in 2028. Per Council instruction, construction bonds must be paid off before the ILAs expire. If no extension is received the rate will be increased enough to allow the County to pay off the construction bonds in the fifteen years before the ILAs expire.

Review SWAC Discussion Guidelines

SWAC reviewed the discussion guidelines which are printed on the back of the meeting agendas.

2012 Work Plan

SWAC reviewed the 2012 work plan. In response to a question Kiernan said SWAC will continue to receive updates about the ILAs but because the issue is focused on the relationship between the cities and King County deliberations will occur at MSWMAC instead of SWAC.

In response to a comment Gaisford noted that single stream recycling is universal in King County but there is a great deal of discussion on the topic elsewhere in the country. The issue is on the work plan to discuss at advisory groups, particularly at SWAC where haulers can provide information about the pros and cons of various collection options.

In response to a question Severn said that the comp plan has received approval from the Department of Ecology and is currently working its way through the King County legislative process. It is possible that the division may update the date and data included in the plan as part of that legislative review.

State Legislation

Gaisford said that progress was made on product stewardship during this short legislative session though no bills were passed. A significant number of product stewardship bills were considered. Even with the primary focus on budget concerns, there was significant testimony and discussion related to product stewardship legislation.

The Medicine Return Bill (SB5234) which would create a statewide system for secure return and environmentally sound disposal of leftover prescription and over-the-counter medicines from households was pulled to the floor of the Senate but did not receive the necessary votes.

Other product stewardship bills about carpet, paint, plastic bags and batteries are “dead” and did not move forward this legislative session even though there was industry sponsorship on some of the bills. Unexpectedly, the Washington Refuse and Recycling Association (WRRA) testified against some of those bills saying they should be dealt with through local efforts or the services should be provided through commercial haulers.

Mele suggested and the group agreed to add product stewardship legislation to the SWAC work plan in the 3rd or 4th quarter.

More information is available at [Solid Waste Legislative Update – February 17, 2012](#).

Transfer Station Usage Analysis

The division proposed closing the Renton Transfer Station on weekends as part of the budget last fall. That part of the budget did not move forward but the division was given a proviso requiring an analysis of transfer station usage to be completed in the first quarter of 2012.

The division wanted to provide information from that analysis to advisory groups and gather input before completing the proviso response. To facilitate that input, Severn sent a series of questions to SWAC members prior to today’s meeting concerning what types of things could be considered when making decisions about transfer station hours.

Kiernan noted that making service related decisions is more than just numerical analysis. It is a process of balancing the value of the service provided against the cost of providing that service. The motivation is to provide the correct level of service, not just to save money.

At the meeting Severn provided bar charts showing garbage tonnage by site over time, comparing usage on weekdays to Saturdays and Sundays, showing tonnage and transactions by customer type at each site and more. Copies are available at [SWD Transfer Station Use Charts](#). Severn noted that the scale along the left side of the page changes and should be considered when comparing results between the various charts.

Severn provided the following additional information and invited comments.

- Tonnage is expected to remain flat between 2011 and 2012.
- The historic seasonal variation has diminished in response to lower tonnage.
- Tonnage at rural stations did not decline to the same degree as urban stations during the economic decline.

- Bow Lake receives a third of the system's tonnage. Houghton and Factoria also receive a large amount. The other stations receive substantially less tonnage.
- The Shoreline station serves a geographically constrained area bounded by the City of Seattle and Snohomish County.

In response to a question Severn noted that staffing in stations that receive low tonnage is already at minimum. Decreasing the level of service provided at those locations would not result in less staff being needed. The division has compared staffing levels with the models used in Snohomish County and other jurisdictions.

Comments included:

- Consider staying open at least one weekend day for self-haulers.
- Consider a model that is open for haulers on weekdays and self haul on weekends.
- Consider expanding the number of hours/days a station is opened to haulers and is not open to the public.
- Consider revisiting the viability of continuing to provide service to self-haulers. Others noted that self-hauling is part of the culture in this area.
- Consider limiting self haul service to occasional targeted weekends and over time, slowly reduce the number of events.
- Consider increasing the fee to self haulers. The self haul service should not be subsidized. Consider a transaction fee to cover more of the costs of providing that service.
- Consider disincentives. Perhaps cities without mandatory recycling should pay a higher rate.
- Consider looking at how decisions about transit service changes are made to see if a similar process c/should be used when discussing solid waste services.
- Be aware of the tyranny of the majority. If service is decreased be sure to provide alternatives or residents will feel disenfranchised.

In response to a comment Severn said that during the development of the Transfer and Waste Management Plan the advisory groups agreed to continue providing self haul service. That agreement is memorialized in the comp plan. Gaisford said that the most recent telephone survey results showed that slightly less than half of respondents said they had visited a transfer station in the last year. Other surveys have shown that "self haul" tonnage is divided between business use, landscapers and home owners bringing materials that are separate from normal household garbage.

The division and advisory groups also looked at the service criteria like "time in station" when developing the Transfer and Waste Management Plan. Those criteria are being met, particularly for self-haulers, in this time of reduced tonnage. Severn said both tonnage and the number of transactions are considered when analyzing transfer station usage.

Severn said that for purposes of the analysis commercial is defined as only Waste Management, Republic, CleanScapes and Waste Connections. Other businesses are considered self-haulers. The majority of tonnage and revenue is received from the commercial haulers. The division considers their needs and usage patterns when setting transfer station hours because increased efficiency for the haulers c/should result in lower rates for cities.

When the new transfer station facilities are opened the division expects to be able to do more “mining” of recyclables from the waste stream.

In response to a question Severn said that commercial haulers on Vashon Island changed their hauling patterns and no longer bring material to the transfer station on weekends.

Severn invited MSWMAC to send additional questions or comments to her at Thea.Severn@KingCounty.gov by Friday, February 17.

Open Forum

Crosby noted that during the March 2nd SWANA presentation there will be a presentation on converting waste plastics to crude oil. Waste Management has built a facility for that purpose in Portland and is building another in Snohomish County. A Plasma Arc pilot facility is currently operating at the Columbia Ridge landfill. The next step is to see if it can be scaled to a size that will handle sufficient tonnage to make it a viable disposal option.

Schmidt-Pathmann said in Germany there are more recycling centers. The quality of the materials they are recycling has improved because of the design of the new stations. For example in one station there are thirty six recycling locations and ten staff members providing direction and information. The percentage recycled is much higher than in the United States because there are ordinances requiring that particular materials may not be disposed.