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Skagit County  
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 13, 2019

**Members Present**

Brian Dempsey  
Britt Pfaff-Dunton  
Diana Wadley  
Leo Jacobs  
Margo Gillaspay  
Matt Koegel  
Tamara Thomas  
Torrey Lautenbach

**Representing**

City of Burlington  
Skagit County Health Department, ex-officio  
Department of Ecology, ex-officio  
City of Sedro-Woolley, SWAC Vice-Chair  
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division, ex-officio  
City of Anacortes, SWAC Chair  
District 2 Citizens  
Lautenbach Recycling, District 1 Citizen

**Members Absent**

Andy Hanson  
Scott Thomas  
Todd Reynolds  
Not Represented  
Not Represented  
Not Represented

**Representing**

City of Mount Vernon  
Town of La Conner  
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers  
District 3 Citizens  
Haulers  
Agriculture Representative

**Visitors**

Elena Pritchard  
Michelle Metzler

**Representing**

Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division/*recorder*  
Waste Management

**Introductions**

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

**Call to Order**

Mr. Koegel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the Continental Building Crane Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, Washington.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Koegel, Chair, opened the floor for public comments.

There were no Public Comments.

DRAFT

**Review and Approve Minutes**

Mr. Koegel, Chair opened the floor to discuss the August 14, 2019 minutes.

Mr. Koegel, Chair, requested a Motion to Approve the August 14, 2019 minutes as written.

A Motion to Approve was made by Mr. Torrey Lautenbach, Lautenbach Recycling/District 1 Citizens to approve the minutes as written. The Motion to Approve was seconded by Mr. Leo Jacobs, City of Sedro-Woolley/Vice-Chair. By a vote of the Membership, the Motion was unanimously passed. Mr. Koegel, Chair, declared the minutes of August 14, 2019 to be approved as written.

**Agenda Items**

Mrs. Gillaspay moved forward to begin discussion of agenda item(s):

- a. Governance Board Meeting
  - i. Flow Control information

Mrs. Gillaspay

The last Governance Board Meeting took place on September 18, 2019 in order to present the County Solid Waste Budget for their review and approval. The Board was presented with updates on the Solid Waste Rates, 2020 Solid Waste Budget and Flow Control.

The Flow-Control sub-committee met in the summer to discuss possibly requesting the Governance Board to sign a letter. The committee also discussed reaching out to Republic, reaching out to Waste Management and talked about Flow Control. I presented this to the Governance Board and they wanted to get more information, what they want to see is our estimates of how material we think is leaving the County; what's the volume and what we see as a lost revenue of material leaving that's not going through the system. So they asked that from us. That is something that they would like to see.

Mr. Lautenbach

I can add to that. So this is just a quick, kind of you know, and I am sure that there is a lot more than this. There was a school in Mount Vernon last year that was demolished, a high school in Anacortes. We estimated it was probably about 2,500 tons each. So that's 5,000 tons. The revetment project that we all know about that was a year or two ago, we just assume there was about 800 ton there. We just personally bid on a job for the Skagit County. It's on the Whitmarsh Road. We missed it. The low bidder was about \$15,000 low, and that's exactly to the number if you use flow control or don't use flow control. We reached out multiple times and actually asked them to put out an Addendum out to make sure, but they didn't that.

DRAFT

Mrs. Gillaspy  
They didn't do that?

Mr. Lautenbach  
No.

Mrs. Gillaspy  
I reached out to them to and I said, just so you know this is flow control and this is what we.

Mr. Lautenbach  
Jack is probably getting tired of us, but that's fine. What's interesting is that I just had a conversation with our neighbor who's having some problems with that large pile there. I had a conversation with an outside contractor. They've been getting inquiries about what it would cost to get intermodals to clean that up. I'm just saying, we put numbers together for that for our landlord and it's about 1,600 ton. So if you add all of that up, it's 7,900 ton at \$43.00/ton or so is what the County actually gets. That's \$339,700.00. If you do the full amount, obviously you have to pay tip fees, that's about \$800,000.

Mrs. Gillaspy  
Who is the contractor that won that Whitmarsh cleanup?

Mr. Lautenbach  
A guy from down south. It'll come to me. He has a brother that's in the business as well. United Recycling. His brother is, I can't think of the name.

Mrs. Gillaspy  
Is the contract signed yet?

Mr. Lautenbach  
I don't know. We keep looking. So it's significant. I think the Commissioners were interested in what we're talking about right?

Mrs. Gillaspy  
Yes, that's exactly what they wanted to know.

Mr. Lautenbach  
So just quickly, I came up with close to a million dollars' worth of total revenue for the Transfer Station. Now obviously if we run a portion of it through our facility, the County makes \$12.00/ton for not touching it; of the residuals and we recycle the rest. That is impactful to us to, \$800,000.00 of potential revenue. And that's only the stuff that we know about.

DRAFT

Ms. Thomas

~~And that's not even, I mean it is in your mind, but it's also~~The issue is the fact that you are loosing projects because you're bidding on projects in a legal way ~~to do it~~. You're losing them to people who are ~~doing it~~scamming the system. ~~So~~That means there is business going out of the County, not just waste.

Mr. Lautenbach

Certainly. We employ almost 70 people.

Ms. Dunton

That's lost wages for those people.

Mr. Lautenbach

Wages, parts, fuel, and it goes on and on.

I know some of the concerns are around do we want to take the time to enforce it, right? Out facility is enforced through our permit right? But we do a lot of other activities that are not enforced through-out permit. So that makes you wonder, do we want to be renegades with everyone else, or do we want to be true to the county? Which we are trying to do.

Ms. Thomas

It needs to either be enforced or it needs to not be on the books.

Mr. Jacobs

This would be a good time to get our power back from the Governance Board. After that last meeting I was pretty disappointed in them asking those kind of questions instead of listening to the information.

Mr. Lautenbach

"Why do we care?" It's right here from Mayor Boudreau, "Why do we care?"

Mr. Jacobs

You've got people there, political people are more worried about the dollars and stuff coming into the campaigns and stuff like that. It is very much a concern.

Mr. Dempsey

I've struggled with the terminology in Flow-Control and it's taken me a while to get up the level. It's a reminder to for communication and education, and you just assume the Board knows. Like I said, I've struggled with the lingo, it's unique to this business.

Mrs. Gillaspay

Yeah, and that kinda goes with another thing I wanted to bring up about the meeting. I think that was kind of a loss on my part, something I didn't go forward with. Thinking of these Governance Board meetings as really an opportunity to educate them on these Solid Waste issues. I really should have gone in more and been more like you want to know

DRAFT

why do you care, and now I'm gonna go in and tell you this is really why you should care. I really should think about these more as, well I've been thinking about them as what do I need them to do. I need them to approve this, I need them to move forward on this project. Let's educate them about this is why flow-control is important. This is what's going on in recycling so then they know that and may be interested in it.

Mr Lautenbach

The interesting thing is that most of these are governmental type contracts; schools. So if they just write it into their contract, then they are in violation of the contract so then they have big problems and they aren't going to do that.

Ms. Thomas

It seems odd that it wouldn't be written into the contract that they need to follow all local rules and regulations. That should be standard wording in any municipal contract. It probably is in there.

Mr. Dempsey

A lot of these school projects are not being managed by Cities and Counties, they are being managed by the Architect. The State, a lot of schools hire Washington State Department of Enterprise Services. They have a group of Engineers. It's a lot to get all of these folks to get provisions in there. I just forget that schools kind of fall through. But then they've got to get building permits through the County. Yeah, you're right. That's the best place, with a building official.

Mr. Lautenbach

There's been some conversation, you know just internal of, we've often wondered, does the County not push on it because it's not very enforceable? Maybe the attorneys are like, well, let's be careful here. I mean, it's enforceable to us because it's in our permit, right? Outside of that, how enforceable is it? So do they want to get in a big fight, or is it just not worth it?

Mr. Jacobs

It ends up being a civil matter right, is that what I think it is? It always sucks to go that way. If you get a ticket, that's criminal. Those are a lot easier.

Mrs. Gillaspy

So in terms of a next meeting with the Governance Board, we can't do another one by the end of 2019. Looking into 2020, scheduling one in the first quarter, and that will be our flow-control education. This is what it is, this is why it's important and this what we think might be leaving the County. So, I'll get that kinda on my calendar and work on setting that up for the Governance Board.

Mr. Jacobs

Typically, they like stats and stuff like that. I would say you put up a couple of things like that, I can put some stuff together. I wouldn't make it very long, because you get

DRAFT

like five of them there if you're lucky because it's always a meeting after a meeting after a meeting and they don't care about this one.

Mrs. Gillaspy

Yeah, that's a whole other thing. Either do the meeting after a meeting after a meeting, or you try to get them all at some other time, and that's like impossible. I think they are just not interested in it right now is the feeling I get. Like, what's so important about it? They've got to be interested in the money and the business.

b. Legislative Discussion

Mrs. Gillaspy

Leo requested kind of a update. There was a recycling coordinators meeting that Ecology put on and they gave a legislative update there for some of the Bills. So you were asking about food waste and recycling and how this would affect Solid Waste planning.

From what I am seeing now, so there are several kind of task groups or outside of Ecology that are working on all of these Bills that were passed in the last session. So, they are kinda just starting working on their State-wide plans now. But they will make recommendations for the food waste recovery. They are going to come up with a State-wide Plan. Then we would need to update our Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan with maybe some of the State-wide recommendations or all of them, or even incorporate them?

Ms. Wadley

So, the legislative that passed for the State-wide Contamination and Reduction Outreach Plan related to the contamination that we see in the recycling stream. So the State is tasked with creating a State-wide Contamination and Reduction Outreach Plan by July 1, 2020. And then after that, the locals can either adopt that or maybe have one more year to create your own.

Ms. Thomas

Is that a completely separate push from the Food Waste Recovery?

Ms. Wadley

Yes, it is.

Mrs. Gillaspy

So that's a different Plan and that's a different group working on that. Do you know when their Plan is due for the Food Waste?

Ms. Wadley

It's sooner. I think in the Fall of next year. They have like a bunch of different branches that are working with Health and everybody to bring that together.

Mrs. Gillaspy

DRAFT

So basically we are kind of waiting to see what these groups come up with, but it's probably a couple of years out.

Mr. Jacobs

I was just concerned that we were going to have to adopt it in the Plan before the Plan's due.

Ms. Wadley

You can amend in so you don't have to do a full revision. Your crop is due in 2021, which I think is about the time you'll be doing your new Plan anyway. You might just want to get a jump on that.

Ms. Thomas

So within our Plan, it just becomes another section?

Mrs. Gillaspay

I think we might incorporate it into some of the sections we already have. I don't know that we would necessarily have to put in a whole new section, but we would want to address Contamination Recycling with Food Waste reduction.

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Ms. Thomas

In terms of Contamination in non-recycling, are they including composting in that?

Ms. Wadley

I don't think that's the key focus.

Mrs. Gillaspay

Another Legislative Bill that was passed was the development of the Recycling Development Center which is looking at how we can improve markets. How can we support businesses that are using recycled materials within Washington State? The Advisory Board will meet in January and I'll be able to you all an update after that.

As far as when our Plan needs to be revised, it's been two years. It will just be an Amendment.

Mr. Lautenbach

For food waste in our County, do we have an idea how much of food waste is available to be recycled if there were better practices and easier management practices for handling? Is there a lot of potential for collection of food waste?

Mr. Jacobs

In my world, there is a little bit. It's going to come down to does the businesses want to pay for it. They already have large garbage and recycling bills that are going up with the cost of doing everything. And you want to throw in like \$40 more dollars, just throwing out a number, for recycling at a commercial business for yard waste or food waste. It's a really tough sell and I've been trying to sell the hell out of it.

DRAFT

Mr. Koegel

We have two of the restaurants and it's easier to just throw in the dumpster. That's what they're going to do. It saves them money and it convenient.

Mr. Lauthenbach

Could they just reduce the size of their garbage container?

Mr. Jacobs

Yes, it's just very challenging when it comes to training them and saying you can reduce this and then you can add this. And then they say but I have to train my people to do that when we could just throw it all in that one there. It's a tough sell.

Ms. Thomas

From my experience in doing a couple of pilots for Redmond and Bellevue, some of the restaurants save a lot and got a lot of benefit out of it once they got the system figured out. Some of them really never saw much advantage. There's all kind of different factors including if they are located in a outside strip mall of some sort and the property owner just pays for garbage and they don't get any benefit from all this extra work. If they own the building then there's a different ball game there. You not only have to have a separate bin inside the kitchen which is sometimes more challenging than finding room for a separate container outside of the building to be picked up.

JambaJuice loved it because they got a lot of benefit out of it because they generate ~~hugh~~ huge volumes of fruit rinds. They just happen to be situated appropriately so they actually were paying for their garbage service.

Ms. Wadley

It's about the food waste that is generated. That's what the Bill is focusing on so I don't know if we need to worry about placing bins for organics.

Ms. Thomas

Wasted food and food waste have ~~got these~~ separate definitions. Wasted ~~food-Food~~ is stuff that could be recovered and eaten by people. Food ~~waste-Waste~~ is not edible by people but maybe it could still be diverted to animals or ~~something~~ composting.

Mrs. Gillaspy

I think they are trying to focus on wasted food and that diversion in the first place. To get back to what you asked, I haven't looked at this in a while but that Western Washington Waste Characterization Study that they did at our Transfer Station, they found that 8% of the waste stream was food that could have been eaten and for whatever reason was thrown out.

Ms. Wadley



DRAFT

It could be that some food that was perfectly good but was thrown away due to the Department of Health regulations where it involves time and temperature like on a buffet or couldn't be cold packed fast enough.

Mr. Lautenbach

Like B.C., they've taken huge initiatives to keep organics out of the landfills so everybody over there is focused. They can't do it or they'll get in trouble.

Mr. Jacobs

I did the Sedro-Woolley school district and I did all the schools, and I proved the savings. They saved \$2,500 over the course of the 4 months and they still did not want to keep doing it. It was easier to throw it away.

Ms. Dunton

The State will be bringing forward a Sharps Waste Stewardship Plan. In the past, we've talked about the Waste Medicine Plan that is in place right now in Skagit County. They are in the process of setting up a State-wide Plan where all counties will be able to have their medicines disposed of and that disposal is paid for by the pharmaceutical companies. What this is looking at is Sharps waste so it would be the Sharps producers which are a lot of those pharmaceutical companies. Many times it's the same companies that are also producing the medical waste. Doing it on a State level, not county by county, they are setting up a system where there will be mail-back opportunities and drop-off sites where small containers of Sharps that people produced in their home that they would be able to drop those Sharps containers off at a pharmacy or the Health Department to be consolidated and then shipped off for proper disposal. It's a big issue right now, especially in these mid-size and smaller counties like us. Because we don't have a good option, we allow Sharps to go into the general Solid Waste stream. They have to be labeled and have to be in proper containers, but how many times do people not label and not put them in the proper containers? How many times are drivers getting needle sticks or the people working on the compactors or Waste Management when the materials go down to the mrf and they're doing the pick-line work? It's a real health issue for individuals and also just having a system that's going to be more conducive to trying to having Sharps get into a proper disposal because we have such a ~~huge~~ huge increase in the amount of Sharps that are getting disposed of just in the streets and in the parks, let alone going into the garbage can or going into the recycling.

Ms. Thomas

Is this going to be like a bottle bill basically so that they pay a deposit and you get the money back when you put it in the right spot?

Ms. Dunton

No. It would be like the Secure Medicine Return Program that they are developing right now State-wide, and we have in this county where the producers of those needles have to set up, fund and operate a collection program. So whatever those cost are, they have to do that. Since it would be a State-run program they are still debating on who's going to be the regulator. It may be the State Department of Health, it may be Ecology, but there

DRAFT

would be a State agency that would oversee that collection program and make sure that if you have a drop box that it is being run safely so people aren't getting exposed to needles and making sure that there is education out there so that the public even knows about it. Making sure that there is mail-back Sharps containers available for people so if they can't get to a drop box. Those are all stewardship plans where the cost is born by the producer and that gets built into the price of the product. It tends to be a lower price if it is worked in that way versus like doing the penny a needle of whatever it would be if they were going that bottled type tax.

Ms. Thomas

I'm just trying to imagine how this is actually going help more sharps get out of the areas where they are. People who don't care don't care. If they can get a couple of cents for it, they might do something along those lines. Right now if you walk into Lowe's, ~~and there's there're~~ all these Sharps containers in the restrooms. Is that going to be any better?

Ms. Dunton

It would give, like those businesses, if they decided to put in those Sharps containers in their restrooms, they would at least have a place where they could take those containers and get them disposed for, paid for by the producer. Right now, Lowe's and other grocery stores, it's coming out of their bottom line. So it would be covered by the producers group. Right now, there are several counties in California that have adopted needle return programs that are producer funded stewardship type plan and are just in their startup. It's the company that is overseeing those programs is the exact same company that is doing the medicine return, its Med-Project.

Ms. Thomas

How is that working, the medical exchange program? Last time you presented it, it was just getting up and running?

Ms. Dunton

I do have quarterly and I didn't even think to bring those tonight since they just came in. The first quarter results, we had their starting numbers in February in a single digit. In three months time, we've gone to in the hundreds of pounds that we've taken. Med-Project hasn't done much in the way of educating or outreach. Any of the outreach has really been done by the county.

c. Anacortes Plastic Bag Ban

Mr. Koegel

I think that's going to happen in May which is the initial kick-off. Grocery stores are banning plastic bags now, there will be paper bags only. I'm not sure how much, but there is a cost attached. I think it will be all grocery stores in the city limits, but I am not sure how wide that is. I don't know the exact details, but I know Safeway and The Market are going to enforce it and those are out two big grocery stores.

Mr. Lautenbach

DRAFT

We can do like San Juan Island, they banned plastic garbage bags so then they just use the thicker bags like when you buy clothing, they use the thicker plastic bags. The push-back was for the boating community to use them for garbage sacks. They are still better than the ones that blow away.

d. New Outreach Programs

Ms. Gillaspay

I just wanted to share some new Outreach programs that Callie Martin is working on.

*Workshops*

She is putting together some new workshops for food waste reduction and clothing and textile production and recycling. She is hoping to do these as in-person workshops. She does a lot at the Food Co-Op downtown. She likes teaching there, it's a nice space. She has also gone out to some Libraries. She had an article out last week in the Herald. She has another one coming out in December for just general waste reduction tips around the Holidays. She always gets the question is wrapping paper recycled.

*Recycling Coordinators Meeting*

Ms. Metzler

Waste Management has been working with cities over the last year and a half or so to update a list of what is accepted in the recycling. We've changed what is accepted in the recycling in partnership with Skagit County, Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley and working with Anacortes to see if they would be open to change their recycling list as well. As far as how is that communicated out to folks once the list is changed, it really depends on the city. In those cities, Waste Management has an annual mailer that we send out and so we will update the list that way. We've updated our website. It depends on the specific city as to what the exact outreach is.

Ms. Gillaspay

When you send out the mailer, and that's just on an annual schedule, do you try to coordinate when you change your acceptance versus when you send out the mailer?

Ms. Metzler

Not really, mainly because we understand that changing recycling list is going to take years for people to actually change their behavior. Whatever comes first, if we are mailing out recycling guide first, or if the city is open to changing the list and we are not going to do a mailing for another six months. We are open to changing the list to wherever it makes sense for the Municipalities. We are really not doing any sort of active enforcement of non-recyclables since we do tag carts when they have contaminated recycling with the drivers leaving them. It will be a multi-year process for folks to get use learning the new list.

*Website updates*

Callie wanted to make sure that the Cities are updating their websites that have the information in maybe a printable format that people can go and look for.

DRAFT

Ms. Thomas

What are the specific changes?

Ms. Metzler

It varies a little bit city by city. We are migrating to a unified list. In general the items that we've removed from the list of acceptable recyclables are:

*Mixed Paper category:*

Anything with a plastic coating, milk carton, frozen food box, coffee cup, paper plate, only paper that is uncoated.

*Plastic category:*

Just plastic bottles, tubs and jugs.

*Metal category:*

Just metal cans only, no scrap metal.

*Glass category:*

Remains the same.

Mr. Jacobs

I don't know if this flyer is the one that has been updated, but I see a yogurt container. I don't remember that as being an accepted item before.

Ms. Metzler

That is considered a plastic tub so that one is fine.

Ms. Wadley

Where does one find the new unified migrating to list?

Ms. Metzler

It is still a little city specific because we have Anacortes on a different list, but you can go to Waste Management's website, [wmnorthwest.com/Skagit](http://wmnorthwest.com/Skagit) County or any of the other cities, you will find the list.

Mr. Jacobs

I don't remember the dairy tubs being on the State list that came out or on the WRRRA. Why are you not matching their recommendations?

Ms. Metzler

We came out with our list before they came out with their list. We came out with our list first so obviously there was going to be a little bit of difference. WRRRA is a State-wide organization and recycling markets are a little bit different on the east side of the State.

DRAFT

So we feel like for western Washington, tubs are a good product and we have stable markets for them.

e. CSWMP-High Priority Recommendations

Mrs. Gillaspay

I put together a spreadsheet of our high-priority recommendations from our Management Plan cause I just kind of wanted to look at the goals that we had set, how we are doing on them, which ones do we want to start focusing on for 2020. I just wanted to get the ball rolling on what we should be, you know, kinda stick to our plans that we worked to hard to put together and think about what we want to be focusing on.

Ms. Thomas

In light of the new Wasted Food Reduction, it just occurred to me that maybe there is some additional outreach to food banks and gleaners that could be done. I'm not sure which direction is the best to start from, contact them and find out what they can do. Contact commercial entities, people who are wasting edible foods. It seems like there ought to be some collaboration there.

Mrs. Gillaspay

Callie and I met with people with Sustainable Connections who run the food recovery program in Whatcom County talking about what would that look like.

Ms. Thomas

I know that the food bank here in Mount Vernon has always been good about taking home-owner grown produce. Who are the other entities out there who try to get food to people? The only three that I can think of is food banks, gleaners and maybe some of the shelters.

*High Priority Recommendations*

Mr. Jacobs

On T1, I'll send you an e-mail in the next couple of weeks to see if it's feasible. On SW4, I've tasked at the City to go ahead and start developing a rough draft of a Disaster Staging type plan. If I come up with a draft, I'll send it out.

Mrs. Gillaspay

As long as you identify properties where you can like store materials it would be a good thing.

Mr. Lautenbach

Across the street, there's still a big area there. The old mill?

Mr. Jacobs

DRAFT

It's under a Phase 2 contamination dig up on it so we're waiting to see what they want to do on that property. It was a free grant from Ecology or one of those programs so it was free to do a Phase 2. The people thought it would be good.

f. Vote to add Waste Management Michelle Metzler as Haulers to the Membership

Mrs. Gillaspy

I would like to add Michelle to the SWAC group and then we will amend our Resolution too as well to add her on as a Member.

Mr. Jacobs

I make a Motion to add Michelle on to the Haulers.

Mr. Koegel

I Second the Motion.

Mrs. Gillaspy

Shall we vote? All in favor?

The vote was unanimous to add Michelle Metzler of Waste Management as a SWAC Member and Haulers representative.

**Announcements/New Business**

Mr. Koegel, Chair, opened the floor to address any announcements or new business.

There were none.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Koegel, Chair, opened the floor to address any public comments.

There were no public comments.

**Unfinished Business**

Mr. Koegel, Chair, opened the floor to address any unfinished business.

There was none.

**Adjourn**

Mr. Koegel, Chair, thanked everyone. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.