

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
 April 20, 2018 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
 King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center**

Meeting Minutes

Members Present	King County Staff	Others
April Atwood - Vice Chair	Jamey Barker	Cynthia Foley, Sound Cities Association
Elly Bunzendahl	Jennifer Devlin	Heather Trim, Zero Waste Washington
Gib Dammann	Jeff Gaisford	Phillip Schmidt-Pathmann, NEOMER
Karen Dawson	Beth Humphreys	
Jean Garber	Matt Manguso	
Kim Kaminski	Ross Marzolf	
Phillippa Kassover	Meg Moorehead	
Kevin Kelly - Chair	Pat D. McLaughlin	
Keith Livingston	Yolanda Pon	
Ken Marshall	Terra Rose	
Stephen Strader	Dorian Waller	
Penny Sweet	John Walsh	

Minutes

The March SWAC minutes were approved as drafted following a motion made by Penny Sweet and seconded by Gib Dammann.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

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

ILA

We anticipate the 37th and final ILA to be signed by the Town of Yarrow Point in the upcoming weeks. Once this is completed we will have all of the 2028 ILAs extended to 2040.

Wood waste “Hog Fuel” Pilot project

Wood chips (aka hog fuel) is used at Cedar Hills Regional Landfill as road bed for constructing temporary roads between the paved roads throughout the landfill to the active working face. Hog fuel is placed directly on top of the garbage and then rock is placed on top of the hog fuel. The hog fuel is a barrier between the garbage and the rock to prevent the rock from becoming contaminated with garbage allowing it to be removed when the temporary road is no longer needed and reused to construct another temporary road. The second use of the hog fuel is as daily cover. The used hog fuel can either be left in place as daily cover or it can be removed and used in a different location in the active face as daily cover.

SWD proposes to separate contaminated wood (painted, stained, treated wood) and process into hog fuel for its own use at Cedar Hill. Currently, there is no beneficial use of contaminated (“dirty”) wood and this material is being disposed as garbage at Cedar Hills.

SWD has spent close to \$400,000 over the past two years purchasing hog fuel for use as temporary road bed. We anticipate this pilot project will be cost saving for the division and will save landfill space.

Washington State Association of Counties Solid Waste Managers meeting

Last week, McLaughlin attended a meeting with solid waste managers from around the state. He reported this working group meet a few times every year. They discussed the reduction of grant funding from the state that many cities rely upon to run their solid waste programs. The working group established a task force to explore the issue and possible solutions. The working group also discussed the China Sword situation, which is a common interest for all the solid waste managers in the state. A task force was also established around this issue to see if it is possible to adopt a more singular recycling strategy across the state to minimize contamination, maximize diversion, and focus on priority materials. This task force will be a resource MSWMAC can use because we will not have to solve this challenge alone. This unification means solid waste agencies can work with industry and regulators like the Department of Ecology with a unified voice. More information will be available.

Algona Transfer Station Break-in

Earlier this week, someone broke into and ransacked the operations trailer at the Algona Transfer Station. A “goat” – a small truck that pulls trailers around the facility - was the only item of note that was stolen. Although it is not street-legal, the goat was recovered undamaged in Puyallup and the culprits remain at large.

Local Hazardous Waste Management Program (LHWMP)

Recycling and Environmental Services Section Manager, Jeff Gaisford reports LHWMP is revising their rate proposal because they heard from the advisory committees the rate was too high (7%) and the frequency of rate increase requests is too long (six years). The Management Coordinating Committee (MCC) met earlier this week and authorized a 3.5% increase to last two years. This new proposal will be presented to the Board of Health in May, with possible action by the Board in June. In 2020, LHWMP will be adopting a new comprehensive plan and will potentially seek another rate increase that could go into effect 2021.

MSWMAC

Sweet said the agenda for last week’s MSWMAC meeting is the same as today’s SWAC meeting. She also encouraged members watch the Isle of Dogs movie for its depiction of garbage.

China Sword Workgroup

Meg Moorehead, manager of the Strategy, Communications, and Performance unit (SCP), introduced the China Sword Workgroup discussion with an appeal to stay the course with regards to authorizing the draft Comp Plan despite the concerns raised by some stakeholders about the uncertainty of the future of recycling brought about by the China Sword situation. Moorehead said this region has a decades old perspective that from an environmental and economic perspective, recycling makes sense. Both the new draft and old Comp Plans have strong commitments toward recycling. The new draft plan includes a menu of actions to be considered over a 20-year planning horizon so it can weather storms such as volatile recycling markets. If the division stops working on the new draft plan and relies upon the old one, the

division will still have ambitious recycling goals, but without the benefit of the modern approaches and policy frameworks in the new draft.

Moorehead notes the flexibility built into the new draft policies allow for occasions where the regional waste system might be stymied by foreign markets, but can pivot focus on waste reduction or developing local markets. The policies also have no deadlines, so as markets fluctuate, the region can take a step back to resolve difficult and long-standing issues and open opportunities to bolster recycling efforts.

Keith Livingston asked for discussion about the timing of the China Sword policies since they arose during this time of geopolitics, tariffs, and trade wars. Gaisford said China Sword policies came about before there was talk of tariffs and trade wars; he noted there was a Green Fence before there was a China Sword. Ken Marshall noted China is building a processing plant in Mobile Alabama so they can sort through for the good stuff to send to Chinese manufacturing plants and leave our garbage here.

Gaisford said the China Sword workgroup includes the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the advisory committees as well as representatives from nine cities, Recology, Waste Management, and Republic Services, and WUTC. These members are the core group. Others will be invited to participate depending on the topic discussed at the meetings. The first meeting will be on April 30, the rest will be monthly for several months. The consultant who organized and facilitate the Plastics Summit in January will be working with the workgroup. The workgroup will focus on creating immediate, near-term, and long-term actions on how the system responds to the lack of recycling markets. Notes from these meetings will be shared with the advisory committees.

Marshall wanted to go on record to say that if there is a possibility he can be part of the workgroup, he would like to participate. Gaisford agreed to add Marshall to the group. Phillippa Kassover asked if there would be representation of the people who create recycled materials, like Amazon. Gaisford said they are trying to find the right people from the packaging industry, and Amazon, who could be pulled in. He said Kevin Kelly might know of a few people.

Livingston expressed concern about the ability of the workgroup to change the human behavior side of the issue. Kevin Kelly agreed the consumer is missing from the workgroup, he says we all buy poly-coated cups from Starbucks and tetra-paks, and because of that, manufacturing producers say they create these packages because that's what the consumer wants. April Atwood said consumers don't know there are better choices; she asked if people have a reasonable alternative to poly-coated cups, certainly not at the price of those cups. She suggested government can play a role and make the bad things more expensive to use.

McLaughlin asked what it was we want; and how do we communicate or impose what we want on the marketplace. He said one of the best features of the regional system is the private/public partnerships. He said we need to be clear about what we are trying to achieve so it will receive investment. He says this workgroup will determine what we want as an outcome and will collaborate to come up with the strategies and tactics to get us there. Atwood asked who is "we." McLaughlin said the regional solid waste system; it is his responsibility as the division director to deliver solid waste services and meet environmental goals. He said he needs to understand what the members of the system want from the cities and the county.

Marshall said since he's not the PC guy, he's going to just come out and say it – currently recycling is tied to trash rates, so it looks free; so people order a smaller trash can since it's the cheaper bin, so they put their trash in the blue bin. And people in multi-family housing just don't care. Marshall says it's time to make the consumer pay for recycling so they will care more about it. Gib Dammann said he believes the markets are based on laissez-faire economics and not the consumer. He says the consumer did not create seven different types of plastics. Dammann said if we simplify and adjust markets locally we will be doing everybody a good service. Livingston said it's back to the government to regulate the supply chain. He wanted to know what behaviors at the top of the supply chain enable consumers to make good choices.

Penny Sweet said she believes people want to protect the environment and they don't put stuff in the blue bin to be wrong, they just don't know; she says she can see the triangle on the plastics, but can't see the number in it. She said to look at reusable plastic bags; Kirkland did for four years. Sweet said she has done a lot of research but has not found a lot of information out there because news is slanted. She hopes this is something the taskforce can accommodate. Jean Garber said she agrees with Sweet, and she's not even clear on the nature of the contamination the China Sword is about. Garber says consumers need education.

Karen Dawson said in her seven years in the industry, she dreams of a recycling infrastructure that can incorporate the well-intentioned and the unaware people. She spent a day ripping into bags of food waste where some bags are perfect and ready for compost such as those that come from Taco Time, but there are the bags of the well-intentioned like from an office party where 50% of the bag is compostable and the rest is not. She says we cannot depend on the consumer to get it right every time; the system needs to handle that.

Kassover said that in her experience with Six Sigma and other quality control methods, we will never have perfection, but we have to strive to get it as close as we can. She agrees consumers need more education. She mentioned the plastic-coated milk carton; even she doesn't know if it's recyclable. Orange juice is sold in glass, paper, and plastic containers and she doesn't know which is the better choice for recycling. Kassover said we in the government sphere have an obligation to help the consumer make better choices; businesses may be unhappy about it but hopefully this taskforce can make those decisions. Gaisford said there will be a discussion about what goes in the blue bin, and rethink the message so it is clear.

Comp Plan

Moorehead opened her [presentation](#) on the draft Comp Plan by sharing the news that all should have received a zip file containing the responsiveness summary to the formal public comments on the draft Plan. Before diving into the responsiveness summary she noted the Comp Plan schedule and a concern about the budget proviso that stipulated the division needed to deliver the Comp Plan to county council by March 31. She said the division sent a letter to council asking for an extension until the end of July in order to obtain public comment. She said the Executive has not made a decision about the long-term disposal option or about transfer services in northeast King County yet, and the State Department of Ecology's comments are not due until May 7. In June, the advisory committee can discuss if they want to make a formal statement about the Comp Plan.

Garber apologized for missing last month's meeting and expressed concern about the manipulability of the online survey since it is not a scientifically-valid survey and it is impossible to know where the responses came from; she asked how long the survey was available online and how the data from the survey would be used. Moorehead said the survey was online until March 8 and her presentation will describe how the data will be used.

Moorehead said the division received nearly 70 formal comments from 19 cities and agencies via U.S. Post or through the official Comp Plan email address. In 2001, the Comp Plan received 16 responses. She said overall, people are in support of the plan and offered all sorts of ideas. In regards to disposal, comments came out in favor of all three options, although few came out for the Waste-to-Energy option, and neighbors of the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill were the most supportive of the Waste Export option. In regards to transfer station services, most people want equitable levels of service across the system, and most supported a new northeast facility or combination of facilities instead of keeping the existing Houghton station "as is."

Moorehead likened the online questionnaire to a town hall meeting where one voice does not represent their whole community; these are informal comments whose themes will be noted in a summary. Most of the comments in the online questionnaire, according to self-reported demographic information requested on the questionnaire, came from the east and northeast parts of the county. Most respondents are in support of recycling, and most liked the idea of a new transfer station in the northeast part of the county, or some combination of facilities. And most respondents listed waste-to-energy facility first among disposal options, followed by further developing Cedar Hills and waste export.

The comments from the online questionnaire will be gathered in a report that will be finalized within the next two weeks. Garber said the results should not be used in any way since there is no value to them; they are not rigorous enough to be included. Kassover said as an elected official, when she asks people for input she knows they do not represent everyone, but she has to ask. She said electeds are able to take into account the voices that want to be heard, and she is obligated to hear them. Livingston said he can appreciate Kassover's point, but he takes umbrage with the division including the informal comments in a public document with the county seal on it because perception is reality. Kim Kaminski said if we cannot tell if these comments came from our community, they may not be representative of our community.

Garber said surveys are very expensive to run properly in order to get an accurate statistical sample, in this case someone can call on a hundred friends around the county and get them to take the survey. McLaughlin said this is a helpful conversation that will inform how we do future surveys but this was a low barrier way for people to provide feedback; it was not meant to be taken as a vote. But, he points out, if someone from outside of the county took this survey and they had good points to make, then all perspectives are helpful. Kelly said the advisory committee needs to decide if they would like to weigh in formally and if so, then concerns about the survey results can be expressed there for consideration by council.

Moorehead said in regard to the formal comments, many comments asked for edits and clarifications that shouldn't require committee discussion, however, there were several comments worth discussion. The first is regarding rural representation on the advisory committees. While MSWMAC is comprised of city partners, SWAC has more opportunity to have rural representatives. SWD's Government Relations Administrator Dorian Waller is recruiting for two SWAC vacancies.

Moorehead said nearly a third of the formal comments were about recycling and collection. Most were in support of the actions in the draft Comp Plan while some were complaints about frequency of collection and others were ideas about how we can do a better job at recycling. Moorehead said her team will be taking a second look at the goals and policies to see if they are good enough and will stand the test of time, and if not, offer edits in the revised Plan. One action that might be refined in response to the China Sword is Action 26-s which says the division will work with its partners to find common ground on recycling and improve the list of what materials we want to recycle.

Another topic for the advisory committees is the matter of how the cities will vote to recommend the draft Comp Plan for adoption. The current voting formula is spelled out in the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) the cities and counties have signed (*per Interlocal Agreement Section 11.6.b "...approved by cities representing three-quarters of the population of the incorporated population..." of the jurisdictions that take action within 120 days*). If this method is not satisfactory, maybe it can be changed when the ILA is next updated. Kelly asked, so it could happen that if only 8 cities could vote, then it (the Comp Plan) can be approved? Moorehead said yes.

Moorehead then shared a revision to the tonnage forecast published in the draft Comp Plan, which was predicted in 2016. Since then, new information has made a revision necessary. The first is that the current booming economy has already added more tons to the system. The second is that Bellevue and the four Point cities have decided to remain in the regional waste system, thus adding more tonnage than predicted. Third, the forecast model has been updated with new economic variables to help accurately match actual reports coming from the transfer stations. Fourth, the predicted recycle rates needs to be lowered. In 2016, the division speculated the recycling rate would be at 57% by now because there were hopes a number of actions would have moved the needle. The State Department of Ecology has reported a 52% recycling rate for each year from 2012 to 2014. Last week, they reported 54% for 2015. So while it is good news the number has gone up, it is not indicative of a sustained pattern. Stephen Strader asked for clarification on where Ecology gets its data. Gaisford said the numbers come from all over, and Seattle's is taken out of the King County rate. Elly Bunzendahl asked if we have our own numbers, why can't we calculate our recycling rate. Moorehead said we have data that arrives on the scales. Gaisford says we also get regular data from haulers about what they pick up on the curb but we don't get information about what is collected elsewhere.

Livingston asked if the data was accurate enough to use in a decision-making process. McLaughlin said Gaisford's team works closely with schools and businesses and need a

mechanism of feedback to see if their work is paying off and if it plateaus where they can change tactics. Moorehead said her team looks at tons as they come in to note economic adjustments and trends. They use this data to model a scenario with low population growth and a recession or what the system would look like during a population boom and no recession. The data helps them answer all the what ifs.

Moorehead then presented a proposal to harmonize a discrepancy between the ILA and a RCW regulation in regards to when the division can modify financial policies. The RCW says policies can only be changed during a prescriptive comprehensive planning process, while the ILA allows policies to be changed when necessary. Moorehead proposed the finance policies in Chapter 7 of the draft Comp Plan be turned into Actions, while the goal statement becomes the overriding financial policy. She said the Comp Plan allows actions to evolve without going through a multi-year comp plan process. Dammann said we need to be more dynamic regarding financial policies; if we have a 3.5% increase in rates for the next two years, how much is earmarked for an increase in services and outreach and recycling. He asked if it was fair to ask about being able to adjust this, is this how we move forward. How we move the elements forward? Simplify? Educate? We should be looking at this from a budgetary point of view. Gaisford said the 3.5% rate increase was for LHWMP, but we will be talking about SWD rates next.

Moorehead concluded her presentation with a list of topics to be discussed at the next meeting in May: Disposal, Transfer, DEIS and Ecology.

2019 – 2020 Rates

John Walsh, SWD's strategic planning manager, said he was there to tee up the rate discussion. The Executive has not yet decided if there will be a rate increase, but Walsh's team will meet with him on Monday so more details will be presented at the May meeting. If there will be a rate increase, the goal will be to keep the rate at or below the \$142/ton projected for 2019-2020 in our last rate proposal. The proposal would also project rates through 2024. He says if it is a go, it will be adopted in September. Kassoer asked what the current rate is. Walsh said it is \$134.59/ton. Kelly said from a hauler's perspective, he'd like to see these rate projections farther out; it would help haulers make decisions as to where to go. These are technically pass-through rates, but they still impact haulers. Marshall agreed.

Public Comment

Dammann said plastics is the issue; it's paramount; he has seen it get four times the attention as any other topic on an online Vashon Island community message board – over 1,200 comments from a population of 10,000. He wondered if it was as hot a topic in Houghton. McLaughlin asked what specifically about plastics. Dammann said plastic bags, what is recyclable and what's not, what do to with plastic bottle caps, etc. Gaisford said the public comments were overwhelmingly about plastics. Sweet asked Kelly about the percent of plastics to paper get recycled. Kelly said fiber, which is cardboard and mixed paper is about 80% of all recycling, glass is about 10%, and plastic is less than 10%. It is measured by weight and volume. He said many plastic things require less plastic to make than in the past. Marshall said he read

an article where the same amount of plastic that used to make 40,000 plastic bottles can now make 90,000 plastic bottles.

Marshall asked McLaughlin for status on the situation of haulers who are asking for variances so they can send recyclables to the landfill. McLaughlin said one hauler has asked for a variance on their unmarketable recyclables, one has requested surcharge, and one has expressed an interest in asking for a surcharge. McLaughlin said King County has not endorsed any of these requests yet, and he told the hauler asking for a variance that they should talk more. McLaughlin said he is hopeful the taskforce will create a regional dialogue where we can land in a universal space and figure out how to eliminate the confusion that is driving contamination by the well-intentioned but mis-informed who want to do the right thing but can't because everywhere the rules are different.

Marshall said while we wait, there's about 700 tons per week going to a landfill that would normally be tipping fees at our own landfill. McLaughlin said we are trying to sort where residuals go in our system. He noted that some of the variances granted had deadlines, and Bellevue's April 20 deadline just passed, but a few cities did not have deadlines on their variances; McLaughlin is looking forward to getting everyone on the same page for how we are going to respond. Marshall asked if there is a way to get more involved, soon it's going to be haulers vs haulers where some are not going through the right process and King County does not get any of the money.

Atwood said regional markets and uniformity in how we address our own waste here will be a real benefit to come together, the potential of coming together can be huge. She noted on the Nextdoor app, she is bowled over by how outraged and unhappy people are about recycling. There is overwhelming support for it and people want to do the right thing, even if it means sorting recycling into 35 different bins. She liked Dawson's idea to make it easy for people and municipalities can make rules about that.

Bunzendahl asked what is the taskforce and will include ideas about a local solution. (She arrived after Gaisford's presentation) Gaisford gave a summary of his presentation and noted, as an example of a local market solution, Kelly is working with a local glass collector who makes wine bottles for Washington wines.

Phillip Schmidt-Pathmann spoke about how plastics have become impossible to recycle because all of us are guilty of buying, it discarding it, not recycling it properly. Ocean plastics outnumber other plastics and there is no value for it. The best place to safely discard plastics is in a waste-to-energy facility. The longer we wait, the worse it will get. Kelly said, of the saying "reduce, reuse, recycle" we should be reducing waste first, reusing it second, and recycling it as a last act.