

APPROVED

Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Members Present

Britt Pfaff-Dunton
John Doyle
Scott Sutherland
Tamara Thomas
Todd Reynolds
Torrey Lautenbach

Representing

Skagit County Health Department
Town of La Conner
City of Mount Vernon
District 2 Citizens
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers
Lautenbach Recycling/District 1 Citizen

Members Absent

Brian Dempsey
Diana Wadley
Leo Jacobs
Tim Crosby
Not Represented
Sandi Andersen

Representing

City of Burlington
Ex-Officio, Department of Ecology
City of Sedro Woolley/SWAC Chair
Haulers
District 3
City of Anacortes/SWAC Vice Chair

Visitors

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

Representing

Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste
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

Scott Sutherland, Member, called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. at the Continental Building Crane Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

Introductions

Scott Sutherland, Member, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business title introductions were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

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Review and Approve Minutes

Scott Sutherland, Member, opened the floor to discuss the February 10, 2016 minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Sutherland to approve the February 10, 2016 minutes as written. Ms. Thomas moved to approve the minutes with the following inserted comments:

Members Present: Tamara Thomas/District 2 Citizens (Chapter 7 review only)

Agenda Items: note that items were reviewed out of Agenda sequence

With no other changes, a motion was made by Ms. Thomas to approve the minutes with changes as noted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Doyle. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

Agenda Items

Scott Sutherland, Member, moved forward to begin discussion of agenda item(s):

- a. *Solid Waste Manager Hiring Update*
- b. *Discussion of current CSWMP revision process and strategic goals*
- c. *Review CSWMP Chapter 9*

a. Solid Waste Manager Hiring Update

Mr. Nersten updated everyone on the present hiring status for the new Solid Waste Division Manager. The finalists have been ranked 1, 2 & 3 in the review process; which has been completed, with an offer made to finalist #1. No time frame has been given for determining a final decision.

b. Discussion of current CSWMP revision process and strategic goals

T. Thomas Comments – 2-10-16

Mr. Hlavka opened the floor to address the purpose of re-visiting the Goals, and to discuss a commentary dated 2/10/16 provided by Ms. Thomas at the 2/10/16 SWAC meeting.

Ms. Thomas suggested that the Goals amended in 2008 are outdated and need to be re-visited. She would like to see her suggestions reviewed for their potential contribution in the current review process.

Mr. Sutherland commented that in the past, he has had the good fortune to be involved in many Plan reviews and updates, and the Goals that have always changed at every update. There had been ample time and consideration spent in that review process. Some of the content listed in Ms. Thomas' comment sheet appears to be in the existing Goals, but worded differently.

Mr. Hlavka addressed the group for a consensus as to which approach to take in the Goal revision; revision of the existing Goals and Objectives to include additions and/or deletions, or choose another method.

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Mr. Lautenbach expressed his concern regarding changes in the SCC Chapter 12.18 and how it impacts the Flow Control Enforcement, and would like to see enforcement of those laws incorporated into the Goals of the Plan.

Mr. Reynolds acknowledged that the County cannot police that enforcement, and therefore suggested that the Goals encourage awareness in support of the Plan through every effort available.

Mr. Reynolds referred to Mr. Sutherland's comparison of Ms. Thomas's goals (paragraph 3 above) versus the existing Goals, and asked Ms. Thomas to indicate specific ones in her list that are not included in the existing Goals.

Ms. Thomas suggested that while she did not prepare her Comments in that manner, the clearest one not covered would be her bullet #7, "*Give Particular Attention To Waste Stream Reduction, Recycling And Re-Use.*" Ms. Thomas suggested that some wording in the Plan Goals was not clear and did not make sense to her and needs to be re-visited.

Mr. Hlavka indicated that the Goals are for the planning process and are not programmatic goals.

Ms. Thomas commented that, when putting Goals in a Plan, it should be the Goals of the program that is being established in this Plan, as opposed to the Goal of the Plan being fundamentally to meet the requirement that there be a Plan. SWAC should make the decision as to what the Goals are for.

Mr. Sutherland commented that the Plan's purpose is to be used as a guide and is better accepted if written in a language that defines or describes a situation; with the approach to make every effort to go in a certain direction that is beneficial.

Mr. Doyle agreed that in gaining political acceptance, you are not necessarily gaining actual policy accomplishment; which stems from what level we are at in the process and our role in the process. We are doing a dis-service by moderating our language at this level in terms of the clear importance needed to be seen in certain things. Unless there is a clear imperative on what is important, management cannot make those decisions, and therefore we have not done a good job in exercising priorities. It is our job to make compromise by government more difficult. His recommendation would be to add a Goal to the Plan to fully fund and staff the provisions of the Plan.

Mr. Sutherland was in agreement, that operating under a Plan generally uses less ridged language; while operating under an ordinance utilizes a very specific language.

Ms. Thomas commented that she prepared her comments with her vision of a direction for the Plan. Her concern is that this revision process has not accessed the expertise present in the SWAC group. The Plan is being written by non-SWAC personnel, with no voting process in place, so why should we waste our time in attending meetings.

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Mr. Sutherland suggested that, based on Mr. Hlavka's past work and the expertise of Terrill and Rick, that their guidance is necessary to build the Plan. The review process has not proved to be a waste of time, in that the revisions have met with the Board's approval; with the majority of the Board accepting our suggestions.

Mr. Reynolds commented that those present have been given the opportunity to voice their opinions on each topic as it has been addressed. There has not been a voting process, but topics were discussed and approved by general consensus before reviewing the next item.

Ms. Thomas commented that in her opinion, there were issues not covered primarily due to the Goals not being clarified. Every section selects a few of the Goals which the Chapters are based on. Not reviewing the Goals in the beginning of the revision process allows the process to roll further away from a viable and reflective Plan and further from her expectations.

Mr. Hlavka clarified that it has not been his and Mr. Chang's approach that they base the Chapters on those Goals. The Goals have been seen as relevant, but the Chapters content has not been constrained by them. More importantly is to look at the existing programs, and look at the Planning Issues section, which are the gaps, and address those through Alternatives and rating those Alternatives to arrive at Recommendations. It is his opinion that the review process has not been constrained by the Goals. There has been no feedback of this nature through the review process prior to the review of Chapter 9.

Mr. Sutherland stated that it is not the intention of the group to exclude anyone's contribution. The last Plan revision incorporated many changes in its structure and content, with the majority of the hard work being done at that time. Mr. Sutherland, in his opinion, expected that this review would be an important update only, since the majority of the hard work was done during the last full revision.

Mr. Hlavka suggested that the last Plan revision withstood the last eight year recession, keeping the system running somewhat smoothly. After discussion by the Skagit County Governance Board and the Skagit County Solid Waste Advisory Committee of the current programs and the desire to continue to show progress, the County's recycling goal was set at 65%.

Existing Goals for Skagit County Solid Waste Management Plan
Planning Goals from Chapter 1 (page1-8):

1.8 Goals Of The SWMP

Mr. Hlavka moved forward with the review process by addressing bullets on Page 1 and 2 of the Planning Goals.

Mr. Doyle suggested adding Goal orientated language regarding "fully funding and staffing the implementation of the Plan" in the Plan. The Plan is so permeated with the issue of funding, that the execution of that element is contingent upon staffing. Its importance falls heavily on the success rate of the Plan.

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Mr. Lautenbach agreed that funding and staffing the implementation of the Plan is a positive link to tie in the public's awareness and education of the existing laws and rules of the county.

Mr. Hlavka asked for any other comments from the group regarding changes to the Goals section. Being that there were no other comments, Mr. Hlavka moved forward to review Chapter 9.

Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Hlavka if we had gone through all of the Goals section, and how was he going to do that.

Mr. Hlavka replied that he was going to show the changes discussed in Chapter 1.8 Goals Of The SWMP discussed in today's meeting. At the next SWAC meeting, he will return with a copy of the Plan that indicates changes made since the last copy reviewed by SWAC.

Ms. Thomas commented that her question was addressing how the review initially seemed to start off by going through each of the older Goals through the first couple, and then jumped to Chapter 9.

Mr. Hlavka responded that throughout the review process, he did ask for any further comments, and when there was none from the group, he moved on. He did not think that each bullet was targeted to be reviewed unless there was a need for a change.

Ms. Thomas responded that we don't have to.

Mr. Hlavka asked the group if it was ok to move on.

Mr. Sutherland replied that it was his belief that at the end of every Chapter, Mr. Hlavka asked the group if it was ok to move on, and when there were no other comments, the group moved on to the next item.

Ms. Thomas proposed that if the group is not going to review each of the old Goals, that Mr. Hlavka take all of her comment items and put them in the new Plan. And at the next review process, strike out whatever does not make any sense.

Mr. Hlavka commented that it was his understanding that the review was being done by an alternative approach and asked if it was the intention of the group to address each of the remaining bullets. There were no other remarks by the group.

Mr. Hlavka asked the group if there were any other items on the list of Goals to review. Being there were no other comments, Mr. Hlavka moved to begin review of Chapter 9.

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c. Wrap Up CSWMP Chapter 9

Administration And Public Education

Mr. Hlavka commented that this chapter includes the revisions as discussed at the last SWAC meeting.

9.2 Existing Administration and Public Education Programs

Cities: Public education activities

Mr. Sutherland commented that the City of Mount Vernon sends out a semi-annual mailing. He does not have an Education Coordinator, and relies on the County for any benefits.

Ms. Martin commented that there is difficulty in getting all the teachers involved in activities other than what is scheduled in their strict daily curriculum. Some work has been done in composting with the 5th Grade Soil Science Unit. It is a challenge for one person to cover so many different schools in Skagit County, compounded by all other events that need to be addressed in the same time frame. Clear messaging goals for the current Outreach Education Coordinator would be greatly beneficial, as well as the specific duties for a Recycling Coordinator. Setting priorities for the year, focusing on school outreach, and establishing relationships with principals, requires someone who can educate themselves on getting programming into schools, leaving someone else tasked with handling publications, etc.

Mr. Sutherland commented that the City of Mount Vernon provides flyers with recyclable options for hard to recycle items. Also, there are now two Spring and two Fall clean up days in place now for the community to bring in garbage and recyclables for no charge.

Ms. Martin commented that the EPA is campaigning for local governments to get involved in “waste less edible food” programs. Given the necessary time needed, her extensive background in composting education which would be ideal in promoting a “waste less food” campaign. A Recycling Coordinator is needed to absorb the recycling management and provide more consistent messaging in promoting C&D and multi-family recycling. Someone able to focus on organic recycling could be done through a “waste less food” campaign and compost education.

Ms. Thomas commented that the County does not have a web link available to access SWAC Agenda and Meeting Minutes information.

Ms. Martin advised that Brian Young is the County’s web advisor. Kevin Renz originally planned to coordinate this effort with Mr. Young, but there was not sufficient time to follow through before he left his office. Ms. Martin will contact Mr. Young to initiate the process of uploading a meeting schedule along with the SWAC Agenda and approved Meeting Minutes. The Solid Waste Management Plan is currently accessible on the Skagit County website.

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9.3 Planning Issues for Administration and Public Education
Flow Control Enforcement

Further revision of the language in this section is required.

Ms. Thomas asked for the purpose behind the chart ratings.

Mr. Hlavka responded that the purpose is to set priorities for the Recommendations.

Ms. Thomas asked why don't we do that just by discussion and deciding a rating of 1,2,3,4 & 5 rather than having these rating scores.

Mr. Hlavka replied that it is the way the rating was set up in the beginning. We are now into Chapter 9 of the review process and a year-long into the process; and changing the system now at this point in the revision would not be practical.

Ms. Thomas commented that if it is a practical matter, it would be really nice and very easy to just delete those all from every Chapter.

Mr. Hlavka replied that in doing so, we would lose transparency in the process.

Ms. Thomas commented that the ratings are not transparent.

Mr. Hlavka replied that the ratings are transparent and are designed to rate the work activities in the future. If there are any disagreements with the ratings, we can discuss those ideas and change the rating levels.

Ms. Thomas commented that she believes that the existing ratings are bogus. If the group wants to discuss and decide which ones to line up first and what is most important to the values of the SWAC, you should do that.

Mr. Chang commented that from an observer's perspective, when you say that you have a discussion, who will write up the discussion in a way that someone in the general public or Ecology understands what that meant? This rating chart gives a sort of short hand, not a full discussion, and is the reason for having the ratings.

Ms. Thomas commented that the ratings don't reflect the discussion.

Mr. Lautenbach was in agreement with the chart as it is designed, but asked what the goal is of the chart.

Mr. Hlavka replied that it is designed to screen out the bad alternatives. For instance, if a particular Alternative was evaluated but was not accepted for various reasons, so hence it will not be moved forward as a Recommendation. Secondly, the Alternatives that are retained; help inform whoever implements that Recommendation, that it is a high or medium priority. If there is a future struggle regarding workloads or budgets, it helps guide their actions.

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9.5 Evaluation of Administration and Public Education Alternatives

Rating of Alternatives, Table 9-4

Mr. Doyle suggested a review and re-evaluation of the chart ratings to implement the necessary changes according to how they reflect the revised Goals. The chart was reviewed by the group with the agreed upon changes recorded by Mr. Hlavka.

Being limited on time, Mr. Hlavka asked if the group wished to continue with the rest of Chapter 9's review and extend over the scheduled meeting time; or, close the meeting and review the remainder of the Chapter in April. With no objections, Mr. Hlavka requested any further comments regarding ratings on the Table 9-4. There were some additional rating changes.

With no further comments relating to Chapter 9, Mr. Hlavka wrapped up the review and explained the next steps in the review process. He suggested taking no further action until a new Solid Waste Division Manager is hired. Over the course of the next several months, Mr. Hlavka and Mr. Chang will meet with the SWD Manager to review the Plan along with the new changes. From there, the next step will be to review the Implementation Chapter in order to look at all the Recommendations at one time and evaluate for in-consistencies, gaps and then put together a complete Plan. As of this time, there is no definite date set for the next SWAC Meeting.

Announcements/New Business

Todd Reynolds, Member, opened the floor to address announcements or new business. There were none.

Public Comments

Todd Reynolds, Member, opened the floor to address any public comments. There were no Public Comments.

Unfinished Business

Todd Reynolds, Member, opened the floor to address any unfinished business. There was no unfinished business.

Adjourn

Todd Reynolds, Member, made a Motion to Adjourn. The Motion was seconded by all in attendance. By a vote of the membership, the Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Reynolds thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.