

MSWMAC Advisory Committee Meeting
March 9, 2018 - 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

<u>MSWMAC Members</u>	
Joan Nelson	Auburn
Bill Peloza	Auburn
Stephanie Schwenger	Bellevue
Sabrina Combs	Bothell
Brian Roberts	Burien
Rob Van Orsow	Federal Way
Micah Bonkowski	Issaquah
Tony Donati	Kent
Penny Sweet – Chair	Kirkland
John MacGillivray	Kirkland
Phillippa Kassover	Lake Forest Park
Diana Pistoll	Maple Valley
Dave Mitchell	Newcastle
Eberley Barragan	Redmond
Gary Schimek	Redmond
Kellye Mazzoli	Woodinville
Paula Waters	Woodinville

<u>King County Staff</u>
Michael Denson, SWD staff
Jeff Gaisford, SWD staff
Beth Humphreys, SWD staff
Pat D. McLaughlin, SWD Director
Meg Moorehead, SWD staff
Terra Rose, KC Council staff
Katherine Taylor, SWD staff
Christie True, DNRP Director
Dorian Waller, SWD staff
John Walsh, SWD staff
<u>Guests</u>
Cynthia Foley, Sound Cities Association
Alex Herzog, Woodinville
Emily Warnock, Bothell
Susan Fife-Ferris, LHWMP, Seattle
Pete Meyer, LHWMP, Redmond
Lynda Ransley, LHWMP, Seattle
Liz Tennant, LHWMP, Seattle
Kevin Kelly, Recology CleanScapes
Joe Casalini, Republic Services
Janet Prichard, Republic Services
Casey Desmond, Waste Management
Emily Newcomer, Waste Management
Laura Moser, Waste Management

Minutes

MSWMAC member Diana Pistoll pointed out that in the February minutes, one of the guest's names should be changed to Jeff Wagner (not Jesse Wagner). With that proposed change, a motion was made and seconded and the February 9, 2018 minutes were approved.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

SWD Director Pat D. McLaughlin gave the following SWD updates:

Draft Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Draft Plan)

The public comment period for the Draft Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement closed yesterday. During the comment period, the Solid Waste Division gave presentations on the Draft Plan to twelve cities and organizations. They include: Auburn, Bellevue, Bothell,

Federal Way, Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville, North Highline Unincorporated Area Council, Greater Maple Valley Area Council, Four Creeks-Tiger Mountain Community Service Area, West Hill Community Association, and Zero Waste Vashon. SWD also held three open houses. Other cities and community groups have requested briefings after the comment period closes. A full presentation detailing comment period activities and findings will be on the April MSWMAC agenda.

Factoria Transfer Station

The Solid Waste Division will be honored by the Industrial Waste Practice division of the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists (AAEES) for the Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station.

The AAEES recognizes outstanding projects that incorporate innovative management and technological approaches to industrial water and waste management issues at pilot or full scale. The integrated waste management design approach of the Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station coupled with its modifications to achieve waste minimization and pollution prevention, blew AAFES away. It is their belief the quality of work and presumed service at the station from the Solid Waste Division will be a boon for regional social and economic advancement.

SWANApalooza

McLaughlin said that he had the opportunity to attend the conference in Denver last week and to participate on a panel regarding the China Sword. He stated that the committee would be talking about this more later in the agenda and that there should be interesting dialogue today. SWANA did a survey of landfills, including Cedar Hills. We are amongst the leaders of those studied.

Legislative Update

Recycling and Environmental Services Manager Jeff Gaisford gave an update on state legislation. He said that the legislature had passed a secure medicine return bill (ESHB 1047) that is modeled on King and Snohomish County's secure medicine ordinances, and that it is now on the Governor's desk for signature. The drug manufacturers are required to participate in the program and there can be no cost charged to consumers when they purchase or return medicines. One or more product stewardship organizations will be established to run the program and the Department of Health will approve the product stewardship plan. The program implementation depends on the Department of Health approving the stewardship plan(s) but the soonest the statewide program would begin is May 1, 2020. The bill has a different convenience standard -- one collection location for every 50,000 residents of a population center (defined as a city, town or unincorporated area within a 10 mile radius from the center of city or town) -- than King County's standard of one location for every 30,000 residents. It is unclear how this change in convenience standards will affect King County. We will need to incorporate into the WA State's program one year after the service starts. The soonest that would happen is June 1, 2021.

Gaisford also noted that there is now an opportunity for residents to take back latex paint. There is now a local recycler for latex paint collecting from [11 locations](#) in King County.

Penny Sweet asked about the new plastic bubble envelope packaging from Amazon. Tony Donati answered he thought it is part of the Bag your Bag campaign. John MacGillivray said that his understanding is that the material is not recyclable.

Joan Nelson said that cities are now developing their budgets for next year and asked about whether there will be a rate increase. Meg Moorehead answered that SWD is still discussing a rate increase with leadership. If an increase is proposed, it would be coming to the advisory committees in late spring for discussion, to County Council in the summer, and late fall to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission for approval.

Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

Sweet said that the agenda for SWAC's meeting in February was the same as the last MSWMAC agenda.

Local Hazardous Waste Management Program (LHWMP)

Gaisford introduced Lynda Ransley, the LHWMP Director. Sweet stated that she sits on the Regional Water Quality Committee and that Ransley had given a presentation to the committee and there was a lot of concern about the rate increase so she requested the presentation for MSWMAC. Ransley mentioned that guests Liz Tennant, Hank Myers, Redmond Councilmember, and Susan Fife-Ferris, Seattle Public Utilities, as well as Gaisford are all LHWMP participants. Lynda gave an [overview](#) about the program. LHWMP has been in existence for about 25 years. It is authorized by the Washington State Department of Ecology, Department of Health-Seattle-King County, and all of the cities. The Local Hazardous Management Program Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2010 – the next update will be in 2020. Ransley stated that she would like to come back and talk to the committee in more depth about services that the LHWMP provides. The operating structure of the program is unique because of the participation of five partner agencies (King County Solid Waste Division and Water and Land Resources Division, City of Seattle Public Utilities, Public Health Seattle and King County, and Sound Cities Association). The Management Coordination Committee (MCC) is comprised of five members that represent the coalition partners and that provide guidance and oversight for the program. The budget for the program is about 19 million with a staff of 70. The program is organized in a line of business structure, matrixed through multi-agency teams. Funding is provided through surcharges on solid waste and wastewater. Rates are periodically adjusted – the last rate increase was in 2012. Services include disposal services (4 fixed sites and the Wastemobile), prevention programs for businesses (technical assistance, education, resources, and incentives), prevention programs for residents (awareness, education, outreach) and policy (working with partners to change policies and systems, including product stewardship).

The MCC is proposing a six-year rate for Board of Health consideration that would be in effect from 2019 – 2024 and would provide the program with sufficient service levels throughout the rate period. Cost drivers that affect revenue needs include inflation, labor costs, and disposal costs (including increased demand, services, and costs).

The MCC has been working on this rate increase for about three years. They want to align with the King County budget cycle and the 23 different entities that collect the LHWMP fees. Predictability is important to the agencies. Six-year duration gives more predictability, and

LHWMP will go back to the Board of Health in 3 years to see if the rate needs to be adjusted. Racial and service equity is very important to the program and there is a need to better connect ratepayers with the services that are available to them. This rate increase will not grow the program, but will allow it to refocus and provide different focus such as more product stewardship opportunities.

Bill Peloza asked about the rate schedule. He stated that he is trying to understand the LWHMP fee and how it relates to the overall solid waste management fee.

Ransley explained that the fee is separate from the solid waste fee. She said that she lives in Lake Forest Park and that on her bill, she sees the curbside rate, then there is a separate line item for the LHWMP fee. Nelson said that it is the same way in Auburn.

Pistoll asked about the commercial roll-off fees. Ransley clarified that it is a single charge, not a charge for each roll-off. She also explained that there is no charge on construction and demolition waste.

Ransley then summarized where LHWMP is in the process. The rate proposal will continue to evolve. She stated that she is looking towards the 2020 Plan update to rethink services and how services are provided. That update process will start next year and she would love to come back to talk about the program more in a future meeting.

John MacGillivray stated that the proposed rate is a 50% rate increase over the rate period. He emphasized that it is a big increase and that the presentation does not clearly present that fact. Kirkland did not know anything about this process and is upset about the governance and representation of LHWMP. Kirkland sets its solid waste rates and is concerned about such a big increase.

Phillippa Kassover said that she is having trouble following the presentation (slide with bar chart). She suggested that the presentation should include a little more information about what the budget is now, and what the program plans to do with the increased rate. She echoes MacGillivray's thoughts about the six-year cost increase. Ransley said that LHWMP has the info and that she can include it in future presentations.

McLaughlin clarified that the proposed rate assumes that there will be a collocated Household Hazardous Waste collection facility at the new South County Recycling and Transfer Station, but SWD has not made that determination yet. The design is still being developed. It is helpful to know the LHWMP rate includes that assumption.

Redmond Councilmember Hank Meyers stated that he is the Sound Cities Association (SCA) representative on the Management Coordinating Committee (MCC). He said that he hasn't heard from any cities since he presented this information to the SCA. He understands the concerns. He said that if there are questions, especially any questions about the political aspects of the rate increase, please let him know.

Sweet said that it came up at the Water Quality Committee and that others on the committee were also concerned. There is not a lot of information and everybody was surprised by the size of the increase.

Meyers said that most people weren't around in 2012 when the rate was increased. He hopes that people will come to him to ask questions. Kirkland Councilmember Toby Nixon gave him some helpful questions about the budget. He said that the issue is public, if he were hearing questions, he would be answering them.

Sweet said that the issue has come up at several advisory committees. She has talked with Rod Dembowski who sits on the Board of Health. She wants to figure out how to improve the communication.

Sabrina Combs said that she appreciates Meyers' comments, but she stated that her Councilmembers come back to her and ask her the questions. She said that we keep raising rates, and she is concerned. Cities were not engaged in the conversation.

Meyers said that if there are specific factual questions he will answer them if asked. The communication question is one he would like to hear about. Typically a rate increase is not an issue that comes up frequently, then everyone is surprised when it does.

Christie True stated that she wanted to help Councilmember Meyers out. Three out of the five MCC committee members are from King County. People need the right information and to get the information earlier. It's not too late to have those conversations.

Ransley said that she wants to stay connected with cities. She said that the LHWMP is committed to improving. She will be happy to come back to talk more about the program.

China Sword

McLaughlin introduced the presentation by saying that Kevin Kelly with Recology CleanScapes and a member of SWAC (Solid Waste Advisory Committee) will give an overview of the China Sword issue, then he will lead the discussion at the end of the presentation. He continued the introduction by saying that he has had the chance to engage in conversations in Nanaimo, B.C., and at the SWANA conference in Denver. One of the questions asked was why weren't we ready for this? Here in King County we have a robust recycling program in which the private sector has made a tremendous investment in infrastructure. Recycling rates have remained at about 52% for several years. The China Sword is all about contamination. Good resources are being contaminated by bad. The County has been approaching the problem in 38 different ways. That may be one reason we are struggling to improve the recycling rate. We will need a regional solution to make progress.

Kelly said that he is presenting a picture for the industry at large, not just his company. Bill Pelozo asked for an electronic copy of the [presentation](#). Recyclable materials are the 6th largest export to China. It is not just an American issue, either. China has accounts for about 50% of the recycling market worldwide. The Green Fence and China Sword policies are China's attempts to clean up the environment in China. The documentary "Plastic China" details the problem and the efforts to make sure that the Chinese "see blue skies again". The

latest policies added 24 types of materials that are banned and details contamination levels for outthrows and prohibitions. The standards seem to change almost daily, however Outthrows are allowed 1% or less contamination and prohibitions are only allowed 0.5%. These standards are almost impossible to meet. Here on the west coast, these restrictions are felt most acutely because we have taken advantage of the empty shipping containers going back to China after delivering goods to the US. The haulers are struggling to find new markets.

China is also no longer accepting #3-#7 plastics. There is a secondary processor in Canada (Merlin) that may take some of these materials. #5 is the most valuable.

Some mixed paper is also now banned. The Chinese markets are now looking for 50-60% newspaper bales. Don't want to see color – looking for brown. No contamination accepted. As of March 1, some new import licenses were opened, but 500 tons were rejected on the first day.

Peloza asked how the US found out about this change. Kelly replied that China filed with the World Trade Organization. There continue to be objections to the policy change.

The value of mixed paper has declined by 95% in the past year. Mixed paper comprises 30-40% of what is in the blue bin collected from residential accounts. It makes the economics of recycling extremely challenging. At the same time costs are going up at Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) as the belts are slowed down to allow for better opportunities to improve standards and reduce contamination.

McLaughlin said that “we are free to choose, it's costly if we don't and we will pay if we do!” As he sees it, we have strong public private partnerships and rely on the private sector to help us achieve our environmental goals. Materials are recyclable, but we need to find homes for the materials. It's when the materials are contaminated, that limits their usefulness.

McLaughlin stated that he sees that we have three basic choices:

1. Reduce/eliminate contamination at the source
2. Slow the sort lines, add more labor to separate materials more effectively, secondary processing
3. Landfill the recyclable materials.

McLaughlin added that it won't be sufficient to solve on a regional basis. We need to look at the whole supply chain.

Pistoll asked if slowing down the line to help sort paper will improve the market available to us in China. Kelly replied that there is no market in China for paper. Other markets are opening, but they may want to impose the same standards.

Peloza said we should look to what the US did during WWII to get rid of this problem.

Combs asked about taking materials out of the recycle bin. Gaisford responded that we haven't done the calculations yet, but that any residuals coming from the MRFs would still come to the landfill.

Kassover asked if it would be smart for her city (Lake Forest Park) to ban single use plastic bags, cutlery, straws and food containers. Kelly responded that if any of those materials are in a container, that container would be refused.

Pistoll asked if we went back to the old days when we separated materials, would it be better? Kelly said yes, but it is a question about whether we want to go that way.

Joe Casalini said that China used to want the mixed paper. Over the years, the mix of newspaper has decreased, however. They have moved away from a higher quality of mixed paper to no mixed paper. Several mills in the NW have closed because the Chinese buyers came in and bought up all of the stock. None of Republic's recyclables are going to China now – it used to all go there.

McLaughlin stated that we are going to be challenged to determine what is recyclable. Is there demand for what we have been collecting? This issue is all about root cause problem solving. The root cause is contamination – and there are all kinds of reasons that materials are contaminated. The public sector can't rely on our partners to clean up the recyclables at the MRFs. We need to work at the source – just like preventing the waste in the first place. We need to prevent the contamination, then rely on private partners.

MacGillivray thanked Susan Fife-Ferris for convening the regional dialogue in January. He stated that we need to have consistency in the region. This issue needs to be kept in the spotlight and we need to engage all stakeholders.

Kassover stated what concerns her is so much that is going in the blue bin now, may not continue to go in the blue bin. The culture we have developed will need to be changed.

Stephanie Schwenger said that she agrees about cleaning up our materials. Are we saying that there is no place for these materials? McLaughlin replied that there is a use for these materials, but China is now recycling their own materials. Kelly said that the global price for old corrugated cardboard (OCC) is \$75-90/ton, but in China it is \$500/ton. Kelly also said that in addition to culture, it is also the infrastructure that has been developed around commingled collection. The trucks and the MRFs that have been developed all handle commingled materials.

Sweet said that MSWMAC will continue the conversation at next month's meeting. She stated that MSWMAC may want to set up a subcommittee to develop a strategy to confront this issue.

Gaisford said that it is good to start talking about solutions. He said that the City of Tucson has instituted a surcharge on recyclables and that landfilling has a cost.

Casalini stated that Republic is not advocating for changing consumer behavior. He thinks that in the future the markets could change again. Quality standards always go up, prices will stay low. Variances may be necessary, but they would be temporary. Study done a few years ago, showed Northwest MRFs had the cleanest bales. He said that wet cardboard is being rejected

and consumers need to keep cardboard dry when setting it out for collection. Kelly added that travel times are increasing because materials have to travel farther, so moisture is making bales moldy.

Eberley Barragan asked about domestic markets – is there any hope of markets developing in the US? McLaughlin said that there is interest, but it will take years for one mill to be built to use paper. It will take time and the industry will want to know that there will be lasting feedstocks before making investments in infrastructure.

Member and Public Comment

There were no comments.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by: Beth Humphreys