

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
January 18, 2019 - 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 | Lane Covington | Janet Pritchard, Republic |
| Elly Bunzendahl | Jeff Gaisford | Cynthia Foley, Sound Cities Association |
| Joe Casalini | Pat McLaughlin | Steve Bergman, Zero Waste Vashon |
| Karen Dawson | Annie Kolb-Nelson | Phillip Schmidt-Pathman, NEOMER |
| Phillippa Kassover | Dorian Waller | Nancy O’Connor, Zero Waste Vashon |
| Kevin Kelly - Chair | Pat McLaughlin | |
| Keith Livingston | John Walsh | |
| Ken Marshall | Hilary Leonard | |
| Stephen Schrader | | |
| Penny Sweet | | |
| Barb Ristau | | |
| | | |

Minutes

Minutes of the November SWAC meeting were unanimously approved.

Public and Member Comment

Kelly notes that last meeting there was discussion around moving public comment to the beginning of each meeting. Doing so would give the committee a chance to consider public comment and is consistent with other meetings. Comments should ideally relate to agenda items, but can be open.

There was no public comment

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin provided SWD updates:

Comp Plan

The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Comp Plan) is progressing and has broad regional support. In January the Regional Policy Committee (RPC) reviewed the plan. They proposed Striker amendments for clarity and intend to take action at their next meeting in February.

SR-99 Viaduct Closure

With the cooperation of Kirkland, SWD modified our traffic impact by extending hauler operational hours and adding drivers. We have found the additional hours have not been

necessary and the division expects to resume normal business operations within the week. We retain the right to modify hours again while the viaduct is closed, but do not expect it will be necessary.

Bunzendahl made the point that Viaduct traffic during the week was lessened precisely because people shifted their behavior and made alternative plans. It's possible that more people will be encouraged to drive again in the coming weeks. McLaughlin responded that we are being flexible in our response and are closely monitoring three metrics: hauler travel times from Houghton to Cedar Hills, ability to clear trailers at Houghton, and if trailers are empty for start new shift. If these things are happening, changes won't be necessary.

Organics Compost Summit

The summit is a regional planning effort to clearly understand the challenges to developing the market for compost. It will take place over two days, March 6th and April 17th. The summit brings to the table policy makers, landscapers, agricultural operations, processing firms, and others. There is a substantial need to improve marketability as organics (food and yard waste) make up the largest material volume in the landfill.

Kassover asked if the work group is by invitation only. McLaughlin responded it is invite only and among the participants will be members of SWAC and MSWAC. We will be able to share updates at the March meeting and we anticipate there will be recommendations for the committee to weigh-in on.

South County Recycling and Transfer Center (SCRTS)

We are continuing to move forward in the SCRTS design process. In December we hosted an open house attended by community members and elected officials. A grade-separated floor design was selected, which is the preferred option by our employees. Commercial haulers tend to like the separation because it keeps commercial traffic separate from residential self-haulers. Other design parameters will be determined throughout the 2019 design phase.

KUOW Interview

Kevin Kelly and Pat McLaughlin participated in a KUOW [interview](#) with Bill Radke on his show The Record. They discussed "wishful recycling" and the importance of proper waste disposal. The segment aired on January 16.

Casalini asked if there was feedback on the KUOW show and Pat said he did not receive any from the public, but got a positive response from SWD and Recology employees.

Kelly commented the coverage came on the heels of an earlier KUOW story on recycling, which demonstrates the level of public interest. He hopes they will be invited back to continue the conversation.

O'Connor noted the importance of not having recyclables be wet and asked how people keep things dry if they are putting rinsed items in comingled bins.

Kelly responded that each bale is determined to have a certain moisture level. Rinsing items is good but dry is still important because moisture is especially problematic for fibers, such as

paper and cardboard. McLaughlin referenced “Empty Clean Dry” and commented that allowing items to air dry and not putting materials in the bin that contain liquid is important.

Casalini echoed what Kelly said and added that wet paper bales will be rejected by international buyers. Once cardboard is wet it is difficult to dry out and often molds in transit.

Gaisford referred to the work of the Communications Consortium and education about keeping materials dry. People will be hearing more about this next month.

Marshall noted he often observes open curbside bins getting rained on.

Pritchard noted that moisture contamination often comes from commercial and multifamily dumpsters with open lids. When issues are observed, we should be speaking with owners.

Kassover also commented on multifamily recycling challenges and wants to make sure that zoning codes allow for good recycling practices.

Gaisford said they’ve worked with cities on sample language to include in city codes.

Casalini asked about the involvement of King County in determining whether to put debris in the old SR-99 tunnel. Gaisford explained that it was Seattle’s and WSDOT’s decision and King County wasn’t involved.

MSWAC updates

Sweet stated the committee voted to remove “Management” from the name, but an amendment to King County code is still needed to make the name change final.

Sweet also noted there was good discussion of the Responsible Recycling Task Force recommendations. Waller added that Sweet is now the Mayor of Kirkland.

Committee Roster and Recruitment

Waller presented the current SWAC [roster](#) and the [status](#) of the recruitment of new members. During 2018 overall attendance was at 80 percent. Committee members Dawson and Atwood had the best attendance.

Standard practice is that members must attend a set number of meetings, and in 2018 some members missed more than half of meetings. Kelly noted that attendance is important because members of the advisory committee need to be informed to carry out their role. In the future, those who are unable to attend should notify Waller in order to excuse their absence. Marshall pointed out that he called in prior to missing his two meetings.

There are currently seven open positions in several categories and applications are under review. The goal is to have the roster to council in the next couple of weeks. Kassover asked to clarify that the recycling category needs someone in the industry and not just an interested advocate.

Kelly noted that it is everyone's responsibility to help recruit members, and encouraged them to get in touch with Dorian for recommendations. McLaughlin and Waller both noted that social media and engaging various groups and organizations is another means of recruitment, especially members of color.

Waller went over the 2019 Work Plan topic areas that include Responsible Recycling actions, Multi-family recycling, local household hazardous waste, and more.

Waller asked members for support on the Comp Plan and asked SWAC members to consider speaking to the County Council and their City Councils.

Cedar Hills Landfill Update

McLaughlin's [presentation](#) covered recent questions posed by community members over the past several months relating to water quality protection, compliance with formal agreements, responsible landfill gas management and the possibilities for a future waste-to-energy facility.

McLaughlin touched on the landfill history and how regulatory changes drove improvements to operations and community standards. Cedar Hills currently receives about 2,550 tons of garbage daily and the landfill is expected to reach capacity in 2028. It's important to start thinking now about future options.

We aim to not just meet environmental standards, but exceed them. Landfill gas is measured at 100 parts per million which far exceeds regulatory requirements in order to ensure operations don't have a negative impact on the environment or public health. Gas is collected very early in the system and containment of gas is a high priority. Compaction of waste, measured in pounds per cubic yard, allows the landfill to maximize capacity.

Instead of flaring the gas, we partner with Bioenergy Washington (BEW). About 96 percent of the gas is collected and purified to produce enough energy to heat 19,000 homes. The Cedar Hills' gas system is largest system of its type in the nation.

EPA regulates gas measurement methodologies and holds us accountable for managing all gas produced. Operations use waste characterization studies to accurately monitor gas production and we measure the gas going into the pipeline to the onsite BEW facility. Additionally, BEW and Puget Sound Energy carefully measure the quantity of the gas they purchase. Cedar Hills Landfill has won several awards for operational excellence from SWANA. Our goal is to remain on track to become carbon neutral by 2025.

McLaughlin then clarified the stated goals in the Comp Plan are to maximize the life of the landfill through additional development. He noted that the Comp Plan does not get into the design and permitting details, which are separate processes that will include public engagement. McLaughlin also emphasized the commitment to honoring formal agreements with neighbors, and notes that those requirements are specified in the Council's proposed Striker Amendments.

The presentation touched on the unlined areas of the landfill and how we are taking care of these legacy areas.

There are 600 gas wells at the landfill and all are monitored. We went from a pressurized to a vacuum system which eliminates gas releases in the event of a pipeline break. The result is higher quality gas with improved marketability.

There is a regional aquifer under Cedar Hills. We regularly monitor the groundwater coming in and leaving the landfill. One challenge is we are downstream from a Superfund Site, Queen City Farms. The site was an open dumping ground in the 1960s that received barrels of chemicals. The groundwater leaving our site is cleaner than when it arrived and is shown to exceed federal drinking water quality standards.

Today's landfill cells are fully contained. In the 1980s a shallow aquifer with contaminated groundwater was discovered onsite and SWD is actively seeking remediation to clean it up. If nothing is done, the contaminated water could reach the regional aquifer by 2058. That said, it is not currently moving and poses no imminent threat to other water sources.

Livingston asked about whether this presentation would be given to other cities and jurisdictions. He recommended adding slides that underscore the history of compliance, monitoring and responsible site management.

Kassover noted that people are likely to not know about the nearby Superfund site and its history. McLaughlin said he would find [resources to share](#).

Casalini asked about aquifer depth and McLaughlin will provide that information once it's confirmed. McLaughlin also noted the aquifer is unlikely to move because of the density of the soil.

Casalini offered a reminder that in the ordinance that created MSWAC, King County Council stated they would not build another landfill or an incinerator within the county.

Bergman asked how much CO₂ is contributing to gas production and if geothermal potential at the landfill had been evaluated. McLaughlin responded that he did not have the data handy, but we do have complete gas characteristics reports available. Livingston added that it would be difficult to permit and retrofit Cedar Hills for geothermal opportunities.

Bergman asked what happens with the leachate and McLaughlin responded we do some pretreatment then discharge it to the South Treatment Plant in Renton.

McLaughlin also clarified that a Waste-to-Energy plant could be a viable option in the future but that we cannot site, design, permit and build one before the current landfill reaches capacity. McLaughlin also said it could possibly require legislative changes.

He emphasized that maximizing landfill capacity is the best decision for now, but that we know we can't stop planning and must continue to look for future solutions. He also acknowledged that any future decisions must be representative of regional needs.

Casalini added that SWD should make it clear that the landfill closure does not end operations. King County must care for the facility for 30 years after closure.

Responsible Recycling Task Force Report and Recommendations

Kelly introduced Gaisford to present the recommendations and next steps from the Responsible Recycling Task Force Report.

Atwood offered that the task force included Seattle so the report truly reflects a regional effort.

Gaisford [presented](#) the six goal areas as well as the proposed plan for further discussion. For the next six months SWAC will go over the action items and ask for feedback that will be addressed at the subsequent meeting.

The task force had 28 members, 10 observers, and 11 industry and nonprofit representatives that studied financing, policies and other issues facing recycling. The 27 page report is available [online](#).

Goal 1:1A. Develop consistent principles around curbside recycling statewide. King County will look to Recycle BC and other extended producer responsibility programs for potential replication.

Goal 1: 1B Legislation that supports market development and local recycling infrastructure. There isn't a bill number yet, but we will keep committee apprised. We would provide comments to the legislature.

Goal 1: 1C. Refine packaging and product stewardship. Two companion bills (house bill 1204, house bill 5397) would require plastic packaging producers to finance and plan for effective management of all plastic packaging. First hearing is Jan. 22.

Marshall noted this is a worldwide issue and that there are companies getting on board with compostable plastics.

Kelly noted The Alliance to End Plastic Waste, a group of companies dedicated to reducing or eliminating plastic packaging has pledged over one billion dollars to the effort. Atwood added that Proctor & Gamble is involved.

Goal 1: 1D Advocating for Responsible Recycling policies with our local elected officials. As an example, Kassover shared that she intends to circulate the report to the Lake Forest Park City Council and ask them to adopt it. She sees the report as a guide for concepts we all recognize as important. By showing support, SWAC and MSWAC members can help these ideas become part of the public conversation.

Goal 1: 1E. Develop a beverage container stewardship program similar to one in Oregon. Work on this wouldn't start until 2020.

Goal 5: 5C. Supports “reusable bag” legislation. Bill 5323 would impose a 10 cent surcharge on paper bags and ban single-use plastic bags. Hearing is on Jan. 22.

Gaisford noted many of these issues are at the state level and asked how SWAC members want to be informed, noting that MSWAC members asked for email updates. Kelly said and SWAC members agreed they too would like to be included on the email updates to the MSWAC members.

Goal5: 5B. Remove plastic bags, film, and shredded paper from regional recycling. There is a draft letter for SWAC to consider supporting. MSWAC received a copy and are currently reviewing it. Gaisford acknowledged there is still much work to discuss. He also noted the Communication Consortium will make recommendations on public education and communication.

Atwood clarified that the proposal to remove plastic bags and film and shredded paper came to the task force from Ecology’s 2016 report, before China Sword. The chronology is important because it demonstrates that these issues have been a concern for some time. Kelly agreed and asked whether members could support moving ahead with the letter given a corrected timeline.

Kassover agreed we should credit the Department of Ecology and added that the missing piece still is what happens to materials if they aren’t collected at the curbside. The letter is an opportunity to educate about alternatives for disposal.

Marshall proposed the content be deferred to the chairs and subsequent drafts could be circulated back to the committee for review.

Atwood asked for clarification about what people need to do with the materials if they are instructed to not put them to the comingled recycling. Gaisford noted another action item in the report addresses this issue. It proposes we support a robust WRAP program. He acknowledged that it is possible we need to have that system in place before the recommendation is implemented.

Marshall commented that we have for years instructed people to put shredded paper into bags. Initiating change will require a lot of education.

Casalini noted that stores used to take back bags and Gaisford asked whether we should reinvest in those programs.

Kassover commented MSWAC and SWAC should clearly state in the last section of the letter they are going to bolster and improve these programs. The second step will be what people do with the materials. She asked for a motion to move forward with the letter given SWD staff in conjunction with chair and vice chair will edit the documents to state the responsibility of the committee in strengthening collection systems for plastic bags, paper and film and advising where these products can go if not in curbside collection.

Kelly made motion. Bunzendahl seconded the motion.

Atwood asked what pressure we can bring to bear on the chemistry industry that's claiming their bags are recyclable in addition to the legislation banning bags.

McLaughlin noted that SC Johnson approached King County about recycling, which is an encouraging sign. We can use our political influencers and regional relationships to further a unified approach with these companies. We should strategize on our sphere of influence with these companies.

Livingston asked whether we can invite these representatives to our advisory groups.

Kelly called for a vote on the motion. One opposed, one abstention everyone else in favor. The motion favors. Kelly will send out a final copy of the letter.

O'Connor asked if the shredded paper from shred events goes to a recycler. Gaisford responded yes, that it's much easier when it's in this large bulk because it's not mixed in with other materials.

Kelly adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by: Hilary Leonard