

**Clark County
Solid Waste Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 7, 2008
6:00 – 8:00 PM**

Members Present: Mike Carnahan, Richard Baker, Jeanne Stewart, Lisa Schmidt, Rebecca Wale, Jack McClary

Members Absent: Don Ebbeson, Eldon Wogen

Staff: Anita Largent, Mike Davis, Gary Bickett

Others: Rich McConaghy, Tanya Gray

I. Roll Call, Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of June 5, 2008 be approved as written. Motion passed unanimously with two abstentions.

SWAC requested an update of what has occurred about plastic bags by other jurisdictions since our last meeting. There are still questions, such as: Are there specific problems with them in the waste industry? Do we have people putting them in their recycling bins?

Updates: County Public Health, County Solid Waste, City of Vancouver

Clark County – Anita Largent

- The update about plastic bags includes the actions that have occurred recently- there's been a lot of activity in other jurisdictions. On July 28th, Seattle did adopt their proposed program – a 20¢ fee on disposable grocery bags to start January of 2009. 5¢ per bag will be kept by the retailer and 15¢ goes to Seattle Public Utilities. This includes grocery stores, convenience stores and drug stores. Los Angeles put a ban on plastic bags but their ban does not go into effect until July of 2010. San Francisco banned plastic bags in April of 2008. The City of Portland in July was discussing a charge on grocery bags. On July 2nd, the Clark County Youth Commission presented a sustainability report to the Board of County Commissioners recommending such actions as native lawns for the county grounds, mandatory green buildings, and a tax on plastic bags. City of Vancouver and County staff are continuing to look at these programs. They did hear SWAC's concerns and requests for more information. The group is preparing a proposal and plan to come back in September with program options. The proposal should include a global analysis with the economic impact, environmental impact, and impact on the people. The COV Council has received articles from their sustainability manager. The County Commissioners have informally commented about such a program. Some have indicated a favorable view (depending on how a program would be structured) and some are not so favorable. But the plan is to come back in September with further discussion.

SWAC request that the analysis includes estimations for revenue for local jurisdictions. Also, how sustainable is the program if the stores are rewarded with an extra 5¢ per bag? And is there a danger of creating a revenue source for a local

jurisdiction which would be relied on and then go away? How fast would you expect the revenue to go away? There is an interest in what is being recommended as a substitute product, how functional and sustainable is it, and how much will it cost? Sanitation issues with reusable bags should also be reviewed. Barriers should be identified and the program should try to mitigate these as much as possible and should give people choices as opposed to pushing something towards them.

- Steve Morical has resigned as a SWAC member so we do have a vacant position – the Southeast Clark County position. It has been advertised and the position boundaries are south of 179th Street and east of Hwy 503 (or the extension of 503).
- The county has recently hired a project waste reduction specialist –Sarah Keirns. She will start on August 25th and one of her primary responsibilities will be to assist us with the transition from the bins to the carts.
- We received comments from Ecology regarding their preliminary review of the solid waste management plan. Most are minor (wordsmithing) but there were two that merit more discussion or further attention on our part.
 - First, there is another section in Ecology that needs to review the plan for the Moderate Risk Waste Plan. The draft plan now been sent to the Hazardous Waste Section – so they're going to start their review.
 - Second, the plan needs an implementation schedule for the recommendations. We're working on this.
- We've been working with the City of Vancouver staff on having recycling containers in some of the regional and the community parks. Containers are in Esther Short, the riverwalk and we are working on Pacific, Lewisville, Vancouver Lake and Salmon Creek Parks.
- Waste Connections has purchased Le May Enterprises which was the largest privately held solid waste company in the northwest prior to this acquisition and they've provided services in Grey's, Lewis, Thurston and Pierce County. With this acquisition, WCI be one of the largest haulers in Washington.
- Mike Davis updated SWAC on the Washougal Transfer Station. Two weeks ago, the contractor began doing the rough grade and will start doing the trenching for the utilities. Construction will began in about a month. The facility should be complete by the end of the year.
- West Van is accepting paper for shredding. There is a charge for the service: a banker's box of paper is \$5.50 and a 90 gallon cart is \$40.00.

Mike Carnahan had a question about the new milk jugs. Are they recyclable since they have a silver lining? Staff will check on this.

County Public Health – Gary Bickett

- Reufener Landfill Update: Portside Lagoon and Landfill has applied to the City of Vancouver for a grading permit on the 30 ± acres that they want to bring up above the 100 year floodplain. Within that proposal, they have three options for the landfill: (1) close in place; (2) use the material as part of the fill with a Beneficial Use Determination from Ecology (which is still pending); and (3) decommission the landfill and haul the material to another permitted facility. PH submitted comments to COV They did not discuss how the landfill infrastructure is to be removed.

Q: Who is the true legal owner of that landfill and did we ever get the financial assurance on closure? A: The county PA's office identified all of the parties as having potential liabilities and obligations.

- PH reviewed the Washougal Transfer Station Moderate Risk Waste plan. We sent the comments to CRC and are awaiting their response.
- Reviewed the Leichner Landfill 5 year remedial action report.
- Approved the Lady Island Berm project.
- We have done a lot of work and spent a lot of time on the horse manure issue in the county.

Gary encouraged SWAC to watching a PBS NOVA presentation called Global Dimming

City of Vancouver – Rich McConaghy

- Rich brought for display a pencil bag made from drink pouches. The website is <http://terracycle.net/>.
- COV staff starts their leaf coupon program on October 1st.

III: Review of 2007 Data Report, Environmentally Responsible Purchasing Annual Report and Solid Waste Annual Report – Anita Largent

We have three of our annual reports for review by SWAC. The Solid Waste Annual Report is a high-level public information piece highlighting some of the programs. It contains our annual recycling and diversion rates. The Data Report is an internal report that provides a lot more details with data and statistics.

Comment: This report is quite impressive. Countywide the diversion rate is 55% - that doesn't mean it couldn't be better but that's an encouraging number.

Q: How is the County supporting food composting in schools? A: We provide a staff person who's dedicated to the school programs – both the green schools and the organics composting. We facilitate getting the program set up in the cafeterias; monitor the ongoing program; provide in-class presentations; and provide bio bags for the schools. SWAC requested the opportunity to attend a school presentation.

The Data Reports contains graphs as an overview of our recycling and recovery rates; total tons that are collected; and annual tons to the landfill. From 2006-2007, we actually saw a decrease in the amount of tons sent to the landfill even though population is rising. The next chart is the Waste Generation Rate. It's the pounds per person per day that people are generating. From 2006 to 2007 it went down.

The next chart compares the different components of the waste stream (what is still going to the landfill). There are still a lot of materials that can be recycled that are still going to the landfill. This is data as of 2003. We have completed the waste stream analysis in 2008 but are waiting on the report. Page iii is for the county's solid waste program goals and the amounts for 2007. The recycling and the recovery rates are on page 8. There is a breakdown of the different materials and the tonnages and the history going back to 2003. Page 16 is a table of the tip fees and how they have

changed over the years. The backup data is in the rest of the report. There's a lot of information that we track.

Q: Is there a chance that the new glass plant in Kalama is going to be able to use some of the glass from WCI? A: Yes, they have been talking with CRC and so it looks pretty good that they will be a market for our glass.

Q: With the tip fee schedule, do we have any data that supports implementing the transaction fee and if the change reduced the number of people using the transfer stations. A: We do have the data. I think the range was a 30% reduction in the number of people that were self-hauling when the fee went into effect.

The county's Environmentally Responsible Purchasing Policy was implemented in 2004. The report tracks our compliance with the policy. The most important chart is on page 4 – a table showing the different categories and the County's percent compliance with purchasing the green products (2007 compared to 2006). The other important item that I'd like to point out is on page 18 – the recommendations from the Green Team for next year. Two in particular: (1) recommend the County not purchase bottled water or jugs of water; and (2) reducing County maintained lawns.

Q: Do we try to focus on whatever pesticide or herbicides have a lesser impact on the bioaccumulative effect? A: Page 12 lists our criteria for pesticides or herbicides which excludes pesticides that have a bioaccumulative effect.

Q: Does the county run two-cycle engines on days when there's an air advisory alert? Clark College does not operate that type of equipment on those days. A: I don't know but we can find out.

IV: Update of Recycling Contract Negotiations – Mike Davis

We're close to an agreement in principals with WCI. Since we last met the Board has made a determination on the collection frequency. They decided to go with staff and SWAC's recommendation of weekly collection. The Board also made the decision that we transition to carts as soon as feasible in the rural area. There will be a public hearing on the contract with the Board around the first of September. We've negotiated good rates and a formal report on the recommended contract will be made to SWAC at the September meeting.

V: Sustainability Conference Report – Lisa Schmidt

Lisa gave an update on the Southwest Washington Sustainability Conference that she attended. This was held at the Hilton on July 10-12th. Lisa stated that the conference was very impressive and she highly recommends others attend next year. There were numerous speakers of a high caliber with a strong emphasis on community. The link to the conference's website is:

www.cityofvancouver.us/conference/presentations.htm

The website contains video and slides of the presentations. Some of the highlights of the sessions Lisa attended include: *Sustainable Community Development; Dockside Green A Developer's Perspective* by Jo Van Belleghem. The Dockside Green project was very impressive. It incorporate green roofs and vertical green walls; complete systems for water treatment and reuse on the site; naturalized creek and pond systems

for stormwater treatment. This also demonstrated that such projects can be economical as well as sustainable. *Communicating the Business Case for Sustainability* by Bob Willard discussed the triple bottom line and the concept of environment, equity and economy working together. He shared information and a resource for the carbon disclosure project – www.cdproject.net. Winona LaDuke spoke on *Honor the Earth: Our Native American Legacy*. This was an impressive account of the Native American culture and how sustainability has always been a focus of their culture and values. Robert Kennedy Jr. made a presentation on *Our Environmental Destiny*. The time spent at the conference was very worthwhile.

VI: Other Business:

No other business was discussed.

VI. Comments from the Public on non-agenda items

There were no other comments.

The next regular SWAC meeting is scheduled for September 4th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25.