

King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
March 16, 2018 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center

Meeting Minutes

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>King County Staff</u>	<u>Others</u>
April Atwood - Vice Chair	Jamey Barker	Cynthia Foley, Sound Cities Association
Elly Bunzendahl	Jennifer Devlin	Phillip Schmidt-Pathmann, NEOMER
Gib Dammann	Jeff Gaisford	Lynda Ransley, LHWMP, Seattle
Karen Dawson	Ross Marzolf	
Phillippa Kassover	Pat D. McLaughlin	
Kevin Kelly - Chair	Yolanda Pon	
Keith Livingston	Terra Rose	
Ken Marshall	Dorian Waller	
Stephen Strader	John Walsh	
Penny Sweet		

Minutes

The February SWAC minutes were approved as drafted following a motion made by Penny Sweet and seconded by Stephen Strader.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

Pat D. McLaughlin Solid Waste Division Director, gave the following updates:

Draft Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Draft Plan)

The public comment period for the Draft Plan closed yesterday. During this 60-day period, the Solid Waste Division gave Draft Plan presentations to 12 municipalities 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.

Special note: Other municipalities and community groups have requested briefings after the comment period closes.

We will have full presentation detailing comment period activities and findings during our April SWAC meeting.

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 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, in: treatment of water for industrial uses; reclamation of industrial liquid, solid, toxic and hazardous wastes; and integrated waste management and industrial process modifications to achieve waste minimization and pollution prevention objectives; Management of air emissions; Remediation of groundwater and

riverine, lake, estuarine, and marine water; Brownfields/Greenfields restoration; and Management of radioactive waste materials.

The integrated waste management design approach of the Factoria station coupled with its modifications to achieve waste minimization and pollution prevention, blew AAEES away. It is their belief the quality of work and presumed service at the station from Solid Waste will be a boon for regional social and economic advancement.

Elly Bunzendahl asked who nominated SWD for the recognition. McLaughlin did not know but acknowledged sometimes design firms nominate projects, or sometimes word gets out when a project receives other awards.

SWANA Conference in Denver, Colorado

McLaughlin shared he participated on a panel at the recent SWANA Conference in Denver with representatives of other municipalities and the EPA. The broad theme of the event was the China Sword situation. SWAC Chair Kevin Kelly will speak more to the matter later in the meeting as he did with MSMWAC last week.

Keith Livingston asked McLaughlin for an update on the Algona and South County Recycling and Transfer Station. McLaughlin said the design firm HDR is under contract with SWD, the details of which are currently in the final stages of negotiation and all is on schedule. McLaughlin said the division will be engaging with advisory committees, city partners, and employees on the station's design concepts to be sure to capture any lessons learned from the design of the division's existing transfer stations. MSWMAC Chair Penny Sweet suggested SWD also engage with Seattle Public Utilities considering their successes in processing and placements. She also suggested the division work with the work group formed after the January 30th Plastics Conference. McLaughlin agreed and will also have conversations with Snoqualmie and Pierce County solid waste managers too. Sweet requested regular updates on the project.

Legislation

Recycling and Environmental Services Section Manager Jeff Gaisford shared a summary of relevant bills in the 2018 Washington State Legislative Session. Namely House Bill ESHB1047 which requires pharmaceutical manufacturers to establish and finance a statewide secure medicine take back program. The soonest the statewide program will be implemented is May 2020. SWD has monitored this bill closely as there was concern it may influence the county's current medicine take back program that was established through the action of the Board of Health. The county's take back program has convenience standards which requires one secure medicine drop off location for every 30,000 residents, whereas the state requires one for every 50,000. The Division will continue to monitor the statewide program as it is developed. There is the hope that the statewide program may bring on larger retailers, such as Bartells, which could provide more drop off locations than are currently available in King County.

The County's Take it Back Network (TIBN) has recently expanded to include latex paint. A Colorado company (GreenSheen) has established a paint recycling facility in Kent. This enabled the TIBN to find retail and other partners will to take latex paint from customers. There are 17 take back locations now in King County. The retail partners set their own fees for what they charge customers to drop off their latex paint. Colorado has a paint product stewardship program in place and GreenSheen is the company that recycles the paint from that program.

Kirkland Latex Paint Recycling Event

Sweet shared flyers promoting the City of Kirkland's April 14 Latex Paint Recycling Event at the Lake Washington Institute of Technology. There will be a cash-only fee charged for any paint dropped off.

MSWMAC

Sweet said the agenda for last week's MSWMAC meeting is the same as today's SWAC meeting. She confirmed with guest presenter Lynda Ransley from the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program (LHWMP) that Hank Myers, a member of the Management Coordination Committee representing Sound Cities Association (SCA) was in attendance for today's presentation.

Local Hazardous Waste Management Program (LHWMP)

LHWMP Director Lynda Ransley [presented](#) an overview of the LHWMP program as an introduction to the primary topic of the proposed LHWMP rate increase.

LHWMP formed in 1990 as a regional partnership authorized by the Washington State Department of Ecology and King County Board of Health to protect public health and the environment throughout King County by reducing the risks of production, use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials. LHWMP operates under a Comprehensive Plan last updated in 2010, and is due for an update in 2020. Ransley said she will engage both SWD advisory committees in discussions about the LHWMP Draft Plan update.

LHWMP works to reduce human and environmental exposures from hazardous materials for the county's 2.1 million residents and 60,000 businesses. LHWMP's services are provided to all King County residents and businesses by a staff of 70 who work from within four partner agencies who have representatives sitting on a five-member board, the Management Coordination Committee (MCC), providing oversight, guidance, and accountability. Three board members represent King County (Water and Land Resources Division, Solid Waste Division, and Public Health). The other two members represent Seattle Public Utilities and the Sound Cities Association.

Livingston asked how well does the City of Seattle "play in the sandbox." Ransley said in her five years directing the program, it works well due to the strength of the relationships of the MCC. Gaisford said there are annual agreements for the agencies participation and members of the MCC meet monthly. Sweet said she was taken aback in last week's MSWMAC by the rate increase proposal since there had been no discussion with the advisory committees. She appreciated DNRP Director Christie True's acknowledgement at last week's meeting of the lack of coordination and communication across the partner agencies and efforts would be made for improvements.

The annual budget is \$19M a year. Partner agencies hosting LHWMP staff are reimbursed for their labor costs. Revenue comes from surcharges appearing on solid waste and wastewater bills. Revenue is also collected as a surcharge on the tipping fee collected at transfer stations. Livingston expressed concern about the program's ability to quantify a relationship between the materials disposed and the transaction cost. Ransley explained that since LHWMP is the sole collector of hazardous waste, it is able to track waste streams and is able to propose a fair rate.

They provide disposal services at four collection facilities and through a mobile Wastemobile and at city collection events. They also manage programs to increase awareness, best practices, and safer product alternatives. Lastly, they work to affect policy changes to reduce exposures and increase producer responsibility, such as the secure medicine program they started locally and is now a soon-to-be statewide program. EnviroStars also began as a LHWMP program and is now a regional program in 19 agencies.

Phillippa Kassover asked if LHWMP was responsible for cleaning up spills on the freeways. Ransley said the State Department of Ecology and or emergency responders such as firefighters do that work.

Ransley noted the challenging climate since the last rate increase in 2012. The existing fund balance exists as a rate stabilization tool to help keep the rate increase low. LHWMP does not want to collect money they do not need, but there are reasons why an increase is needed namely inflation, labor costs, contracts, an increase in population and the need to make the program convenient to these residents such as the possibility of having a co-location at the new South County Recycling and Transfer Station facility such as the one in Factoria. The rate increase is scheduled for 2019, with a 6-9 month lead time for billing partners. The six-year duration between increases is timed to work with agencies' biennial budgets. The program's savings are risky to rely on as a source of funding to pay their own disposal fees, so the funds are repurposed for priority work programs. Rates are based on volume of service and are applied as a percentage on a bill. LHWMP is a revenue-neutral program.

Ken Marshall asked if LHWMP checks the ids of customers to determine if they are residents of King County. Ransley says they collect zip codes, and some staff worry non-residents could potentially use LHWMP's services, but so far it has not been a problem, although it may be when the new station opens in Algona. Gaisford pointed out both Snohomish County and Pierce County also have hazardous waste collection programs that also do not charge at the point of collection so it is not likely there will be abuse of the system.

Livingston said there are cheats everywhere. Elly Buzendahl pointed out if someone is taking their hazardous waste to a collection facility then they probably are not bad people. Gib Dammann told a story about a friend of his on Vashon Island who is moving off the island and had a van full of hazardous materials to dispose. Dammann wanted to help his friend find the island's hazardous waste drop-off location and spent ten minutes looking for information online and found nothing but an occasional visit by the Wastemobile. A business owner told him they could not take the waste to the Wastemobile and asked if that were true. He stressed education was needed at the community level and was concerned where the big hazardous waste was going. Ransley said businesses could take their waste to the Wastemobile in small quantities, as per state code. She agreed there is more work to be done toward communicating with communities, there is never enough information to give to ratepayers, and with the update of the new Draft Plan they will be studying where people go for such information.

Marshall shared in his 16 years as a sanitation driver, he experienced three chemically-induced truck fires; trash companies take all the risk. Ransley said LHWMP tries to make it as easy as possible.

Livingston asked if the Board of Health was a King County entity and if King County Council has to approve oversight by them. Ransley said yes, the Board of Health is from King County and she does not believe council has to approve them. She pointed out that more than half of the program operates out of the Solid Waste Division.

Strader asked how LHWMP's fund was set up. Ransley said it is a dedicated revenue fund with no seed money; reserves have built up over time and will be drawn down to mitigate the rate increase. Kelly asked if LHWMP will send an insert about the rate increase to be sent out with bills. Ransley said LHWMP recently hosted a webinar for billing entities to discuss timing of the rate increase and how it will be implemented; LHWMP will take responsibility for all communications and staff a hotline to field phone calls.

Marshall asked how this rate increase will affect the contracts cities have with the haulers. Ransley said the rate is a pass-through fee, and the reason why the proposal is to increase rates each year over six-year period is to establish predictability for contract negotiations. Kelly said since haulers are the ones

presenting bills to customers, they are the ones who take the heat. Sweet said some cities also bill for solid waste and will anticipate receiving phone calls about the rate increase. Strader asked since there are 38 cities and tribes participating in LHWMP is there any confusion over what can be disposed. Ransley said no, since LHWMP does all the collecting, they have no variation in what is accepted across jurisdictions; LHWMP has a robust customer service call center with a lot of information about that they collect. Bunzendahl asked if LHWMP tracks what is thrown out. Ransley said they collect a lot of data, including from partners. They track trends in the waste stream and use that information to research and promote safer alternatives so hazardous products are not purchased in the first place. Gaisford pointed out there is a chain of custody for the waste materials.

Bunzendahl said it all boils down to consumer choices. Ransley agreed and said this is where policy comes in and can provide incentives to help consumers make better choices and avoid regrettable substitutes.

The next steps for the proposed rate increase include outreach to partners, stakeholders, and the general public once a decision has been made by the Board of Health. The MCC will be meeting again to review direction by the Board of Health. In the second quarter, there will be public notice and a public hearing. And finally, conversations will begin about the 2020 Draft Plan update.

Livingston shared he did not think the LHWMP program booklet looked like it was depicting a government entity; he did not have a sense it was from Seattle or King County given the lack of logos.

Kassover commented she felt she understood today's presentation better than the one she saw at last week's MSWMAC meeting, she thought the graphs were easier to understand. Ransley said she incorporated feedback and suggested edits to the presentation. Kassover was pleased the fund balance will smooth out the rate even though it will still be significant. She encouraged careful and strategic communication when rolling out the rate increase. Ransley said she will be back to update the advisory committees on the effort.

China Sword

McLaughlin introduced Kelly's China Sword presentation with an appreciation for the need to balance a desire to experiment with a desire for predictability. He asked committee members to keep in mind policy implications and the Draft Plan as they listen to the presentation; now was the time for discussion and decisions will come later.

Kelly began the [presentation](#) with the news China is the world's largest buyer of unprocessed mixed plastics, fiber, and cardboard being 50% of the marketplace for recyclable materials. Recyclable materials are the nation's sixth largest export across all sectors. He encouraged committee members to watch a recent documentary *Plastic China*.

This fall, China canceled import licenses for exporters not meeting the new allowable contamination standards, which used to allow up to 3-5% contamination and now it is less than ½ of 1% and less than 1% of "outthrows" – materials that don't belong in a given bale. On March 1, China renewed some licenses under strict conditions and have already rejected 500 million tons of materials at the dock, turning ships away. To ensure the standards are met, U.S. material recover facilities (MRFs) are slowing down the flow lines. The Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries says these new standards are impossible to meet, increasing the costs of doing business while revenues are declining sharply.

China does not want any plastics #3-7, they only want #1 and #2. If China sees a piece of plastic film in a load of plastic, they have grounds to reject the entire load. There are domestic markets for plastics #3-7, such as Merlin Plastics in Vancouver, B.C. who is a secondary processor, but they are already at capacity.

Fiber is an even bigger issue, although communication out of China is a moving target and information is often unreliable. They want bales of mixed paper that are 60% newspaper, but newspaper is now less than 5% of the paper stream. Cardboard is an example of an outthrow; if it is brown, they do not want it even if it is a good, clean recyclable; 50% or more of the paper market has gone overnight. China used to pay \$97.50/ton in March 2017, and now they pay \$5/ton.

McLaughlin presented three choices for the recycling market – reduce contamination at the source, slow sorting lines, or landfill materials. Bunzendahl asked expense aside, why isn't there a local processing facility? McLaughlin said: We have done well with managing our recycling – our 52% recycle rate is twice as good as the national average. We achieved this with a mix of public and private partnerships. Private businesses have made huge investments to accommodate recycling at the curbside, and early signals said there are other markets. We are reminded that recycling haulers are in this with the division and they are feeling pain. Contamination is a problem in both recycling and composting; there are a lot of resources in the waste stream that could have a better life but we need capacity and we need demand. Contamination is better eliminated at the source; but MRFs have slowed down their lines, which means more labor and more labor costs, and so does landfilling. We created a system that makes recycling look free. We also need to expand beyond our region – there are producers of packing, consumers, processors – who have choices and expensive equipment, and there are policy makers. We are trying to get harmonization across the supply chain. He asked what do you think we should do? Bunzendahl quipped getting a local facility would be easier than changing the Draft Plan. She also asked how does Canada process 80% of their own recyclables?

Marshall said I told you so. He mentioned there are bales that are being reopened, which doubles the labor, and we are still achieving 3% contamination. He said there are MRFs closing daily. He says legislation need to change to eliminate materials. Kelly says one of the issues is capacity, which would require capital investment to grow, but that is tough to do when you do not have an end market; \$5/ton is not an appealing return on investment. Livingston brought up commodity markets, saying glass has no value and it contaminates paper when it breaks; tin and aluminum are easier to sort, but the consumer does not know this, it will take 20 more years to change behavior. He says the big question is how do we get better at sorting products of value. Kelly said glass currently has higher value than paper.

McLaughlin said one of the concerns about building domestic capacity would be why wouldn't anybody else say what China has said. Sweet said she hates to bring it up, but wouldn't Waste to Energy take care of this issue since everything goes in, right? McLaughlin said recycling is still encouraged in areas with Waste to Energy; in Japan they have waste bins labeled *Combustible* and *Non-combustible*. Sweet said this (conversation/situation) makes her worry about how the Draft Plan sits now.

Bunzendahl asked what did China do with the plastic and paper. Kelly said office paper become toilet paper and Kleenex, which we all use and don't want to go away. Plastics are turned into decking, benches, toys, picture frames, eyeglasses, etc. He clarified that MRFs typically sort Plastics #1 & #2 separately but combine Plastics #3-7. Plastics #1 & #2 are pelletized by secondary processors. #7 is a catch-all category for any other kind of plastic, and can even be organic material. The market for plastic pellets is volatile with what oil does below \$60/barrel. When oil is \$75/barrel, plastic is more viable. April Atwood asked if there was a market for Plastics #1-6. Kelly said yes.

Dammann said we need production incentives to establish higher value for waste to resource potential, such as what legislation did to encourage solar panels in our state; we need to legislate that by 2025 all consumer plastic needs to be recyclable. McLaughlin asked what would that look like with respect to the Draft Plan; what actions should we do. Dammann said we need to reuse; figure out how to reuse. And do a better job to increase services, pull materials out of the waste stream, and create markets locally, double down on R&D, ban the bad juju like how King County talks about bad pesticides and herbicides.

Marshall said when recycling started, recycling trucks had different troughs for each type of commodity. They each got their own bin, and when the driver unloaded his load, he'd have to open a gate, unload, and move to another location, open a gate, unload, and move to another location, open a gate and unload. We should go back to that even though we have already trained everybody to put it in one container. Marshall said he hated to suggest it because it was a lot of work, putting a lot of wear and tear on everybody's bodies with everyone having to bring different containers to the curb. And multifamily needs to be completely separate, in a separate MRF. Kelly noted that would lead to higher costs, and those trucks carried a lot of air because not all compartments would fill evenly; commingling was a lot faster and participation rates increased.

Livingston asked if the needs for resources in China were changing. He then said whatever comes back from China that is recyclable is usually less quality and costs more; things made of virgin materials cost less, like office paper. Kelly said OCC (old corrugated containers) which has limited imports and drives down the price, it used to be \$75 – 90/ton then \$150 – 200 now its \$5/ton. This is a raw material they need.

Karen Dawson said this was an awesome discussion. She noted residential customers are not seeing the impacts of this yet. She asked if anyone was going to be communicating to customers about this. She wondered if they are going to be hit with costs or will it stay invisible for them? Gaisford said Waste Management has proposed a surcharge for their WUTC areas to cover the additional processing and market costs. It is up to the WUTC to approve, modify or disapprove the surcharge. The surcharge would be for 90 days starting in May 2018. Republic has requested a waiver from the cities it serves and King County to be able to dispose of unmarketable materials. King County has not yet granted approval for the materials for the unincorporated areas. It's not clear which cities have granted or denied this request from Republic Services.

Kassover said Lake Forest Park is doing something about single-use plastic bags and she encourages other municipalities to do the same. We have industry represented on the advisory committees but we don't have anyone from the upstream side. We might benefit from someone from groceries, or the company with HQ1 located here. We need to understand each other. Kassover said being from England and visiting often, she knows the European Union has better regulation on manufacturing of plastics; it's all standardized. Keeping food safe and fresh is important and plastic helps with that. We have to work with these people and material scientists to make sure they are focused on these problems. McLaughlin said we will have an effective engagement with them if we have a unified voice. Kassover said she has no problem having SWD create standards.

Kelly said SWD should look at the Tucson model and create a surcharge that floats with revenue. We should form a subcommittee to explore this topic. He suggested picking a combination of the first two options of the three choices, and also to allow new technology. He said we have invested 20 years of infrastructure, culture, and mindsets. It's problematic if customers to the work and it goes to a landfill. Sweet said this needs to be elevated on the state's agenda and everybody should watch *Plastic China*.

Dammann said it needs to be made simple and uniform across the county, and the only way to get rid of the problem is at a community level, education can be simpler.

Marshall said we have a tremendous problem today; there are health concerns on 3rd and Lander with bales surrounding the outside of the building, it's all going to Monster Road, going on a train and heading to a landfill. He said the bales of paper products are deteriorating. Kelly said Waste Management is not wall to wall; their recyclables are moving out.

Bunzendahl said Amazon has amazing ingenuity, what stopping us from inviting them to these meetings. She said change is always going to happen, with private and public partnerships there will always be a supply of recycle streams – we should keep it in Cascadia. We have been relying on a foreign market and that is a poor choice. Let's adapt and overcome and do something better. Industry and innovation should be at the table, not just Amazon.

Kelly asked if there was interest in a subcommittee, with a nod of heads. Sweet said we should be partnering with SPU and their SWAC. McLaughlin said there will be a task force with a combination of forces focused on what we have the authority and resources to do. Market development is a long term issue, we will need to have near term strategies and a regional scope. Kelly said Dorian Waller will set up a meeting with MSWMAC.

Public Comment

Phillip Schmidt-Pathmann spoke at length about the virtues of Waste to Energy and its successes in Europe. He said landfills are subsidized and we should look to countries and companies who have been successful at waste management. A company he is affiliated with has something to do with equipment costing \$25 billion to produce high-quality materials in China. And plastics in the ocean outnumber fish. We should focus on glass and metal since plastic is only 9-15% of the recycle stream.