

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee**  
**Oct. 19, 2018 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.**  
**King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center**

Meeting Minutes

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>King County Staff</b>	<b>Others</b>
April Atwood – Vice Chair	Jamey Barker	Phillip Schmidt Pathmann, NEOMER
Gib Dammann	Scott Barden	Natalie Peterson
Karen Dawson	Beth Humphreys	Janet Pritchard, Republic Services
Keith Livingston	Annie Kolb-Nelson	Nancy O’Connor, Zero Waste Vashon
Barbara Ristau	Glynda Steiner	Dwight Miller
Penny Sweet	Pat McLaughlin	
Stephen Strader	Belinda Morrison-Brantley	
	John Walsh	
	Andrea Clinkscales	
	Bill Berni	
	Jeff Gaisford	
	Jennifer Jessen, Public Health	
	Alexis Posielski, Council Staff	
	Margaret Bay	

SWAC Chair Kevin Kelly was not present so Vice Chair April Atwood called the meeting to order.

**Minutes**

Penny Sweet requested her comment on Page 3 of the Sept. 21 meeting notes be amended to say MSWMAC members felt information on the Responsible Recycling Communications Toolkit was over-communicated. With that change, the Sept. 21 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

**Updates -- Solid Waste Division (SWD)**

Jeff Gaisford, SWD Recycling and Environmental Services Manager, gave an update on the status of the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan, noting that division staff and management are actively meeting with city councils and that briefings to 30 of the 37 cities will be completed by the end of October.

The six jurisdictions that have submitted letters of support for the Comp Plan are Tukwila, Normandy Park, Algona, Federal Way, Auburn and Black Diamond.

King County Councilmembers Gossett, Dembowski, Balducci and Van Reichbauer have signed on as Comp Plan sponsors but the Regional Policy Committee and County Council aren't expected to take any action until early 2019.

### **Public Engagement**

Oct. 10, King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn hosted a town hall at Maple Hills Elementary School where about 200 people attended, many expressing concerns about further development at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

SWD will host a public tour of the landfill on Saturday, Oct. 20, and about 35 people are signed up. A meeting for Cedar Hills Regional Landfill neighbor is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 23 at the King County Library Distribution Center in Issaquah.

### **Good News**

Q13 Fox covered the Recycle Right campaign in a story that aired on Oct. 3, strongly emphasizing the key messages the Responsible Recycling Communications Consortium developed around "Empty. Clean. Dry". The story remains on the Q13 [website](#).

The Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station earned a "[Best Project](#)" award in the 2018 Government/Public Building category from Engineering News Record Northwest, an industry publication that covers engineering, architecture and construction news.

### **Requests for Information**

John Walsh, SWD staff, shared a list of proposers who responded to a Request for Information on ways to increase regional recycling rates. Fourteen proposals are being reviewed by SWD staff and management. Recommendations about which ones should be referred to a Request for Proposal process will be brought before the advisory committees in early 2019.

Gib Dammann, Vashon Island, noted that Zero Waste Vashon's compost facility proposal was not on the list. Gaisford noted that SWD has been in many conversations with Zero Waste Vashon. Dammann asked for Zero Waste Vashon's proposal to be included on the Request for Information proposer list.

### **MSWAAC updates**

Penny Sweet noted that upcoming meetings will be affected because of change in schedules related to December holiday. There was a move to take December off and there will be a joint meeting in January. The SWAC committee then unanimously voted to also cancel a December meeting.

### **[Responsible Recycling Task Force Short-term Recommendations – Curbside Recycle Bin](#)**

Gaisford and Walsh presented a follow up to the last meeting over what goes into recycle and compost bin, and went over the homework assigned to members to review the language in their contracts as part of preparing for possible RRTF recommendations to remove plastic bags/film and shredded paper from the recycle bin.

The presentation also focused on principles and long term goals around the minimum standards outlined in the Comp Plan for plastics, cardboard, paper metal. The question for committee members: Should we add others to the minimum standards list?

Principles to consider include the need for continued recycling in response to China Sword and to keep promoting the need for customers to recycle better by making sure binned materials are empty, clean and dry. Avoiding frequent changes is important to avoid customer confusion, which means there should be a high bar set for adding or removing recyclable items.

Longer term goals include recycling more and more types of materials.

Customer confusion about recycling is pervasive because cities and haulers have different standards and rules and which materials are accepted in the bin, which underscores the driving need for consistency that includes leveraging communication to educate customers.

Gaisford went to criteria for removing materials, which includes:

- Contamination – are materials contaminating comingled recyclables?
- Environmental impacts of products and their lifecycles, looking long term
- Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) capability – can they actually sort and process these materials, and what are customers willing to pay for?
- Alternative collection, such as drop-off or take-back sites.
- Costs. How much are we willing to pay? People could be willing if there are big environmental benefits.

This month's question is around collecting plastic bags and film and shredded paper in curbside recycling carts and whether the problems these items cause should merit their removal from being collected in the recycling cart.

Seattle did a study of how plastics bags and films are affecting operations at the MRF where their materials are processed. The study found that the MRF was only able to remove about 25 percent of the plastic bags during the pre-sort process. The remaining bags consistently contaminate other baled commodities. While plastic bags and film make up roughly 0.2% of incoming materials by weight, approximately 20-30% of recycling center labor is attributed to dealing with these materials.

For example, shredded paper often creates litter and becomes problematic at the MRF.

Sweet noted this was a big point of discussion at the Sept. 14 MSWMAC meeting, where members agreed to support a ban on plastic bags and film, but requested more data on shredded paper.

Gaisford said that Seattle is part of the task force that supports the recommendations to remove the materials and to make this universal in the county to for consistency.

Sweet asked for clarifications on concerns about shredded paper, and Gaisford said one city talked to their hauler and they said it's not a problem to collect it, but it's important to poll the haulers and the MRFs, because a Department of Ecology study documented the issues with shredded paper, and that City of Bellevue wants to know if there are markets for materials that come from community paper shredding events. Keeping materials separate makes it more marketable and reduces the contamination issue. Still think its good idea not to have it in.

Keith Livingston noted that most paper waste including shredded paper ends up in a plastic garbage bag because customers are directed to bag it. Gaisford noted the noted extra handling needed for bagged shredded paper and said that's part of the MRF problem as well.

Barbara Ristau noted that special handling and requirements around which locations can take certain wastes is complicating disposal.

It was then noted that MSWMAC last month was onboard with a letter recommending the removal of plastic bags and film from the list of materials collected in curbside bins.

Dammann asked about looking at organic plastic bags and whether this would be a good option to bag shredded paper. In addition, last month Dammann suggested Waste Connections be invited to a task force meeting. Gaisford affirmed he would send an invitation to Waste Connections.

An advisory letter recommending the removal of plastic bags, plastic film and shredded paper from bags would cover communications and education and contracts and facilitate better communication and rollouts.

Atwood asked about the homework to review contracts. Gaisford said contracts might say "paper" and not "shredded paper", and messages about plastic bags and film weren't in every contract. Only 17 cities accept plastic bags and film in their blue bins.

Sweet said theses inconsistencies are concerning, and Gaisford said Recology cities collect bags and that there is support to move forward with removal from the bin.

Atwood asked about the market for plastic film and bags, and Gaisford said there's an active market. If it's collected separately it tends to be cleaner, but collecting it in a comingled bin is not an ideal option.

Sweet commented that Amazon directs people to take their shipping bags to a grocery store that takes back plastic grocery bags, though many grocery retailers have discontinued these programs. No one is currently working with the stores to revive the program but the time may be here to do it if plastic bags and film are not going to be accepted in recycling bins. Gaisford noted that many cities have adopted plastic bag bans and while it doesn't eliminate bags in the system, it reduces litter and marine debris.

Dammann said the Vashon IGA collects bags and any clear plastic but requests that customer direction and education be uniform and that imposing a system that won't work for all isn't desirable.

Gaisford said uniform guidelines are part of the plan for 2019.

Ristau expressed disappointed that there's not more effort to work with the stores since it's the easiest way to safely dispose of the bags, and likes the idea of imposing responsibility on the retailer since they're the ones distributing the bags to customers.

Gaisford noted the reason the takeback programs were shuttered is because the bags became acceptable as a blue bin item but we now know that's likely not the right approach.

Atwood said it sounds unclear because some items can be turned in at other collection sites, and that putting so much responsibility on consumers to properly dispose of items like plastic bags or shipping envelopes is very frustrating and unfair to consumers motivated to recycle.

The committee then took up consideration of a recommendation to ban plastic bags, plastic film and shredded paper from the blue bins.

Karen Dawson said Cedar Grove would be supportive because plastic can end up in organics, even from shredded paper that may contain plastic cards or stickers. Cedar Grove's contracts are with haulers not cities, so there are glitches in the system. Cedar Grove will have a new list January 1 of acceptable materials at their facility that will specify no shredded paper in compost bins.

Atwood expressed concern about the potential for more plastic in the garbage and less recycling. Gaisford said there's a risk of creating unmarketable materials or materials with little or no value, and that looking to grocers or even the plastic industry to help could be an option.

Ristau thinks plastic is on people's radar with because of the Great Garbage Patch in the Pacific Ocean, so people may have a concern about it.

Janet Pritchard of Republic Services commented that shredded paper gets everywhere. That it even gets into loads of glass, cans and other material. Handling it requires a lots of labor, it's very expensive, the material doesn't bale well, limiting its potential as a valued commodity.

Jennifer Jessen from Public Health – Seattle & King County commented that there are large shredders in the Kent area that could be a potential resource due to their ability to shred and bale materials right away. Gaisford noted that RES staff have already reached out to them.

The committee then held two votes. The first vote on removing plastic bags from the bin received five "Yes" votes, zero "No" votes and one not voting. The second vote on removing shredded paper from the bin received 6 "yes votes ...

#### **[Update on the South County Recycling Transfer Station \(SCRTS\) Project](#)**

SWD staff Andrea Clinkscales presented (LINK) on the status of the South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS) Project, which will replace the aging Algona Station built in the 1960s. The new station will improve service and to bring a state of the art facility to south county that offers recycling services currently unavailable at the Algona facility.

The new SCRTS facility will improve service and convenience for customers, and feature a tipping floor, scale house plaza, moderate risk waste facility, green building features and public art. Part of the project plan includes straightening a portion of the West Valley Highway that many community members felt offered a limited sightline.

Guiding principles of the construction are safety, efficiency, customer service, green building and community engagement, and extensive engagement with employees through workshops to help shape preliminary design.

SWD has been working closely with City of Algona, the host community and plans a December open house at Algona City Hall. SWD will also begin recruiting members for design advisory group, or DAG, to solicit community involvement. There is a focus on engaging with community-based to bring together diverse stakeholders.

Strader asked which employees were engaged in the design process, and Clinkscales replied every employee was involved through All-Hands meetings that took place in August and September.

Livingston asked about the characteristics of the Algona community and commented that the area of South County is growing because of affordable housing. Clinkscales replied it is a small town nestled amid many jurisdictions including Auburn and Federal Way that appears to be growing in diversity. Russian, Korean and Spanish are widely spoken and that SWD is doing an equity impact review to more thoroughly analyze demographics, which will help shape outreach with communities.

Strader asked if an Environmental Impact Statement was completed and Clinkscales noted one had been done during siting.

The facility will likely collect yard waste for composting.

Livingston noted that the property footprint is 19 acres and that slopes and other site issues could limit buildable area. Clinkscales noted there are urban transfer stations that are creatively designed with small footprints. She also responded to Livingston's inquiry about the future of the current Algona site, saying that the property will be returned to the city when the facility closes.

Clinkscales will return to present at SWAC next month.

### Area 8 Updates

Scott Barden, SWD staff, presented a virtual tour of the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill that highlighted the dedication and training of the operations staff. The facility has earned several awards from the Solid Waste Management Association of North America, or SWANA. Operators are certified by SWANA to employ best management practices for solid waste as well as leachate, gas, and wastewater, and carry out a number of environmental controls to protect communities. The staff are also committed to efficiencies that improve operations and save money.

The landfill spans 460 acres and is surrounded by a 460-acre buffer. SWD has a partnership with Bio Energy Washington to process and sell the methane gas harnessed from the landfill, which generated \$8 million in revenue last year that was returned to ratepayers. A pilot project at the landfill to fuel fleet vehicles with compressed natural gas (CNG) has resulted in a 40 percent offset in diesel usage.

Employees work hard to reduce impacts to nearby neighbors. Specially trained Nasal Rangers do daily odor checks six times a day, and are on site 24 hours a day. The facility also attracts an array of wildlife including deer, eagles and elk, which the employees are very proud of helping to protect through responsible environmental management of the landfill.

Margaret Bay, SWD Staff, presented on the status of Area 8, which is the next landfill cell that will go into operation after Area 7 reaches capacity and closes.

Her presentation outlined how environmental controls including a complex underdrain system and clay and geosynthetic liners were put into place to increase safety and reduce environmental risk and the potential for later added costs.

Construction of Area 8 began in 2017 and will conclude next year. The liners are largely in place.

There were no questions for either presenter.

### **Member and Public Comment**

Karen Dawson asked about the SWAC Code of Conduct form members sign, and pointed to specifics around attendance noting that some members seem to miss a large number of meetings. She also asked how many positions on the committee are currently open.

Gaisford replied that attendance is tracked, and SWD staff Dorian Waller is working on recruitment that includes a goal of increasing member diversity. SWD Director Pat McLaughlin said that these are issues that should be future SWAC action items committed to more communication around vacancies and membership changes.

There are currently four representative areas open on the SWAC: Agricultural; Labor Representative Teamsters Local 117; Recycling Industry; Waste Management Industry.

How open is process and how broadly does the recruitment go? Rep areas open: Agricultural, labor rep 117, recycling industry, waste management industry.

Atwood inquired about the recent public meetings, and McLaughlin replied that the town hall hosted by Councilmember Reagan Dunn on Oct. 10 meeting was very well attended with many concerns about landfill plans. Dawson then mentioned legislation Dunn prepared that would require SWAC to include at least one representative within a mile of the landfill. McLaughlin affirmed SWD is very supportive of the legislation and will track and report back on its progress.

Community member Phillip Schmidt-Pathmann, NEOMER, gave public comment. He attended the town hall meeting hosted by Councilmember Dunn on Oct. 10 and recapped some of his

observations that about 200 people showed up and that many would like the landfill shut down by 2028. He said he heard attendees voicing complaints about birds and odors, and that many would prefer a waste-to-energy facility.

Respectfully submitted by Annie Kolb-Nelson