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Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Members Present

Britt Pfaff-Dunton
Diana Wadley
John Doyle
Leo Jacobs
Scott Sutherland
Tamara Thomas
Todd Reynolds

Representing

Skagit County Health Department
Ex-Officio, Department of Ecology/conference call
Town of La Conner
City of Sedro Woolley/SWAC Chair
City of Mount Vernon
District 2 Citizens
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers

Members Absent

Brian Dempsey
Tim Crosby
Torrey Lautenbach
Not Represented
Sandi Andersen

Representing

City of Burlington
Haulers
Lautenbach Recycling/District 1 Citizen
District 3
City of Anacortes/SWAC Vice Chair

Visitors

Callie Martin
David Bader
Eddie Nersten
Elena Pritchard
Matt Koegel
Rick Hlavka
Terrill J. Chang

Representing

Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste
Lautenbach Recycling
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste/Interim Division Manager
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste/recorder
City of Anacortes
Green Solutions
B-Town Consulting

Call to Order

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. at the Continental Building Crane Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

Introductions

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business title introductions were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items.

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Public Comments

Mr. Bader introduced himself and requested time to address comments submitted to him by Torrey Lautenback/District 1 Citizen. It was agreed that such comments will be interjected as each chapter is reviewed.

Review and Approve Minutes

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, opened the floor to discuss the September 9, 2015 minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Sutherland to approve the September 9, 2015 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reynolds. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Agenda Items

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, moved forward to begin discussion of agenda item(s):

- a. *Update on hiring process for Solid Waste Manager*
- b. *Wrap up CSWMP Chapter 6*
- c. *Review CSWMP Chapter 7*
- d. *Review CSWMP Chapter 8*
- e. *Review CSWMP Chapter 9*

a. Update on hiring process for Solid Waste Manager

Mr. Nersten announced that the interview process is still underway. Approximately 6 candidates have been chosen for the interview process. There is a selection of candidates from inside and outside of Skagit County. There is no hire deadline date set and no final decisions have been made at this time.

Mr. Hlavka expressed the desire to press forward with the Plan revision. A new hire, unfamiliar with the County, may require many months to learn the County system, and therefore, may not address the Plan as an immediate priority. Should the Plan revisions be put on hold until such time that the new hire has learned the county system, or, present it now as a completed Plan that would be beneficial in providing him or her with some guidance in their new role as SW Division Manager. In the event that some parts require amendment at some future point, those revisions would be a simple process. A decision needs to be made as to when the Plan is presented to the new manager.

Mr. Hlavka recommended the goal of completing the draft at this time; and upon completion, evaluates how to move forward with the review and approval process.

It was the unanimously agreed to move forward with the Plan revision to complete a draft at this time.

b. Chapter 6, Waste Collection

Chapter 6 was last reviewed in September of 2015 and includes some track changes made based on that discussion. Some additional changes were noted, including Table 6-1.

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Ms. Pfaff-Dunton confirmed with Waste Management that they do provide a once monthly pickup service for a 32 gallon can supplied by customer. Follow up with Waste Management will be necessary since Code dictates the only option of an every-other-week pickup for mixed garbage.

6.6 Waste Collection Recommendations

The cost for Recommendation WC1 will be up to \$25,000....Waste Management.

Mr. Jacobs inquired as to the source of the recommendation of the \$25,000 cost noted on Page 6-10. Mr. Hlavka replied that the \$25,000 is an approximate figure and not based on a cost analysis which could involve public education, distributing brochures, etc. and possibly involving multiple cities.

c. Chapter 7, Transfer And Disposal System

Mr. Chang gave a summary of this section by commenting briefly on the narratives of each section.

7.3 Transfer System

Coordination between Facilities

Mr. Bader commented that there are no recommendations attached to this paragraph's discussion and does not carry to the back part of this chapter. He questioned whether this was by design or should there be a Low, Medium or High Rating attached to it.

Mr. Hlavka commented that *Alternative A* would need to include an *Alternative B* for that section to allow pursuit of that idea further in the *Alternatives* section. The *Coordination* paragraph did seem to be adequately addressed under the *Planning Issues* and does not affect a lot of vehicles. In past conversations with Kevin Renz, Skagit County Solid Waste Division Manager, his concerns included those customers arriving with mixed loads who were not interested in the inconvenience of a drop off at multiple locations, despite the incentive of a lower rate from neighboring businesses. Another concern was the limited hours of operation at other facilities not meeting the customer's needs.

Mr. Bader commented that because the recommendation to customers to visit other vendors is not a set policy at the Transfer Station, it does not follow through to the next person, and therefore does not encourage recycling.

Mr. Bader, Ms. Pfaff-Dunton, and Ms. Martin suggested that staff at the Transfer Station initiate recommendations directing or encouraging customers to preferentially utilize local recycling facilities for their source-separated loads, in lieu of disposing at the Transfer Station, since it is a disposal facility and not designed to separate or recover. Resource informational flyers were also suggested as an educational material for the public.

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Alternatives for Waste Transfer

Alternative A- Install Waste Transfer Capacity at Sedro-Woolley site and close Clear Lake Site

Comments were discussed regarding the pros and cons of closing the county's Clear Lake Site. There is a substantial subsidy to maintain operation of a site which generates a less than 2% return, when there are other alternatives of service in the area.

Recycling is not available through Waste Management to areas where the Clear Lake Compactor Site residents would be requiring it since Waste Management doesn't provide service east of Hwy. 9.

Ms. Thomas noted a previous chapter recommendation that the County could mandate that Waste Management provide recycling anywhere that they provide garbage pickup, inclusive of Nookachamps.

Mr. Hlavka commented that the County would have to adopt a service level ordinance that dictates that everyone in the county who receives garbage pickup must also get recycling pickup. It is important to keep in mind that this type of ordinance would activate an increase in the cost of recycling for everyone in the county.

Ms. Martin inquired as to the percentage of success rate for adopting a recycling resolution in place for that level of service adoption to encompass higher density areas such as Nookachamps Hill.

Mr. Hlavka suggested that the best approach could be to use a blanket approach rather than targeting specific areas, which has seen some success in other counties such as Spokane, Thurston, Snohomish, and others. Chair Jacobs offered to send correspondence to Waste Management on behalf of SWAC, soliciting feedback on exploring this type recycling endeavor.

Ms. Martin commented that considering this approach from an Outreach perspective, encourages a higher success rate.

Mr. Reynolds' familiarity with service area cost, the markets, and extended current markets in recycling, enables him to foresee this kind of mandate with Waste Management as having a negative outcome by potentially reflecting an exorbitant price increase for the county.

It was suggested that if the Clear Lake Site is moved and the alternative is mandatory service and collection, Clear Lake Site customers would be more receptive to visiting a site just a 2-mile distance away rather than paying a monthly bill.

Mr. Chang suggested that there would be operational efficiencies of operating a single facility versus two facilities. The alternative of mandatory collection by the county would minimize illegal dumping by providing proper disposal. It was agreed that *Alternative A* remain as is under *Alternatives for Waste Transfer*, and would be discussed further under *Recommendations*.

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7.4 Waste Import

Existing Waste Import Activities: Waste Import

Ms. Pfaff-Dunton brought to the Committee's attention the agreement in place with the county for acceptance of Diablo Newhalem. Ms. Pfaff-Dunton confirmed with Mr. Nersten that there is an interlocal agreement (dated 1980's) with Whatcom County to accept Diablo Newhalem at the Mount Vernon Transfer Station.

Ms. Wadley requested a copy of that agreement be sent to her attention.

7.5 Waste Export and Disposal

Potential Future Options for Disposal

Ms. Pfaff-Dunton offered the information that there is an anaerobic digester in the County who handles some liquid industrial and commercial solid waste from food processing operations. This facility handles a niche component of the solid waste system and provides the potential for expansion for a new anaerobic digester or expanding existing ones.

Ms. Thomas suggested that some categories could be interpreted as treatment technologies with a remaining material at the end of the process not for disposal, but would need to be handled differently.

Alternative C – Conversion Technology

Mr. Doyle expressed concern about policy priority pertaining to the energy market shifts along with various commodity markets with valuable organics in the stream. Market shifts, particularly the energy market, cannot be allowed to overwhelm a well-established diversion market created in the Plan. Energy markets and new emerging technology markets should be viewed in light of existing program impacts or existing problematic impacts. Also, misinformation can potentially shift the market in such a way as to end long-term viability. In this particular Plan, we should look for highest and best use and strive to divert and re-use and recycle the waste stream to the highest degree possible.

Ms. Martin commented on the large volume of received communications from citizens interested in waste to energy conversion systems being available in Skagit County. Largely in part due to Anacortes citizens inquiring into the Anacortes/Georgetown Energy Prize competition for a \$5,000,000 energy grant to change energy systems for the city.

Ms. Thomas suggested that, based on this discussion, the Plan's Goals and Objectives in Section 1 do not address any kind of sustainability and prioritization along those lines, and should be re-visited.

Mr. Chang stressed the importance of addressing objectives on a case by case basis. The wrong timing could potentially interfere with flexibility.

APPROVED

Mr. Hlavka confirmed with Ms. Wadley that the Plan requires review only every 5 years, with possible revisions done at that time if deemed necessary. Only certain key portions require revision, such as the 20-year projection and the 6-year capital requirement, which can be accomplished in an amendment.

Mr. Doyle emphasized his point that any conversion technology or emerging technology or reviewing the enlistment of a technology has to be taken in light of its impact on the programmatic commitments and the inertia of the programs that has a substantial amount of investment in at the time. It should be understood that it is not just a simple review of the technology to ensure that it is a good idea; it is a review of the impacts on that technology on the existing programs that we are embedded in.

7.6 Evaluation of Transfer and Disposal Alternatives

Cost Effectiveness

Mr. Doyle and others expressed their concern that the term should be more specific as to its intention, how it benefits the Plan as a whole, and how it pertains to Solid Waste. It does not address the root and perimeters and assumptions on cost effectiveness.

Mr. Hlavka and Mr. Chang explained that the intention of the definition is to address this section in general terms in order to establish a priority for *Recommendations*, and to reflect back to the case by case approach. To change the definition would require a better definition for the *Alternative* section, which is not appropriate at this point since this section is being addressed in general terms.

Mr. Doyle suggested using a sample programmatic or policy prototype to use as a guide to apply to the Plan since its current definition is not a very useful tool to make programmatic decisions given its ability to be manipulated to create any outcome.

Ms. Martin suggested the use of a broader term that would encompass more.

Mr. Hlavka was in disagreement with the idea that this terminology can be manipulated to be anything.

Mr. Doyle changed his previous comment to clarify his opinion that the *Cost Effectiveness* definition can be easily manipulated to shift things that are in close competition with one another, things that have significant impacts and by current politics to shift from one direction from another.

Mr. Hlavka commented that this could be a concern, for example, in the evaluation of two different proposals, which does not apply since the discussion is in general terms.

Ms. Martin and Mr. Chang suggested explaining the section in different terms, such as “cost needs to be a consideration” or “cost consideration”. Keep in mind that applying this different criterion would potentially impact numerous other chapters.

Mr. Hlavka commented that this change in language will change the ratings in already in place. Also, the language in the Plan is intended to be more easily understood by the general public. Changes could potentially complicate the concept of laying out the Plan

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in a clear and transparent way. *Cost Consideration* would need to be defined in such a manner as to be able to apply a Low, Medium or High rating that would be understood easily by the public.

Mr. Doyle commented that the term of *Cost Effectiveness* has a whole range of potential possibilities for this definition to be applied. The Plan needs to be more specific in its description.

Mr. Chang commented that his intention of definition for *Cost Effectiveness* is that, for the blend of benefits for an action, there is a cost. If both are not outrageous, one cost might be lower than the other. The intention is to keep this as broad as possible.

Mr. Hlavka confirmed his understanding that the committee is in agreement that the language under *Cost Effectiveness* needs to be clear in its description as to how we arrived at the ratings.

All was in agreement that Mr. Hlavka will review the existing language in *Cost Effectiveness* to make sure it is clear as to how we arrived at the ratings, and, in addition, the language will be added to the Glossary.

7.7 Recommendations for Transfer and Disposal

Some suggestions were made to revise some language in this section.

d. Chapter 8, Special Wastes

Mr. Chang commented that this chapter addresses 4 special waste topics chosen for review to be included in the Plan.

8.2 Asbestos

North West Clean Air is considered the primary regulator. They require notification in the event that asbestos will be moved or handled in construction or demolition.

Commercial demolition projects require notification to air quality authorities to request an assessment of the quality. In some cases, unidentified materials are being accepted without a certified determination that the materials are asbestos free.

Planning Issues for Asbestos

Mr. Bader suggested that asbestos should be addressed before a permit is issued or finalized, therefore preventing employees from being exposed. For example, if the county issues a demolition permit while ignoring the possibility of the asbestos threat to employees at the County Transfer Station, the material would get routed to the Transfer Station instead of being recycled.

Ms. Thomas commented that the City of Mount Vernon has an established government path in place, unfortunately, the County does not. More effort needs to be made to prevent those that disregard this path and skirt the rules. There is basic asbestos awareness training available on-line for those who handle solid waste materials.

Mr. Bader suggested that flow-control be monitored more closely. The flow-control in effect in the Plan mandates that all materials are the county's waste and must be sent to

APPROVED

the County Transfer Station, which is causing significant more harmful exposure to employees.

Asbestos Management Alternatives

Special Waste Alternative A

Mr. Doyle and Ms. Thomas suggested specific language addressing the issuance of demolition permits, citing specifically the necessity of an evaluation by SEPA for special waste highlighted in this Plan. Such language should state that buildings to be demolished through the use of a demolition permit should require an asbestos evaluation by an AHERA or certified person.

Mr. Hlavka will implement the changes as indicated by the committee.

8.3 Biomedical Wastes

Mr. Chang shared that legitimate health care facilities are usually following proper disposal guidelines for medical wastes. There is some concern with improper residential and public area disposal.

Regulation of Biomedical Wastes

Sharps:

Mr. Reynolds shared that Skagit River Steel & Recycling has seen an increase in needle disposal in aluminum cans coming from the county transfer station. The aluminum cans come in from roll off containers and are passed through a machine that extracts magnetics.

Ms. Pfaff-Dunton suggested an increase in materials for educational awareness for both homeowners and small businesses. The needle exchange program for the county was non-existent for a period of 5 years, which contributed to the increase in improper needle disposal. The program has been re-instituted and could be assisted with some additional education outreach to small businesses. A lack of funding could also be a contributing factor for the lack of educational materials being generated by small businesses for advertisement of their collection programs.

8.4 Disaster Debris

Management Alternatives for Disaster Debris

Mr. Bader suggested that the Plan include language to encourage staging areas to direct their efforts towards recycling or recovery of materials, if accessible and applicable.

Mr. Chang suggested some revisions in language to modify the contents of the *Alternatives*.

Ms. Pfaff-Dunton suggested using a county owned site not on a landfill as a separate staging area for a stockpile of material to be moved by rail lines and road lines.

8.5 Moderate Risk Wastes

Mr. Hlavka commented that State Law specifically states that Counties are not required to update their Moderate Risk Waste Plan. However, The Department of Ecology encourages a combined Solid Waste and Moderate Risk Plan which can never be separated once combined. The current Moderate Risk Waste Plan in place is dated 1993.

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8.6 Evaluation of Special Waste Alternatives

Table 8-1 Ratings for the Special Waste Alternatives

It was generally agreed by the Committee that some ratings should change in light of earlier discussions on elevated concerns and risks relating to improper disposal of biomedical wastes.

Ms. Pfaff-Dunton proposed an additional *Alternative H, Increase technical assistance and enforcement of MRW requirements for Small Quantity Generators*. Due to their own time constraints, some small businesses would benefit from additional guidance from the County in technical assistance; with enforcement of those requirements implemented only when needed.

Announcements/New Business

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, opened the floor to address announcements or new business.

The next SWAC meeting will address the Election of Officers.

Public Comments

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, opened the floor to address any public comments.

It was agreed by the Committee that the next SWAC meeting will return to its regular scheduled time of 5:00p.m.-7:00p.m.

Unfinished Business

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, opened the floor to address any unfinished business.

There was no unfinished business.

Adjourn

Leo Jacobs, SWAC Chair, made a Motion to Adjourn. The Motion was seconded by all in attendance. By a vote of the membership, the Motion passed unanimously. Chair Jacobs thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.