

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
September 21, 2018 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center**

Meeting Minutes

Members Present	King County Staff	Others
April Atwood – Vice Chair	Jamey Barker	Phillip Schmidt Pathmann, NEOMER
Elly Bunzendahl	Dylan Brown, CM Lambert’s office	
Gib Dammann	Beth Humphreys	
Karen Dawson	Morgan John	
Phillippa Kassover	Annie Kolb-Nelson	
Keith Livingston	Matt Manguso	
Ken Marshall	Pat McLaughlin	
Barbara Ristau	Belinda Morrison	
Penny Sweet	Yolanda Pon	
	Dorian Waller	
	John Walsh	

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Kevin Kelly was not present so Vice Chair April Atwood called the meeting to order and called for SWAC Chair and Vice Chair elections. Atwood stated that Kelly was interested to continue as Chair. No one else expressed interest in the position of Chair. Dorian Waller confirmed that with only one candidate, no election was necessary. Keith Livingston nominated Kelly for Chair and Gib Dammann seconded the nomination.

Atwood stated her interest in continuing as Vice Chair. No one else expressed interest in the Vice Chair position. Ken Marshall nominated Atwood for Vice Chair and Barbara Ristau seconded the nomination.

Minutes

The July SWAC minutes were approved unanimously. There was no August SWAC meeting.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

Solid Waste Division Director Pat D. McLaughlin provided SWD updates:

Sound Sustainable Farm Visit

McLaughlin noted that there was no August SWAC meeting and instead, many members visited Sound Sustainable Farm. It was an opportunity to see Cedar Grove compost at work in local farming.

Comp Plan Briefings

SWD staff have been busy with moving the Comp Plan forward. McLaughlin, Meg Moorhead and Dorian Waller have made over 20 city visits to provide updates on the Comp Plan and to discuss issues specific to each city. SWD has now received 5 letters of support for passage of the new plan. There are also 5 more letters of support in the works. SWD has attended 2 briefings with the Regional Policy Committee, and another is scheduled for October 24th. SWD will also present a staff briefing at the King County Committee of the Whole (COW).

Keith Livingston asked what SWD has learned at the city briefings. McLaughlin responded that it was helpful to learn about each city's particular interests and concerns. Waste-to-Energy (WTE) is a common theme. There's unease regarding WTE but also growing intrigue. Cities understand that the current plan is to maximize the use of Cedar Hills Landfill (CHLF) but we must continue planning for disposal after CHLF. The region needs to be ready for the next phase. SWD staff also cleared up some misconceptions about different greenhouse gas modeling methods. If other municipalities want briefings with their council or key staff please let us know.

2019-2020 Rate

Committee Of the Whole approved SWD's 2019-2020 rate as proposed by SWD, \$140.82. It includes a low income rate to encourage all residents of King County to have better access to needed services. The new rate is effective January 1, 2019.

Facility Design and Planning

Factoria received the SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) 2018 Gold Excellence award. This prestigious award is bestowed on a limited basis and only when a project such as our newest flagship recycling and transfer station demonstrates the highest levels of excellence. The criteria included; History of the Transfer Station Design and Construction of the Facility, Environmental Controls and Regulatory Compliance, Performance, Economics and Cost Effectiveness, Worker and Customer Health and Safety, Public Acceptance, Appearance and Aesthetics. (Our Bow Lake facility received similar recognition in 2014 when it received SWANA's Silver award.).

SWD has begun designing the South County RTS. The Algona city mayor and city administrator are excited. Designers are meeting with 4Culture to ensure that public art reflects Algona city values. The design team has engaged SWD staff for design considerations and will soon begin external community engagement activities.

Gib Dammann asked about SWD's Recycling & Resource Recovery Request for Information (RFI). McLaughlin answered that SWD received 14 submittals including local, national, and international firms, and a variety of solutions ranging from waste prevention and outreach to emerging technologies. Dammann asked if there is an anticipated date for a subsequent Request for Proposals based on the RFI results. McLaughlin responded that next steps depend on SWD's review of the RFI responses.

Ken Marshall requested an update on Republic's landfilling of MRF residuals. McLaughlin explained that residuals can come from several places in a MRF process including damaged bales, non-marketable materials, and refuse material collected throughout and at the end of the MRF process. "Flow control", as stated in county code, requires that all garbage from within King County be disposed in county-approved and controlled disposal facilities. Republic

historically has disposed of residuals at their own landfill rather than directing them to CHLF. Following discussions with SWD, Republic is now preparing a variance to formalize that out-of-county disposal of residuals. Republic has reported that they are not landfilling any recyclable materials as a result of China Sword complications. Phillippa Kassover asked for more details on Republic's variance request. McLaughlin explained that residuals currently go to Republic's own landfill. All King County-generated waste should go to CHLF, but Republic also handles waste from Juneau AK and Seattle. So, the separation of waste can be complicated. The division is considering Republic's request for a variance.

MSWMAC

Penny Sweet, MSWMAC Chair, had nothing to report from MSWMAC.

Responsible Recycling Task Force: Communications Tool Kit

Matt Manguso, SWD, delivered his [presentation](#) on the Responsible Recycling Communications Consortium Communications Tool Kit. SWD shared the tool kit with regional partners in August 2018. Deliverables include an introduction, strategies, what the tool kit is meant to accomplish, links, social media posts for all to use, images, and key messages. The Recycle Right [webpage](#) includes general information, a tool for finding one's hauler, and links to partner pages. Manguso noted that city comments so far are that they have plenty of material for now; SWD will continue developing material for later use. SWD has received 102 visits in 10-days' time. Cities and haulers are using posts and other tools in the tool kit. Manguso opened the discussion to SWAC members' reactions to the tool kit.

Sweet felt that information was over-communicated. Staff got the information but weren't always sure what to do with it. It's important that the right stuff is directed to the right people with clarity on what they should do with it.

Gib Dammann asked if Waste Connections is represented on the Task Force. They are not, and Dammann explained that they are Vashon's hauler so they should be represented.

Livingston noted that reaching 102 readers is great but what's the plan for reaching more? Is there a budget to target the right people and saturate King County? Manguso explained that's the next phase, to include bus ads, zip-code based targeting, and possibly TV ads. Livingston followed up suggesting coordinating with the haulers. They could suggest zip codes in need of support and help be smart about social media. Manguso noted that SWD plans on customizing messages whenever possible.

Kassover directed a comment to Karen Dawson regarding plastic contamination in organics. The public messaging campaign needs to state that plastics don't go in organics. Dawson agreed that organics needs to be included in the contamination discussion. She acknowledges that China Sword is indeed a problem but the organics contamination situation has been building slowly and inevitable over the years. It's a problem too even if not in the news like China Sword. Also, is King County Green Schools program integrated into the Responsible Recycling Task Force (RRTF) recommendations? Manguso responded that it's not but that's a good suggestion. SWD will circle back on that.

Dawson continued, inquiring about where the hits come from and from which platforms. Manguso stated that SWD would provide that information. Atwood emphasized that compost

contamination needs to be part of all messaging. Dawson continued that it helps to explain how a MRF works – that all processors need a clean feedstock/stream.

Livingston stated that it's been a great start to the messaging and it needs to go further. Stickers on carts need to be changed. How and when and who will do that? The message isn't getting to everyone. Stickers on carts is the way to get through to everyone. Elly Bunzendahl asked if the messaging is paid yet. Manguso stated no, not yet. Bunzendahl proposed that the message is maybe only getting to recycling geeks who already care. It's a great start but needs to get to other audiences. Is the ESJ lens being applied? Manguso noted that's in the next phase: reaching new audiences and bringing the messaging to multi-cultural communities and translating information.

Dammann offered a reminder: this is arguable bigger than organics. It's about re-use, simplicity and uniformity. For example, can Waste Connections accept plastic bottles *and* tops? They don't now, which makes for a complicated educational component. Make the message dynamic, understanding the market needs, regarding compostable service ware for example. How to educate and then enforce that in a community? For example how to get retailers to distribute and use compostable materials? Arguable it needs a more uniform approach.

Dawson noted that regarding contamination and China Sword, messaging needs to be practical and common-sense based and transparent. For example shredded paper isn't wanted in organics or in recycling. It's contamination. Cardboard in the green cart is also contamination because of plastic tape and labels. Education needs to be flexible, responsive and needs to be an evolving list. Dammann asked what is in shredded paper that is the contaminant. Dawson replied that both envelope windows and shredded credit cards are primary sources. A recycling program needs to support the end market.

Responsible Recycling Task Force: Recycle Bin Recommendations

John Walsh began his [presentation](#) on the Responsible Recycling Task Force – Recycle Bin Recommendations. A mid-term action is determining region-wide what materials should and shouldn't be in the recycle bin. A short term action is potentially removing shredded paper and plastic film/bags from the list of materials for the recycle bin.

Marshall noted that we all need to understand specifics of the contamination issue. Recology's contamination rate was around 5%. Recology made changes including adding staff and re-running sorted materials. Their best contamination rate is now around 3%, still unacceptable to China. China's contamination requirement is extreme.

Atwood noted that King County doesn't determine the materials – it's the cities and haulers; and then the haulers struggle with what they've agreed to take. Dammann said it depends on the haulers' processing abilities. Atwood continued that they'll offer to take something they're not yet able to handle because they want to win a contract. Marshall explained in mainland King County, haulers have their own MRFs. But Waste Connections takes Vashon's recyclables to a 3rd party MRF in Tacoma. Livingston stated that King County doesn't touch the material; it's between the city and their hauler. There are 37 different contracts, all slightly different. It's tough for a consumer to get excited about contamination issues. There needs to be a unified message but that's unlikely with 3 haulers. Coordination could even be viewed as collusion.

McLaughlin agreed that we need a harmonized plan. Comp Plan action is to work cross-county for increased consistency and a higher recycling rate.

Marshall stated that haulers take on all responsibility for the commodities once collected. They'll push back on increased costs. They'll want to see where the contamination originates and target those sources with, for example, extra billings to apartment complexes or some form of surcharge to cover costs. Atwood noted that she can see the motivation to simplify the list of recyclables but as others point out, if the material isn't collected, there won't be a market for it. So she's resistant to mandating materials out of the bin. Dammann expressed surprise that composites and laminates aren't on the problem list (see slide 18). Walsh responded that those are becoming problematic. The list is based on an old Ecology list with 29 total materials.

Walsh continued with a discussion of building a region-wide minimum collections standard list, and how to modify it. Livingston stated that glass is the biggest concern as a contaminant for organics and all other streams. He recognizes it's a commodity but we need discussion on collection options. Walsh noted that the group will discuss all materials. Dawson noted that the glass and the liquid contents are contaminants. And the group needs to discuss collection vehicles, which should provide the ability to see what's in the bin before it tips into the truck. Walsh agreed that alternative collection methods need consideration.

Regarding the timing of adding or removing materials from the list, there should be flexibility, and discussions should open as needed. Walsh raised the possibility of annual reviews of recyclable lists. Kassover responded that getting the public to change behavior is a tough expensive multi-year processes. The community can't be as nimble as proposed, adding or cutting materials. Walsh agreed there should be no knee-jerk changes; rather should be long-term considerations. Elly asked if the RRTF is involved in this list of materials. McLaughlin responded yes, there will be numerous perspectives gathered as this moves forward.

Livingston followed on Kassover's comments: hauler contracts are typically 5-years. No one can be so nimble to renegotiate annually. We need to consider product manufacturers and have materials dictate this conversation. The more times you touch a material, the higher the cost. Recology has increased staff costs, and someone will have to cover that. We need to drive this situation to a more secure outcome. Ristau noted that so many materials all go to different places (like clothes, batteries, EPS...). Consider that most don't have the time or interest or resources to recycle right. Kassover said she is excited about extended producer responsibility (EPR) and other different economic models. Now the burden is all on the consumer – removing labels, washing, drying... consumers have had enough. What's the responsibility of the manufacturers? Who should pay? Kassover thinks people would pay more knowing that something is more environmentally responsible. It's a long road but we need to do it. Marshall suggested convenient drop off stations for recycling needs. Also, SWAC members should get and review meeting minutes from the RRTF. It'll result in better recommendations.

Walsh asked for thoughts on slide #26, *Decision Making Proposal*. Marshall noted that SWAC needs updates on the RRTF proceedings, regarding what materials to add or subtract from the list. Marshall said that the RRTF includes representatives from the haulers so they'll have different recommendations than SWAC members. SWAC members don't have to find markets for materials. Walsh stated that there'll be no decisions without hauler input. Regarding a

“special decision” or “simple majority, Livingston asked what that means with 37 cities and the haulers. Seems like a circuitous path for decision-making.

McLaughlin stated that haulers are typically in attendance at SWAC, although they aren't today, and are able to provide a well-rounded perspective. SWAC and MSWMAC are advisory bodies who advise in relevant decision-making. McLaughlin's job is to responsibly take that advice into account, make decisions, be able to explain why, and share that process with the King County Executive and Council so they can also make decisions when necessary. Marshall responded that he has missed only 1 meeting in years, and there's rarely any hauler's perspective besides Kevin Kelly and Karen Dawson. Kassoer stated that this decision-making process is serious business. SWAC and MSWMAC each comprise different constituencies with different concerns. Cities' concerns include costs and the ratepayers; haulers' concerns include their business model. We're not always on the same page and a simple majority model may not work. It should be a mixed input model, stating all views and presenting that to council or others. Ristau said that we can make decisions and recommendations, but will the people respond?

Walsh began a brainstorming session for Evaluation Criteria for adding or removing materials from the collection list, and suggested contamination potential as a criteria. Dammann suggested that we look at other jurisdictions, such as Portland-Metro, for examples of what works and what contaminates. Bunzendahl suggested a measure of the total impact of a material including carbon impact, volume, weight and market factors. Marshall noted that King County is a leader in recycling. Others look to us for direction. Others are cutting materials from the recyclables list, low-value plastics for example. Livingston, having worked on hauler contracts, recognizes economic analytics and factors in contracting. That's how haulers make their business model. They need to succeed: if they fail, we fail. Atwood noted that we need to be flexible enough to respond to change, for example changing market value of glass. McLaughlin raised cost as a criteria: should we recycle materials that cost more to recycle than to landfill? The question is raised state-wide with other jurisdictions. Livingston noted that the county doesn't pay the costs, rather they are negotiated between ratepayers/cities and haulers. If the county leads, it leads with ratepayers' pocketbooks. Atwood stated that a long-term perspective is required. Is it cheaper to landfill? What happens when Cedar Hills is full? Livingston said that elected officials will have to weigh impacts and then make decisions.

Dawson added economic viability, environmental impact, consumer impacts and carbon impacts from hauling and processing to the list of criteria. Also, does 1 material contaminate others; and could alternative collection methods improve things. Dammann suggested a life-cycle analysis including greenhouse gas emissions. We shouldn't limit the discussion to laissez-faire economics, e.g. what's the true value of collecting & recycling EPS to our region. Marshall recommended investigating market synergies, i.e. if a material is removed from the bin, does it impact other market viabilities. King County needs to set a leadership example to support others' work. Marshall noted that Merlin Plastics in BC works with #s 3-7 plastics. They can't absorb much more feedstock, but other firms are also exploring low-value plastic processing.

Atwood suggested extending the meeting by 5 minutes. The group agreed. Walsh introduced the homework for the group: consider a RRTF recommendation to remove plastic bags/film and shredded paper from the blue bin. Walsh asked SWAC members to bring this recommendation back to their cities and consider advantages and hurdles. Atwood commented regarding

Walsh's ven diagram: what things might be cut from the list to reduce the confusion, contamination, and lower demand and value. What other options are there, for example reducing single-stream collection?

Marshall explained how dangerous the garbage-hauling occupation is: another hauler was killed last week while out of the truck. Having drivers out of the truck for hand-loading increases the danger. Atwood said that returning to multi-stream collection doesn't have to mean going back to how it was.

Bunzendahl stated that the primary purpose of the RRTF was local market development solutions, rather than reducing contamination that still won't make bales marketable. Walsh noted that cutting shredded paper and plastic film is a short-term action. Market-building is part of the long-term work. Bunzendahl requested that SWAC get the RRTF meeting minutes. Dawson requested RRTF agendas too; Dammann requested past minutes. Atwood noted that the RRTF minutes are great and very detailed.

Dawson inquired about any upcoming joint SWAC/MSWMAC meetings. Regarding the homework, Kasover will be out of town for the next month's meeting but wanted to share that Lake Forest Park passed a plastic bag, straw, and cutlery ban, effective January 1, 2019 with potential for temporary waivers if needed. She supports the plastic and shredded paper changes to the recyclables list.

Member and Public Comment

Phillipp Schmidt-Pathmann, NEOMER, stated that the meeting was a good discussion of recycling's challenges. He noted that separate collection of materials works in much of Europe and the occupation is not nearly as dangerous as in the US. In many cases, it is not possible to separate materials once they are collected together. An important question to ask is how to reduce the waste stream from the producer's end.

Respectfully submitted by: Morgan John