

**Clark County
Solid Waste Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 4, 2008
6:00 – 8:00 pm**

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

Members Absent: Don Ebbeson

Staff: Anita Largent, Pete DuBois, Judy Vaughn, and Gary Bickett

Others: Rich McConaghy, Mike Piper, Mike Drumright, Anya Caudill, and Dan Schooler

Handouts:

1. Minutes from Thursday, August 7 meeting.
2. Agenda for the September 4, 2008 meeting.
3. Composting Workshops flyer; dates during September, October and November.
4. Save the date for Block Foam Recycling for September – December
5. Community Share Fair flyer for Sunday, September 14, 2008.
6. Proposed Contract for Residential Recycling Collection.

I. Roll Call, Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of August 7, 2008 be approved as written. Motion was passed unanimously with two abstentions.

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

Clark County – Anita Largent

- The fall Master Composter/Recycler Workshops will be held this September, October and November.
- The Community Share Fair will be held on Sunday, September 14th from 1:30 to 4:30 at Clark Public Utilities.
- The Free Block Foam Recycling events will be held at alternating locations this year, the Fisher's Landing Transit Center and Clark College. The first event is September 6th at Fisher's Landing from 9:00 am to 1:00pm.
- We will have a booth at the Vancouver Peace and Justice Fair on Saturday, September 13th at Esther Short Park. This is an all day event.
- The County will be doing their annual ISO Certification audit for its EMS (Environmental Management System) Program. It will be October 14th and 15th. This year the Solid Waste program will be included in the audit and will be certified.

City of Vancouver – Rich McConaghy

- The annual Flyway wildlife show will be on Saturday, September 13th at the Water Resources Education Center.
- The Environmental Destiny show has just started up at the Museum.
- There will be an event this November and December called “Business to Waste” and it will showcase art work made out of recycled business waste. There may be a show and prizes for entries.

County Public Health – Gary Bicket

Paul Christensen, Hough Foundation, has informed Public Health that they will resubmit their BUD (Beneficial Use Determination) permit application to Department of Ecology with a complete SEPA. Paul is seeking an opportunity to meet with the Director of Ecology, Mr. Manley. In addition he is seeking assistance from Craig Pridemore and will solicit letters from the BOCC, City Council and Public Health. Boise Cascade has also recently confirmed their commitment of financial assistance.

Department of Ecology – Mike Drumright

Mike introduced Ecology’s new Green Building Specialist, Anya Candill. Anya’s office is located in Lacy, Washington. She shared that her position involves reducing construction and demolition wastes by utilizing better design features and encouraging less toxic materials during construction.

III. Continuation of the Plastic Bags Discussion - Pete DuBois, Rich McConaghy and Mike Piper

A presentation was made updating SWAC on recent actions by other areas and jurisdictions and the diverse amount of information that is available on the internet about plastic bags. “Plastic Filled Ocean” film was presented to the group describing the floating mass of plastic in the Pacific Ocean. This was produced by the organization Algalita. Their website www.algalita.org provides this and other informative articles.

C: There is a lot of information that is available. It is important to have hard science to better understand the issue; be able to rely on the information; and make good decisions based on this information.

One bag at a time presentation was also shown. Also, an article from the National Geographic News from September 2003 provided some examples of debates, myths and facts regarding plastic waste.

C: National Geographic recently had a good feature on Solid Waste – the January 2008 issue with the articles entitled *High Tech Trash* and *Recycling: The Big Picture*. It was suggested that this be presented to the group in the near future. Also, a program called *The Works* aired on a local station which was an informative program on the Solid Waste lifecycle. Both of these would be beneficial for SWAC to review.

Worldwide:

Countries such as Ireland, China, Australia and South Africa have either banned or are in the process of banning plastic bags.

Q: What is the objective of Third World Countries to ban? A: It was discussed that litter was the main driver and possibility limited natural resources that are available to these countries.

United States Updates

Savetheplasticbag.com is an organization that advocates for the use of plastic bags and is actively opposing a lot of California's activities to ban them. SWAC was encouraged to review the information on their website as it does present "other sides" of the issue.

Hawaii:

Hawaii has also banned plastic bags and that law is expected to take effect in January 2011. Businesses will be encouraged to provide paper bags that must be made of 40 percent post-consumer recycled content or reusable totes.

Arizona:

Phoenix and the Bag Central Station have provided examples of problems encountered with contamination of bags in their recycling system. They addressed the problems by encouraging recycling containers at different establishments; implementing a reduce, reuse, recycle policy; educating the community about alternatives to plastic bags; providing reusable bags; and working with the city to solicit community input of the program's effectiveness. More information is available on their website at www.bagcentralstation.com

C: Eldon Wogen informed the group about a "bring your own bag" day educational opportunity that occurs in Singapore. Mike Carnahan mentioned that not everything needs to go into bags and gave the example of Costco.

California:

San Francisco was the first in the US to ban plastic bags. The city originally pursued the bag fee concept but this was found to be illegal, so they just banned them altogether. The city does require stores to recycle plastic bags. Oakland also banned plastic bags and pursued the fee on paper bags but legal action was brought against the city alleging that their SEPA plan failed to conduct a comprehensive environmental impact study. Santa Monica has a ban on plastic bags and charge 25 cents per paper bag but may also be challenged in the courts.

Washington State:

Seattle has proposed a 20 cent fee for both paper and plastic bags. An initiative is collecting signatures from citizens in an attempt to overturn their legislation. It appears that enough signatures will be obtained and this issue will be voted on by the public in the May primary.

Local:

Portland is also considering a bag fee. There is an upcoming forum on September 20th at the Portland City Hall, sponsored by Recycling Advocates.

The Vancouver Planning Commission will present “Thinking Beyond the Bag”. It will be held Tuesday, October 7th at the Vancouver City Hall, Council Chambers. Discussion will include bags and other disposable packaging – the use, convenience, waste, cost, tax and ban.

The Vancouver’s Downtown Business Association is having a First Friday which recognizes Turtle Place. This is the area along 7th Street between Main and Washington (where the downtown C-Tran transit center was located) that is being planned on the principals of sustainability.

Q: What natural resources are needed to create plastic bags? A: Plastic bags are made out of the waste products of other industries. Some of these waste products are exported and some of them stay here in the United States to manufacture plastic products. Eldon Wogen agreed to provide information how plastic is made and used.

Bag Fee/Ban Discussion: At this time, the general consensus of SWAC is to support an education program without including the bans or fees. Rebecca Wale mentioned that she could support a disposable bag reduction proposal that would make Clark County a leader. Several other SWAC members agreed to continue discussion on the matter. Staff will continue to track Seattle and Portland’s proposals and will report back with any developments.

IV: Executive Session: Proposed Recycling Contract Update – Anita Largent

SWAC convened into Executive Session to discuss the proposed recycling collection contract that has been negotiated with Waste Connections. In the presentation, Anita reminded SWAC of the decision making process that the County has been through in recommending changes to the recycling collection system. Last year the Feasibility Study was completed; the pilots began in August 2007; an RFP for recycling collection service was issued in January of 2008; in February the final report from the pilots were generated; and system recommendations were made in May. The following decisions for the collection system were made: 1) carts rather than bins; 2) flexibility in the size of the carts; 3) the county will purchase the carts; 4) commingle recyclables with glass on the side; 5) add rigid plastics items to the material stream; 6) weekly collection; and 7) two compartments on the trucks. All of these system components have been included in the negotiated contract. The contract also includes a 25% bump in revenue (which is anticipated with the new system collecting additional materials). This revenue is being passed on to the customer. On the invoices, customers will see the true cost of recycling with the revenue reflected as a credit. In the contract, WCI has agreed to become ISO certified with specific deadlines which must be met. The contractor will be obligated to report annually to the county on progress towards their goals. The contract contains performance standards on collection, customer service, material quality and

contamination levels. The term of the contract is ten years with a one year extension. There is an allowable CPI adjustment which includes two indexes. The first is the standard Consumer Price Index and the second is the Energy Information Agency Fuel Index. The escalator will be 88% of the CPI and 12% of the Energy Information Agency Fuel Index. 80% of this calculated index is then applied as the annual inflation factor for the rates. There are no fuel surcharges in the contract. There are liquidated damages set up for the performance standards. Some of these charges are carried forward from the previous contract and some are benchmarks from a new Seattle Public Utilities contract.

The proposed rates are: Urban Area Single Family is \$3.98 per household per month; Rural Area Single Family is \$5.50 per household per month, and Multifamily is \$2.99 per household per month. Current fuel costs have impacted the rate changes. Also, the current contract is 10 years old and rates did not keep up with inflation.

There is a public hearing with the Board of County Commissioners scheduled for Tuesday, September 9th at 10:00 a.m. At this time, the Board will be asked to execute the contract. Waste Connections will be required to submit an Implementation Plan for the transition to the new collection system by November. The new trucks have been ordered and will arrive in March. Changing the system in the County UGA will start in March. Rural implementation will begin in July through October. The rates change January 1, 2009.

Comment: It was suggested that goals be set for the hauler for percentages for the recycling rate. This could easily be included in the development of the ISO targets and objectives. Incentives for households could also be added.

SWAC reconvened from the Executive Session to a public meeting.

Action Items:

Eldon Wogen is to provide information on the life cycle of plastics (how plastic is made and used).

The Power Point presentation from Pete DuBois will be sent to the commission. This presentation will include all of the links regarding all of the programs, organizations and information that was discussed tonight.

VI: Other Business:

No other business was discussed.

VII: Comments from the Public on non-agenda items

There were no other comments.

The next regular SWAC meeting is scheduled for October 1st.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm