

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
September 20, 2019 - 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>
Ken Marshall	Pat McLaughlin	Cynthia Foley, Sounds Cities Association
Kevin Kelly—Chair	Morgan John	Lane Covington, KC Councilmember Lambert
Gib Dammann	Dorian Waller	Heather Trim, Zero Waste Washington
Phillipa Kassover	Jeff Gaisford	
Karen Dawson	John Walsh	
Stephen Strader	Jamie Barker	
Barbara Ristau	Rory O'Rourke	
Keith Livingston	Annie Kolb-Nelson	
April Atwood – Vice-Chair	Lindy Honaker	
Penny Sweet		
Robin Friedman		

New Member

Dorian Waller introduced Robin Friedman, applying to be a new SWAC member. Her application is currently going through the approval process.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Kevin Kelly called the meeting to order and called for SWAC Chair and Vice Chair elections. Waller explained that Chair and Vice-Chair elections occur every September. Kevin Kelly, current Chair, expressed interest in continuing as Chair. No one else expressed interest in the position of Chair so Kelly's nomination was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.

April Atwood stated her interest in continuing as Vice Chair. No one else expressed interest in the Vice Chair position. Atwood's nomination was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Minutes

Minutes of the August SWAC meeting were reviewed and approved. Chair Kelly acknowledged the careful work of SWD's meeting minute-takers.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Updates

Solid Waste Division (SWD)

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin provided SWD updates:

Comp Plan

The Comp Plan was ratified by 34 cities. Now Ecology's 45-day review period begins. 95% of cities took action. Of the cities that took action, the cities that approved it represent 88.7% of the service area population. This is a strong approval rating and shows that the comp plan development process included many voices.

Keith Livingston asked why some cities did not approve?

McLaughlin responded that SeaTac, Snoqualmie, and Newcastle voted to reject the Plan. Concerns included impacts of Cedar Hills Regional Landfill on neighbors and the continued intrigue of Waste-to-Energy (WTE). McLaughlin offered that perhaps SWD wasn't effective enough in communicating that this is a plan through 2028 only. It does not state a final disposal solution. WTE is still on the table as an option. SWD is requesting that the three non-approving cities write letters to explain their vote and their concerns; McLaughlin will share those with the committees.

Cedar Hills Regional Landfill Redevelopment

The redevelopment plan for Cedar Hills Regional Landfill is underway. We are currently in the 60-day public comment period on the environmental impacts of proposed future development at Cedar Hills. SWD staff are reviewing comments now. There will be more opportunities for public engagement.

Eco-Repair Events

SWD has hosted numerous of these events where the public can bring a variety of products needing repair. Repair people are on hand to assess and repair products and keep them out of the trash.

Eastgate Parcel

SWD is moving to sell the Eastgate property. Located above the Factoria Recycling & Transfer Station, this SWD-owned parcel is now in a purchase-and-sale agreement with Congregations for the Homeless, a Bellevue-area men's shelter. SWD has owned this parcel for many years, and most recently used it as a construction staging area for the transfer station reconstruction. It was recently assessed at \$28 million. Cash is especially important to SWD now in the wake of the Construction & Demolition (C&D) ban. Implemented in 2018, the ban resulted in a significant drop in tonnage and revenue.

Kelly asked where the C&D material is going. McLaughlin responded that we hope it is going to regional C&D recycling facilities.

Penny Sweet asked if the property is being sold for its market value. McLaughlin stated that SWD must be made whole regarding the property value.

Phillipa Kassover commented that as an elected official, she hears from the smaller construction firms who are unhappy with the C&D ban. It forces them to drive much farther to dispose of C&D which increases costs, drive time, and congestion. McLaughlin directed Jeff Gaisford to inform SWD's partners, and Kassover in particular, of the network of firms that accept C&D. Kassover added that some of the material is going to Snohomish County.

Ken Marshall noted that the C&D ban adds around 3 hours to a haul of a roll-off bin as they must drive much further. Drivers previously would have driven to a closer transfer station. Gaisford stated that roll-off bins are not accepted at SWD facilities. Marshall responded that roll-offs have dropped at transfer stations. Stephen Strader recalled a sheriff who was assigned to follow C&D loads and verify proper disposal. Gaisford responded that SWD has a contract with the Sheriff's office but we're having trouble getting staff assigned to the C&D patrol.

Keith Livingston asked of the acreage of the Eastlake property. McLaughlin responded that it's about 9 acres.

Livingston asked for an update on the South County Recycling & Transfer Station project. McLaughlin responded that we're approaching the 30% design milestone, and we recently updated Algona mayor and staff.

Atwood requested an update on the Waste-to-Energy study happening in the County Executive's office. McLaughlin answered that we're expecting a final report on October 4th. We will share it and discuss it with the committees. McLaughlin expects it will have limited immediate impact but will inform future planning.

Ken Marshall asked for an update on Houghton – a new facility, land, and discussions with Kirkland. McLaughlin responded that SWD is meeting with the "core cities" on Monday September 23rd to initiate discussions on the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station process, how to approach siting, criteria, and engagement. Marshall requested an update after that meeting.

Karen Dawson requested an update on the Recycling & Resource Recovery Request for Information (RFI). John Walsh answered that SWD is reviewing options, looking at costs, and impacts on revenues. Dawson responded that a best practice is to inform respondents of the status of the project. Dawson noted that there was another solicitation too, one with a short response time. McLaughlin responded that we will take action and respond to those who did submit, telling them where we're headed. We will also work with our contracting group to develop a standard work process.

Extended Producer Responsibility

Gaisford updated the group on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) actions. Several legislators from California met in Seattle to review and discuss EPR programs in British Columbia and product stewardship programs in Washington State. Kassover asked for a summary of the take-aways from the event – are Washington legislators more informed? Might there be future action on EPR? Kassover's sense of the legislature last year was of limited awareness. Is it growing now? Gaisford explained that California nearly passed an EPR bill so that provided a great opening dialogue for the group, and there was lots of information to share. There's much work to do in the WA legislature but a study bill did pass which will help raise awareness.

MSWAC

Sweet provided a MSWAC update – MSWAC covered similar information as the SWAC agenda except for the Eastgate Property news.

Labor Strike

Kasover asked for an update on the Republic Services labor action. McLaughlin explained that SWD received notification of a risk of a Teamsters 174 strike, stemming from an unresolved Republic/ Teamsters contract dispute in Massachusetts. SWD activated its strike preparation plan so we can be as ready as possible. We expect to have very little time to react – as in several hours. Expected impacts are potential delays in collection. After several days, garbage could start to pile up at the curb/dumpster.

Marshall explained that the dispute began in Massachusetts, spread to Georgia, and California. Republic is not playing fair with this negotiation. Locally there's a no-strike clause. However members will honor a picket line and will not cross one to work. Regarding Factoria, there's 1 way in and 1 way out. All haulers know that once a Republic truck goes in with a replacement driver, traffic backs up because others won't go in. During the last strike, Marshall counted 47 trucks backed up, plus other self-haulers. It's a safety issue for others who use the Factoria access road (SE 32nd St) for work or business. Labor disruptions at Houghton are less disruptive for haulers and local business. McLaughlin will work with all the haulers to mitigate any impacts. Marshall followed that he doesn't want the labor dispute here – it's disruptive, and we have good labor/business relations here.

Responsible Recycling Program Update

John Walsh presented on the Responsible Recycling Task Force's (RRTF) plan for Action 3A, harmonizing curbside materials.

The goal of Action 3A is to develop a process and criteria for adding/removing materials in the curbside recycling programs that is consistent with the responsible recycling framework. The task force expects to have a proposed list of acceptable materials in 2019, then review the list for additions/subtraction in the second quarter of 2020. The guiding principles for this action are:

- Take the Long Term View – minimize adding or cutting approved materials;
- We Want to Recycle More – removing some materials may help reduce contamination overall and thereby increase recycling; and
- Strive for Consistency – consistency across the region is a plus.

Regarding shredded paper– last year the focus was on shredded paper in the recycle bin but this year it's on including shred in the Green Bin and how it impacts the organics process. Shredded paper itself is not considered a contaminant but plastic often gets shredded with the paper. Shredded plastic has very little weight but a large impact visually and quality-wise.

Criteria for assessing materials are:

- # of Jurisdictions Collecting Material
- Estimated Tonnage
- Greenhouse Gas Impact Reduction
- Contamination
- Processing Issues

“Market Viability” was removed as a shredded paper criteria because it was redundant with “Contamination”. SWD sent a questionnaire to Cedar Grove and Lenz Composting. Cedar Grove

responded but Lenz stated that the questionnaire was too simplistic for a complex issue. The region should focus on current contaminants such as glass or plastic.

Walsh talked through the “Shredded Paper” table on slide #14. 90% of KC jurisdictions collect shredded paper; it comprises less than 5% of tonnage; collection provides a medium level of GHG reduction; contamination issues are of a medium level owing to shredded plastic; and processing issues are ranked high, because of the effort to remove plastic contamination.

Dawson notes that it is rare in collection contracts. Walsh noted that it’s good to clarify what is in a contract versus what’s messaged to the people. Kelly asked how EPA’s WARM model ranks collecting shredded paper. Walsh explained that WARM doesn’t cover composting shredded paper so we used the WARM recycling value as a proxy for composting. Sweet recommended removing that row on the table. Walsh continued with alternatives for handling shredded paper:

- Stop shredding – is it necessary and if so, for what materials;
- Emphasize shred-a-thons – city-sponsored and sponsored by a bank/realtor...; and
- Put it in the trash – this may be better than contaminating other products/processes.

Next steps at October’s meeting are to approve or disapprove of this process and criteria for assessing shredded paper, then approve, disapprove, or table putting shredded paper in the Green Bin. Following a decision, these steps are suggested for implementation:

- A letter from advisory committees to city leadership and staff;
- Marketing and messaging campaigns;
- Contract changes and/or enforcement; and
- Bans at SWD facilities.

Barbara Ristau stated that most people who shred at home do so for confidentiality or for securing data. Is that concern still warranted? Is that data loss still a risk? Gaisford mentioned that the City of Bothell worked with their attorney to determine what’s needing shredding. Gib Dammann asked that unincorporated areas be considered when assessing shred event needs.

Dawson noted that Seattle is viewed as a leader or bellwether on these topics. If Seattle does something, people often think that it’s coming for the rest of the region. So Seattle needs to be engaged in this now. Are they? Gaisford responded that they are engaged and there’s ongoing dialogue. Dawson recommends noting when contracts are up for renegotiation – that’s the time for SWD to influence contract provisions and make a real impact.

Communications Consortium Update

Annie Kolb-Nelson presented an update on improving consistent regional messaging through the RRTF’s Communication Consortium. “Recycle Right” and “Empty, Clean, and Dry” are examples of that messaging. King County, Bellevue, SPU, Recology, and Washington State Department of Ecology are members of the Consortium. This presentation will focus on best practices for diverting plastic bags and wrap from curbside bins. The Consortium is working with C+C to develop a campaign kick-off, to include a media event at the Recology MRF. Messaging will focus on preparing the public for upcoming changes and raising awareness - that bags and wrap are no longer allowed in recycle bins, explain why, and prepare the region for what’s next. It will be phrased as a “best practice”, not a “ban” or “policy”. Messaging will be ready prior to the MRF media event, and will include a communication toolkit with media

messages, mailing templates, etc. SWD sent a survey to partner cities to help develop the toolkit and will continue coordinating with the cities and haulers. Messaging will direct people to alternative plastic recycling options through social media, web updates, news articles, and paid media posts. Other work will include gathering data from waste characterization studies, MRFs, and other sources to develop baseline evaluation metrics and progress updates.

The primary messages are to keep bags and wrap out of the curbside recycle bin and use other means of recycling plastic such as collection points, so that all materials have the best chance of becoming new products. As a last resort, throw it out. The point is to recycle the most. Plastic mustn't interfere with other material recycling. The campaign will address equity issues – that not everyone has easy access to alternative drop off/takeback locations. Phase 2 in Q1 2020 will include continued outreach, updates, and expanding the takeback network.

Phase 3 involves a tentative Marketing Campaign in Q2 2020 - a retail/industry partnership MOU, expanded takeback locations, increased program visibility, and continued program updates.

Gaisford added that Seattle has applied for a grant to support communication on proper recycling.

Dawson asked where the collected plastic film goes. China? Gaisford responded it goes into Trex composite lumber but we need to continue discussions on this. If we collect something, it needs to have a market to go to.

Kassover commented that if we wish to change people's behavior, we need to clearly explain the positive result. Is the plastic going to a good place? If it is, that needs to be a primary message so people have a good feeling about it and then change their behavior. Dammann noted that the IGA grocery chain collects plastic bags at all their stores.

Atwood expressed concern about messaging and the order of tasks in the plastics program. If we initially tell people to throw bags/wrap away until the takeback network is stronger, it will be hard to change their behavior back to recycling. Atwood also noted that even for consumers who try and recycle everything already, there is still no choice with much packaging. Atwood asked if there is other work happening to change packaging upstream. Gaisford responded that Seattle is leading those conversations with industry.

Livingston voiced concern about pushing bags/wrap to the trash because it's problematic at landfills too. It becomes wind-borne, wraps around equipment, and it's a problem system-wide.

Kelly commented that this work doesn't get us to the root problem of single-use materials.

Marshall noted that several cities in this room have banned bags/wrap in the recycle bin. More bans makes a stronger point. Marshall added that having more takeback locations is important. Can SWD have collection points at our stations? Kassover expressed concern about the cost to customers to take plastic bags/wrap into a SWD station. Gaisford responded that there's no charge for bags/wrap. It's part of the "free recycling" at Shoreline and Bow Lake.

Dawson expressed concern about the growing infrastructure that supports increased use of single-use plastic. It's an ethical dilemma to work with the American Chemistry Council which actively opposes all plastic bans. We're relying a lot on Trex – is that the best use? Uses like that help the plastic industry thrive.

Sweet noted that urban dog owners need bags for dog waste – it's something to consider in this conversation - how to handle that need.

Kassover stated that Dawson's comments on ethics are important to consider at this time. City leaders can't always square ethics with practicality. Consumers are at the whims of industry that is completely irresponsible regarding single-use plastic. It's hard for consumers to find non-plastic products and packaging. City leaders need to legislate and otherwise support plastics reduction. Food safety is an example of plastic's benefits, but then there are consequences. We're seeing the continuing evolution – how to tackle the next transition of proper material use.

Strader noted that he objects to the continued attacks on "single-use" plastic. Why single out plastics? Many common products, like paper, cardboard, aluminum, tin cans..., are single-use but in his household, plastic disposables are most likely to be used more than once. Dammann responded that plastic is uniquely problematic - paper is compostable, aluminum is 100% recyclable...

Kolb-Nelson continued with her presentation. Phase 4 in Q3 2020 will address ongoing contamination with further education, feedback, and other means of motivating proper bag/wrap behavior. Cart tagging may inspire fruitful conversations at future committee meetings.

A shredded paper communication plan is in the works and will be a topic for outreach too. The MRF media event will be an opportunity to show what happens to shred at a MRF, with dust, blowing debris, and other issues. Marshall wondered how often shred events are held, and stated that they must be frequent. Gaisford commented that cities, banks, and realtors hold them. Kolb-Nelson suggested that people ask what really needs to be shredded. Kassover reiterated that people need to understand why a behavior change is the right thing to do. Then they're more likely to change.

Cleanup LIFT

Lindy Honaker provided an update on SWD's Cleanup LIFT tip fee discount program. Qualified customers get a \$12 discount on their transaction. To receive the discount, eligible customers show their ProviderOne, EBT, or ORCA LIFT card at the RTS entrance. This is one way SWD is supporting Equity & Social Justice principles. In 6 months we've counted over 2,000 cleanup LIFT transactions. Customers saved over \$24,000 so far on 430 tons of garbage, 64 tons of organics, and 1 ton of recycling. Cleanup LIFT has been used on 0.55% of all Self-Haul Transactions over the first 6 months. Other ongoing program activities include making Cleanup LIFT available at the Skykomish Drop Box, translation of materials into 9 languages, ethnic media outreach, signage, and outreach at eligibility sign-up locations. SWD continues to monitor the program and consider compliance actions and program improvements. Atwood asked if it's only valid with credit cards. Honaker responded that cash works too.

Member Comment

There was no member comment.

Kelly asked members to come prepared for next month's action items.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am