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Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
WEBINAR/CONFERENCE CALL
Wednesday, July 8, 2020

Members Present

Andy Hanson
Brian Dempsey
Britt Pfaff-Dunton
Diana Wadley
Margo Gillaspay
Michelle Metzler
Todd Reynolds
Torrey Lautenbach

Representing

City of Mount Vernon
City of Burlington
Skagit County Health Department, ex-officio
Department of Ecology, ex-officio
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division, ex-officio
Haulers/Waste Management
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers
Lautenbach Recycling, District 1 Citizen

Members Absent

Leo Jacobs
Matt Koegel
Scott Thomas
Tamara Thomas
Not Represented
Not Represented

Representing

City of Sedro-Woolley, SWAC Vice-Chair
City of Anacortes, SWAC Chair
Town of La Conner
District 2 Citizens
District 3 Citizens
Agriculture Representative

Visitors

David Bader
Shannon Jones
Troy Lautenbach
Wendy Wyker

Representing

Lautenbach Recycling
Department of Ecology, Recycling Coordinator
Lautenbach Recycling
Republic Services

Introductions

Margo Gillaspay, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business titles were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items.

Call to Order

Ms. Gillaspay, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. via Webinar/Conference Call, Mount Vernon, Washington.

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Public Comments

Ms. Gillaspy, opened the floor for public comments.

There were no Public Comments.

Review and Approve Minutes

Ms. Gillaspy opened the floor to discuss the March 11, 2020 minutes.

Ms. Gillaspy, requested a Motion to Approve the March 11, 2020 minutes as written.

A Motion to Approve was made by Michelle Metzler, Haulers/Waste Management to approve the minutes as written. The Motion to Approve was seconded by Torrey Lautenbach, Lautenbach Recycling. By a vote of the Membership, the Motion was unanimously passed. Ms. Gillaspy, declared the minutes of March 11, 2020 to be approved as written.

Agenda Items

A Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting; open to the public, was held on July 8, 2020 for anyone to speak on any topic on the agenda, or items not listed on the agenda:

a. COVID-19 Impacts

There is a new order now in place from Governor Inslee that all businesses must enforce. Customers must wear a mask when entering any business. Since the Transfer and Recycling Station is considered a business, we are now enforcing that order by the Scale house Attendants reminding customers to wear a mask when using the Facility. If a customer does not have a mask, then a free one is offered to them. If they claim to have a medical condition which prohibits them from wearing a mask, that customer is directed to a separate section of the tipping floor and is kept separate from other customers. Since the Transfer Station cannot offer a remote service, we've created this means to continue our service to everyone. Hopefully, the signage currently in place, which is posted at the entrance gate and the Scale house, will educate everyone as to the safety requirements for using the Facility.

The Transfer Station has not had many big changes, except for a two week period of not accepting cash payment at the Scale house. We discontinued the use of plastic customer cards temporarily and have replaced them with disposal paper cards that are used once and discarded.

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As we entered into Phase 2, the Transfer Station resumed taking cash payments, and continues to use paper cards. We are making every effort to follow the rules and guidelines as they change.

Lautenbach Recycling has put new policies and procedures in place to follow the current safety guidelines. The San Juan operation has reduced the dump lanes from 4 to 3 lanes to create extra spacing. Masks have been offered to customers at the Facility.

Skagit Soils has been extra busy with yard waste intake during the work-from-home period.

Skagit River Steel and Recycling finds that customers are still reluctant to wear a mask when using the Facility. Those customers who refuse to wear a mask are requested to remain in their vehicles while staff remove their materials for them.

The City of Mount Vernon drivers are required to wear masks when interacting with customers. Customers have been requested to consolidate carts for less contact handling. Trucks are manned with one driver per vehicle using automated vehicles. Full service remains in place with no changes or stops in collections. Some staff, but very few, did find it necessary to work from home temporarily. There have been no reports of illness from staff.

Many City Hall employees are teleworking from home due to the office closure.

Waste Management made many changes early in March, which is now the new normal. New procedures are in place to protect drivers, such as modifying pre and post trips, distancing, and wearing masks when in close proximity to customers. There has been an increase in residential volumes due to home projects. Businesses are resuming services and are generating normal waste. The collection of large bulky items has been temporarily suspended.

The State of Washington is in a giant budget shortfall currently through 2023. The use of Furlough time has been one means used in an attempt to save costs. Currently, budgeting is being done for Local Solid Waste Funding Assistance (LSWFA) grant funds for 2021 and for current grants. It is unknown whether there will be future grant money available. The Department of Ecology is funded from what should be a stable funding source. It is expected that it will stay at current level due to being in a more secure funding source. A supplemental budget was cut recently due to the State's COVID-19 expenses that the State is incurring.

There may not be a special session for the Association of Washington Cities this summer until November. Therefore, there will not be any information available regarding the budget and planning decisions until the end of the year.

A State-wide plastic bag ban is scheduled to go into effect in January of 2021. Many grocers are currently not allowing the use of personal reusable bags. Researchers are

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currently putting together information guidelines on the safety of reusable materials. Outreach materials will go out in October to different associations across the State regarding the ban and how businesses can be in compliance.

Skagit River Steel and Recycling has experienced impacts in the recycling market over the last several months, with a loss of approximately 40% almost overnight. Non-ferrous markets were impacted due to the global impact. The market is still very sensitive. Paper markets got worse. Cardboard improved slightly last month, but lost revenue this month. Most paper that was exported is now going to domestic mills. China has finally started catching up with consumer excess capacity on OCC. Domestic mills were ramping up capacity and value started to increase. Their finished products were sitting on backlog, and as a result, reduced some allocation and backed off value on OCC. Plastics are suffering with no expected rebound in the near future.

b. CROP Update

Contamination Reduction Outreach Plan. The Department of Ecology will release the first draft on July 20, 2020 for Public Comment. The State-wide Plan for CROP for recyclables will be available for review and comment. SWAC will need to review the Plan when it becomes available and determine if we are interested in adopting it to our own Management Plan. The deadline to respond is set for July 1, 2021. We will have little time and a multiple approval process to circulate through starting with the SWAC, the SW Governance Board and finally through the Skagit County Commissioners. If it will be necessary to submit modifications to the DOE Plan, or write our own Plan; everything needs to be done in that same time period. Hopefully, the SWAC can meet again in August.

The Department of Ecology is considering putting forth an Accepted Materials List as a suggested list. It is expected to mimic closely the one that was released by the DOE; and others.

c. Agricultural Plastics Recycling

Mayor Boudreau, City of Mount Vernon, expressed interest in knowing if SWAC has been looking into this type of recycling in the County, and if there been any interest from farmers in taking this type of recycling to the Transfer Station. She shared that she is aware of small farms who are interested in ways to recycle film plastics that are used to put down on crop beds.

When Skagit River Steel and Recycling previously accepted this material during the summer, they received an ample supply of it. Film plastics have become very stringent since China got out of the game. Currently, they only move clear; if it is in pristine condition. The biggest concern with ad plastics is the cleanliness. It must go through a wash process since any contamination is problematic.

Waste Management sees very little markets for contaminated plastics. It is not necessarily the collection or processing that's the issue, it's the markets because there is nowhere to send it. It is cost-prohibitive due to the limited market. The only places that take

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agriculture plastics are plastic-to-oil type facilities, and they are limited in the Pacific North West.

Film plastics can go to a few different avenues, but has not been successful. There is nothing to move forward on at this time.

Announcements/New Business

Ms. Gillaspy, opened the floor to address any announcements or new business.

The Skagit County Budget is looking good so far. We are scheduled to start working on the 2021 Budget this month. It will be interesting to see the projected volumes for next year. The Transfer Station's volume of garbage and customer counts have greatly increased since February. In some cases, other places showed a decrease in volume. We expect to budget conservatively for next year and see where we're at.

The County is slowly moving ahead on the Whitmarsh Landfill project. The Public Comment period will be re-open in March and April of 2021. We are currently finalizing responses to Comments. We expect to switch over to working on a remedy for that site, but it will not affect next year's budget.

Public Comments

Ms. Gillaspy, opened the floor to address any public comments.

There were no public comments.

Unfinished Business

Ms. Gillaspy, opened the floor to address any unfinished business.

There was none.

Adjourn

Ms. Gillaspy, thanked everyone. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:40 p.m.