

**King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee  
February 21, 2020 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
King Street Center 8th Floor Conference Center**

Meeting Minutes

<b><u>Members Present</u></b>	<b><u>King County Staff</u></b>	<b><u>Others</u></b>
Ken Marshall	Pat McLaughlin	Cynthia Foley, Sounds Cities Association
Kevin Kelly—Chair	Morgan John	Lane Covington, KC Councilmember Lambert
Gib Dammann	Dorian Waller	Wendy Weiker, Republic Services
Phillipa Kassover	Jeff Gaisford	
Karen Dawson	John Walsh	
Lee Momon	Jamie Barker	
Barbara Ristau	Rory O'Rourke	
James Borsum	Annie Kolb-Nelson	
April Atwood – Vice-Chair	Lindy Honaker	
Penny Sweet	Tom Creegan	
Robin Freedman	Andy Smith	
Heather Trim	Janine Blaeloch	
	Margaret Bay	

**Financial Disclosure Packets**

Members are asked to complete their Financial Disclosure Forms.

**Regarding Printing of SWAC Meeting Packets**

Kevin Kelly explained that SWD will no longer print meeting packets unless requested by a member, owing to administrative and resource costs of printing and the commitment to zero waste of resources.

**Minutes**

Members reviewed minutes of the January SWAC meeting. The following changes were noted:

- Heather Trim requested that Ken Marshall be added to the “Members Present” table, as he was present.
- Trim also clarified that Senate Bill #6278 bans new water rights for commercial bottled water operations – it does not ban new water rights outright.
- Karen Dawson followed up on the topic, covered on page 8 of the January minutes, of SWAC supporting legislative issues.
- Phillipa Kassover noted a misspelling on page 5 – “cited” rather than “sited”.
- April Atwood noted that SWD staff Jamey Barker presented but was not listed as “present”.

Chair Kelly approved all suggested changes and moved to approve. Ken Marshall seconded, and the January minutes were approved. There were no changes proposed to the February agenda so the meeting proceeds.

## **Public Comments**

There was no public comment.

## **Updates**

### **Solid Waste Division (SWD)**

SWD Director Pat McLaughlin provided SWD updates:

#### **Media Coverage on Cedar Hills Landfill and Eagles**

Cedar Hills Landfill received a range of media coverage this week, primarily on bald eagles. SWD hosted interviews with KING5, KIRO, and Q13 on site and at King Street Center. USA Today covered landfilling and recycling issues. KING5 also covered recycling in King County and at Recology's MRF as well. Eagles at Cedar Hills is not a new concern. SWD does get complaints from neighbors about garbage dropped in yards. SWD is working on a wildlife mitigation plan, and has hired a wildlife biologist to discourage nesting and feeding. As the stories came out, a letter to the editor noted that birds at the landfill is human-caused problem – people are putting too much food waste in garbage.

Kelly asked that Dorian Waller send media links to both advisory committees.

#### **Other Cedar Hills News:**

- Over 3,700 landfill neighbors received invitations to an anonymous survey regarding landfill issues – how are neighbors impacted and how can SWD better engage with them. SWD will share survey results with both advisory committees.
- SWD received a \$36,000 grant from the Department of Ecology to install electric charging stations at Cedar Hills to support using low emission vehicles there.

#### **South County Recycling & Transfer Station**

On Tuesday February 25, Jacobs Consulting will present SWD the 30% design briefing for the South County Recycling & Transfer Station (SCRTS) – to include a proposed station footprint, primary features, traffic patterns, and more. It's time to lock in those basics to set a baseline for schedule and budget. Continued challenges include wetland mitigation – both off-site and on-site – and SWD's commitment to the Living Building Challenge's Petal certification.

Trim asked about a wetland site in Algona – Boeing gave it to Algona, it needs mitigation/attention, and there's potential for getting school kids involved in the restoration work too. McLaughlin will ensure that SWD's team is aware of it.

#### **January Storm Emergency Declaration**

The King County executive issued an emergency declaration regarding January storms. After a declared emergency, SWD can waive disposal fees – but hasn't done so yet. It may happen still so we're leaving that option open.

## **Legislative Updates**

Gaisford walked the group through the “2020 Legislative update; SWAC; February 2020” handout.

Regarding ESSB 5323, Kassofer asked what is the “technical fix” noted in the “ISSUES” paragraph. Trim explained that the bill had a hearing yesterday – the technical fix allows any jurisdiction that has a \$.10 fee to retain \$.10 or can lower it to \$.08 – the jurisdiction can choose.

April Atwood asked for explanation on SSB 6213 – polystyrene, recycling center. Gaisford responded that the Recycling Development Center has a broad mission to improve recycling markets – initially focused on paper, and plastic, but there are concerns about limiting it to certain materials.

Trim noted other topics from the February 20 legislative hearing: a null & void clause; will generate revenues to WA state; and stats were presented on paper bags.

- SB 6213 was slimmed down to exclude some products and accommodate some local industry.
- Solar panel bills were combined to one bill, HB 2389.
- Plastic food service products legislation, HB 1632 is in continuing negotiations.
- Recycled content bill, ESHB 2722 is based on the California bill: the goal is to align WA’s bill with the CA bill. It’s considered a middle ground approach with bipartisan support.
- SB 6278 regarding water rights for commercial bottled water is precedent setting for the entire US: would ban new water rights for commercial bottled water except in municipal emergencies. Other water rights may still be approved.
- Regarding flushable wipes: HB 2565 requires that if wipes are not flushable, packaging must clearly state that.
- SB 6430 concerns industrial waste and enjoys unanimous support. For any industrial waste sites, the Washington State Department of Commerce will help coordinate with other industry uses for environmental health, conservation of resources, and other needs.
- Regarding SSB 6213, expanded polystyrene, and the reference to the Recycling Development Center: Marylyn from Styro Recycle in Kent is concerned that her business would be hurt since she hires vulnerable populations – so wording is different now.

Karen Dawson explained the broad cross section of support for the compost bill including Recology, Association of Washington Businesses, and the Nature Conservancy. There’s unanimous support which is unusual in Olympia.

### **Northeast Recycling & Transfer Station**

Annie Kolb-Nelson & Tom Creegan presented the latest on NERTS and talked through the “Northeast Recycling & Transfer Station Project” presentation. Jacobs Engineering and EnviroIssues comprise the consultant team. No decisions have been made at this point – SWD is open to a transparent siting process and is encouraging the widest breadth of participation.

Ken Marshall provided some history of this project – it’s been around since 1993, with more studies in 1997 and 2003. He wonders when SWD will involve commercial haulers in planning.

The current Houghton location is centrally located. Why not keep it in that general area? Sammamish is far to the east, and Woodinville is far north. Marshall is concerned about traffic flow for haulers. Current location is easy to access from the freeway. The 2003 study identified 2 locations that are still available. Marshall doesn't understand the delay. A year ago, SWD talked about closing Houghton and directing waste to Factoria. Existing studies are good and can shorten the process.

Kolb-Nelson responded that haulers will be an important stakeholder group. Creegan understands the concerns about past stops and starts of this project. With the recent passing of the comp plan, it should continue now.

Trim wondered, given population increases, why not rebuild the existing Houghton station and build another? And SWD should consider a facility with multiple benefits: parking, a sports facility, housing, or other.

McLaughlin responded, regarding 2 stations that a single modern station should provide all needs for the growing region. Regarding other public benefits: SWD will definitely consider that.

Kassover explained that there are unique issues for those who live around the county line. Residents aren't ruled by the county line, and growth straddles the county line. What are the relations between King and Snohomish Counties regarding working together to provide solid waste needs?

McLaughlin responded that there are clear policies, but practically, customers will go where they're best served. Sometimes price determines that. In long term planning, political boundaries must be considered, but sometimes they're meaningless.

Kassover asked if KCSWD talks with Snohomish County's solid waste staff?

McLaughlin said yes, but we need more discussions with Snohomish and Pierce Counties and Seattle. For example, McLaughlin currently serves on a committee for common policy and logistical discussions, and will expand that type of cross-boundary work.

Kolb-Nelson and others at SWD are exploring how people get information. That helps SWD strategize how to counter misinformation and glean what information is most useful. SWD is now introducing the project to the public and emphasizing the need for the project. SWD found that there's little knowledge of it. SWD will tap into community voices, prepare for a citizen advisory group, and reinforce that "no" is not an option. Essential public facilities need to be sited where they are used. It's also an opportunity to educate the public on SWD's other activities – including sustainability and the Zero Waste of Resources Plan (ZWORP).

Marshall thanked all for the presentation. Time frame is concerning considering growth in the northeast corner of KC. He questions the need for all the work to find a host city. Penny Sweet has stated that Kirkland is ready to host. SWD should pursue that availability while it's there.

Kolb-Nelson responded that it's a good point. She can't speak for Sweet but it's important for other community members in Kirkland to have a voice too.

McLaughlin added that there's a state-dictated process for siting. We can't jump on one site – we need to find and assess alternative sites. We are looking at alternative processes to speed this up. The siting process also looks at functionality and services needed. Having said that, SWD encourages keeping the pressure on to move it along.

### **Rate Development Update**

Lindy Honaker presented the “Proposed Recycling Fee for 2021-22 Rate”. SWD does incur costs for “free” recyclables. Fees allow SWD to cover those costs. SWD's rate team is considering several fees, starting with a “Regional System Fee” to charge each customer on a per-transaction basis. Honaker clarified that \$15 million is the 2-year cost for SWD's recycling section. That's different from the fees that customers pay for curbside hauling services, which are paid to haulers, not SWD. Walsh clarified that SWD's costs for transfer station recycling are increasing. Direct costs are about \$1 million annually and expected to increase. There are additional indirect costs too – overhead etc. Honaker noted that a separate, Regional System Fee raises people's awareness of costs, and minimizes increases to other garbage fees which otherwise support recycling costs.

Kelly asked if SWD will look at impacts on contamination in curbside recyclables, and increased illegal dumping? The fee is needed but have we looked at that?

Honaker stated that we are considering that and will keep exploring it, especially for dumped mattresses. Regarding contamination, Gaisford wasn't sure how a fee would change that.

Gib Dammann assumes that more services offered will result in less contamination, like with food waste. Regarding raising rates, he would like to see specifically what services are being added. Expanded polystyrene, for example, and electronics – where's the money going?

Kassover inquired about what's collected at transfer stations and what's the customer base. Residential customers or businesses? She agrees with Dammann that if transfer stations are seen as a convenient drop-off resource, fees would be easier to accept.

Gaisford responded that perhaps newer stations can be full-service stations. Regarding who are the customers, SWD surveyed customers bringing bulky materials – appliances, yard waste, and wood waste. SWD can provide survey results.

Trim asked about the current tip fees for MSW now. The recycling fee is a good plan but SWD needs to charge more for hard-to-recycle products. Rates aren't structured well for dealing with consumer behavior.

Walsh explained that we're still figuring out what the fee will pay for. Mostly it will pay for ZWORP activities including new infrastructure and encouraging new practices before waste comes to transfer stations.

Ristau stated she's a customer - she goes to stations 4-5 times/year with cardboard, yard waste, recyclables, and other stuff.

Walsh noted that the Regional System Fee may not apply to fee-recycle items.

April Atwood supports using pricing to encourage and discourage behaviors. She asked if charging for recycling may discourage it.

Kelly responded that that doesn't match market reality.

Atwood understands that recycling isn't free but does a fee cause recycling to drop off? Are there other examples of fees to learn from?

Kelly stated that adding the \$4 universal fee helps to sustain a long-term recycling program.

Dawson supports transparency in pricing. A recycling fee for recycling is good. Then customers can make well-informed decisions, partly based on fees.

Kassover asks who would pay such a fee? Do all haulers go to stations? Commercial and self-haulers will pay it too?

McLaughlin answered that yes, haulers will pay it and may pass it on to customers – an estimated \$.04 increase to a monthly customer charge.

Honaker noted that most transactions are self-haul.

Kassover asked if yard waste comes mostly from landscapers? How to incentivize recycling, and who are we trying to incentivize? Regarding Illegal dumping, is it businesses, or is it individuals?

Walsh clarified that we wouldn't apply a new fee to CleanupLift customers. Regarding the number of transactions, recycling transactions are very few compared to MSW transactions.

Gaisford added that there is a recycling fee at curbside even if it isn't apparent, and in unincorporated areas, the recycling cost is itemized on a bill.

Marshall noted that lots of "recyclable" stuff isn't recycled now: 3-7 plastics and mixed paper often end up in garbage. If we want to prioritize recycling, there needs to be a way to pay for it when there's no value in it. It must be tied to the garbage rate.

Honaker continued with proposed fees for mattresses. SWD developed the proposed \$30 fee based on private sector rates.

Dawson looked at the What Do I Do With resource on SWD's site – the website needs updating. She's concerned about more mattresses getting dumped. Who are the private sector haulers?

Honaker responded that it's the mattress retailers – when you buy your new mattress, they will haul away the old mattress for a fee.

Honaker continued with proposed fee increases for Yard Waste. She explained the history of yard waste fees and a proposed new rate based on a cost recovery approach. The current rate hasn't increased in over 10 years.

Dammann stated that \$100/ton is getting too high – a landscaper will think of a ravine instead of paying that much.

Walsh noted that in 2018 we lost about \$300,000 on green waste costs. That drives up the MSW rate, which must support green waste collection.

Dammann explained that he's thinking of the 70% recyclables in MSW - he wants to encourage the right practices.

Marshall asked if yard waste customers will also pay the proposed \$4 universal fee too?

Honaker responded that we may only add the \$4 on MSW; not on the recycling menu.

Kelly asked what fees are proposed for yard waste? Honaker responded: the proposed new minimum fee is \$16 and the proposed per-ton rate is \$100. SWD had initially added the \$4 universal fee as well but is now considering \$4 on MSW only, not recycling transactions.

James Borsum noted that the proposed yard waste rates may be higher than competitors, and it seems like a steep increase. Kelly agreed that by percentage, it's a huge jump. Walsh reminded the room that SWD hasn't increased that fee for over 10 years.

Gaisford noted that most yard waste customers are paying the minimum charge.

Dawson stated that the Cedar Grove drop off fee is \$56/ton. What's SWD's goal? To be the last resort for green waste? Or for this to be a revenue generator? If people don't want to pay that much, are they referred elsewhere?

Honaker explained that it's an attempt to reach a point of cost recovery, a break-even point.

Dawson stated that people want to do the right thing – recycle. SWD's website must be accurate, with up to date information so all can make informed economic and environmental decisions.

Trim suggests that we should think more about consumer behavior, maybe proceed in a different way than what we're proposing.

Kassover stated that policy and finance don't go hand in hand well. Policy tries to achieve a bigger goal, but finances don't always follow. And it's not always clear what the mattress collectors do when they take mattresses away.

McLaughlin thanked the group for the excellent feedback: valuing greater transparency in charges and in what customers are getting. There's a third element: the environmental benefits to be gained by this fee.

Kassover asked what is happening to mattresses. Gaisford responded that they can and do come to CHLF. He doesn't know what happens to other mattresses. If SWD charges \$30 per, they won't come to CHLF.

Borsum asked why SWD doesn't address rate increases each year rather than with steep hikes? Honaker responded that smaller incremental changes are the new standard for SWD moving forward. We're also considering an overall rate restructure that's less dependent on the variability of a tipping fee. Walsh noted we're now beginning the rate review for the next biennial budget.

McLaughlin continued with the topic of more regular rate updates. Haulers and processors have already added service charges, so we're playing catch-up. SWD is expecting a sizable rate increase for 2021-22. Haulers are decoupling their rates from the commodity markets, and SWD is exploring that too.

### **Zero Waste of Resources Tour Update**

Andy Smith provided background on the Zero Waste of Resources (ZWOR) tours being planned for spring 2020. SWD is zeroing in on what to focus on for diversion. We're looking at new ideas for handling waste and diverting resources and are seeing clusters of innovation around the country. SWD is arranging 5 tours for different parts of the country: 4 tours are in the final planning stages; 1 in BC will be mid-2020, coordinated with Zero Waste of Washington.

Dawson asked for more details on Philadelphia – Smith explained that the city and surrounding area are getting up to speed with some cool innovative waste solutions.

Trim asked why the tours aren't spread out some more? McLaughlin responded that we want to see the innovations early on so we can begin discussing later in 2020.

Trim asked for more details on costs. Smith explained that SWD is still finalizing the plans. Lodging, airfare, and meal costs will be borne by each person, hopefully at group rates when available. Some local transportation, like tour busses or vans, is provided by SWD.

Dawson asked if SWAC will get lists of who's going? McLaughlin responded that we can discuss how to share that info. SWD staff is also planning on how to debrief so everyone understands what's seen and discussed. Dawson asked if MSWAC members have committed to certain trips? McLaughlin responded that yes there are commitments, although some cities haven't identified the actual person yet.

Marshall suggested that SWD consider streaming or videoing parts of the tours. McLaughlin noted that some facilities will not allow filming or pictures but we're considering how to film or stream pre- and post-tour discussions.

Smith noted that the tour dates listed on the powerpoint presentation are firm.

Kassover stated that every trip conflicts with something else on her schedule - she echoes other's requests to bring info back for the group.



**Member Comment**

Atwood asked for an update on plastic wrap collection practices, now that it's not allowed in the blue bin. Is there data, what sort of accountability is in place, and where's it going. She asks because she's heard numerous reports of store employees dumping collected film. When that happens, it degrades trust in the recycling system.

Kelly proposed a plastic film update at the next meeting.

Dammann gave an example of unexpected damage caused by three plastic bags blocking a drain and ruining household goods.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am.