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Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Members Present

Andy Hanson
Britt Pfaff-Dunton
Leo Jacobs
Margo Gillaspay
Matt Koegel
Tamara Thomas
Todd Reynolds
Torrey Lautenbach

Representing

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

Members Absent

Brian Dempsey
John Doyle
Not Represented
Not Represented
Not Represented

Representing

City of Burlington
Town of La Conner, *retired*
District 3
Haulers
Agriculture Representative

Visitors

Callie Martin
Diana Wadley
Elena Pritchard
Rick Hlavka

Representing

Skagit County Solid Waste
Department of Ecology, ex-officio, *present by phone conference*
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste, recorder
Green Solutions, *absent*

Call to Order

Matt Koegel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. at the Continental Building Crane Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

Introductions

Chair Koegel, 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

Chair Koegel opened the floor to discuss the June 22, 2017 minutes.

Chair Koegel asked for a Motion to Approve the June 22, 2017 minutes as written.

Chair Koegel requested a Motion to Approve the June 22, 2017 minutes as written. Vice-Chair Jacobs made a Motion to Approve the June 22, 2017 minutes as written. Member Thomas seconded the Motion to Approve as written. Chair Koegel asked for an all-in-favor vote to approve the June 22, 2017 minutes. All voted unanimously in favor of approving the June 22, 2017 minutes as written.

Agenda Items

Chair Koegel moved forward to begin discussion of agenda item(s):

d. Update on recycling markets – Todd Reynolds

Mr. Reynolds reported that the Tonnage Report for the County had a really good year. Even with December recycling figures not in yet, we are up 20% from 2016 and 30% up from 2015 in tonnage from the County. The County is on pace to do 2,100 tons, with 2016 coming in at about 1,750 tons and 2015 at about 1,550 tons. The markets for recycling have been increasingly improving. Income is up about 3 times compared to 2016 with cardboard and metal increases in recycling. Paper recycling has been increasing despite present concerns with China's import regulations.

Plastic recycling has not been showing any promise in the market or outlets. There is no home for a lot of the grade plastic, specifically, the post-consumer items such as *mixed bottles*. #1 and #2 grades will always have a domestic market. The downside is not having enough to ship them to a processor. There must be straight #1 PET's or straight #2 HDPE's. The difficulty is in getting a large enough of one of any individual volume to make a truck load. Everything went export in the past with mixed loads. *Films* are difficult to move unless they are a super clean LDPE grade A.

Waste Management is still accepting co-mingled plastics, but only their material from their accounts. They remove only #1's and #2's with value. Number 3 through #7 mixed plastic materials were shipped to China in the past.

News of China will implementing new regulations, effective on January 1, 2018, and has already caused a huge disturbance in the industry. Some trade organizations report negative feedback in China's potential success. China's ban on "carried waste" is their goal for zero contamination. Even with relative clean products from the States being shipped to China, there was still significant abuse of the system with shipments of trash. The all or none approach is a requirement from China's president in an attempt to create a "beautiful" China. The CCIC, which is their inspection arm of their government, excelled in identifying copper and high value materials. Inspection of paper and plastics is out of their realm of expertise. Upon our trade organization's return from Beijing last

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week, they reported that the inspectors cannot indicate which contaminants that they are looking for. Contamination levels reported varied from .1% to possibly .3% and eventually settling out at .5%. Materials coming out of MRF's (material recovery facilities) cannot reach even a 1.5%. China will never get to the .5% acceptable level and therefore would in effect ban the material without having to make that statement. Skagit River Steel & Recycling, the County and other smaller recyclers do not have product contaminated to that level. Our Facility implemented extra sorts in the bailer to ensure that the .5% or less contamination is met. SRS is currently able to move mixed paper at this time. The last update from last year indicated that almost 30% of the mixed waste paper in the United States went to China. Some information indicates that the materials may go to South East Asia next but similar laws and regulations may change that course. This could affect the majority of the mixed paper in the United States. SRS's extra necessary steps in documentation of the sort process, to keep materials clean, include pictures and videos of the sort process. Currently, values for the paper market have seen strong numbers due to the mills in China making large purchases. The smaller processors in China have had government shut downs due to inability to meet the water run-off and sorting process requirements. Some of the larger processors have not renewed their license, and therefore brought in as much tonnage as they could on their old license, which could have possibly ramped up the market at the end of the year.

Tax Reform Bills may create some tax incentives for larger businesses such as Waste Management, which may motivate them to build plastic recycling facilities. The plastics #3 - #7 that could be sorted, are typically a low value and therefore will generate a very low return.

Vice-Chair Jacobs asked if there is a contingency plan in place, such as charging for bringing in recycling.

Mr. Reynolds commented that if there is no outlet for the mixed plastics, SRS will stop receiving it, and eventually go to the County Transfer and Recycling Station as garbage.

Vice-Chair Jacobs expressed his concern that the plastics may be sent to landfills once permission is given by Municipalities. Hopefully, citizens can be prepared in advance that their plastic recycling may be going elsewhere.

Mr. Reynolds commented that another option would be to get the public to start sorting again.

Returning back to the 3-bin system is another option.

Ms. Wadley commented that the Whatcom County SWAC are largely unaffected at this point.

Ms. Martin commented that the concept behind co-mingled recycling was behavior change or removing barriers. Whatcom County does not have any issues surrounding how many people recycle.

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Mr. Reynolds commented that the whole push was to increase tonnages of recycling. It did not actually ever pay off in the way it was believed that it would. It also did not take into account how much contamination it caused with the sparkle pack. It came in as recycling and went out to the landfill.

Ms. Martin suggested that if there is a year for moving away from single use plastics, now is the time to utilize that momentum and keep moving in that direction. Mr. Lautenbach also suggested that now is a good time to educate the public on what to buy.

a. Update on Rate Study

Ms. Gillaspy thanked those who provided review sheets. Overall, it appears that Bell & Associates were selected to provide the rate study. Their lower price was a significant variable in their selection. Ms. Gillaspy spoke with Mr. Bell on the telephone a few times and also contacted the references for both companies as well. References for both companies were positive. Ms. Gillaspy selected Bell & Associates based on their previous work done, which was of a similar scale to Skagit County. The other company could provide a great rate study, but seemed a bit larger. The next step will be to contact the companies and go through the County contract procedure.

b. Update on CSWMP

The Public Hearing was held on November 28th with few attendees. There were just a couple of comments. Some Commissioners in attendance requested to read through red-lined copies of the Plan to follow the edit process. The Plan was approved by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners on Consent Agenda. The next step is to prepare a Resolution for Adoption for all participating Jurisdictions and forward an executed copy to the Department of Ecology.

Ms. Wadley commented on the RCW regulations that require SWAC to hold one more meeting that should take place right after all Jurisdictions have adopted the Plan and before the Plan is sent to the Department of Ecology for their final 45 day review.

c. Product Stewardship Program for Perscription Medications

Ms. Dunton provided handouts prior to her review.

Opioids in Skagit County

The County Health Department and Board of Health are currently working on secure medicine return program for the County, which is already taking place in other counties such as King, Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap, Callum and Whatcom. The program implements a stewardship program for taking in unwanted and expired household medications and provides a safe and secure method of disposal. The pie chart indicates opioid use and deaths in Washington State from prescription and non-prescription dependency. The gateway prescription drugs were pain killers, followed by heroine and other opioids throughout the United States.

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Schematic Overview of County Secure Medicine Return Regulations

Solutions were developed in King County and Alameda County in California by taking a Stewardship Program approach. The attached gives a schematic overview of how the program works. It essentially funds a disposal mechanism for the waste product that is funded by the producers. There is also a light recycling program and various others for different products throughout the United States. Some Police Stations and Sheriff's Department maintain a receptacle and collect waste medications within their own budget without any outside funding assistance. Unfortunately, due to limited staff and time for collections and storage, some drop boxes have been eliminated. Drug producers now work together through one or more stewardship organizations to plan, finance, coordinate, and promote the program. In practice, more than 400 companies have formed MED-Project LLC as their stewardship organization. Under a pharmaceutical stewardship policy, the companies that make the medicines finance and operate the medicine take-back program. This relieves the burden on local government and law enforcement, and provides sustainable funding for a more convenient program for consumers. Secure drop boxes are located in pharmacies, hospitals, and police stations that volunteer to participate. A Regulation to be presented to the Board of Health is in the process of being drafted. The potential time frame for briefings and public hearing could likely take place in February of 2018. The Board could possibly adopt the ordinance be in late February or early March. From the date of passage of the ordinance, the roughly 400 producers in Washington provide a drafted plan to the Health Department within 6 months. The Health Department will then review the Plan which could take up to 4 months. Upon approval, the producers have 90 days to implement a collection system. Drop boxes can only be located at DEA approved licensed sites such as pharmacies, and law enforcement stations. Pre-paid mail options will require mailers to be available in Municipal buildings such as libraries and City Hall.

Ms. Thomas commented that the process seems to be redundant in requiring each separate county to go through the process. Could the process be implemented State wide instead?

Ms. Dunton responded that bills have been circulated through legislature for State wide approval for over 10 years with no success. State wide implementation time line could take up to 4 years.

Skagit County Public Health, Jennifer Johnson, Director & Howard Leibrand, M.D., Health Office; commentary

Mr. Lautenbach referred to the 1,200 pounds of medicines collected in 2016 at Skagit sites. Is there an estimated projection on how many additional pounds could be collected once the Stewardship Program drop boxes are in place?

Ms. Dunton responded that they are unsure at this point. King County is the only county with the Stewardship Program in place at this time. Their operational phase is so new that they do not have any data available at this point.

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Mr. Lautenback inquired whether there is any national data of effectiveness of the program available. The cost of prescription medications could increase as a result of the Program. We don't want consumers to pay for a program that no one is going to use.

Ms. Dunton commented that the Producer will add on their cost to the prescription. There is no source data from other counties at this time to explain their actual calculations. The *commentary* does provide estimates that were projected at State and Federal levels. The pharmaceutical industry has estimated program costs of about \$1.2 million per year under a similar law in Alameda County, CA, which has roughly seven times the population of Skagit County. This works out to a cost of the Producers of less than 0.1% of medicines sales in the County.

Mr. Lautenbach inquired as to why Whatcom County has such a lower rate of opioid deaths compared to Skagit County? Do they have other types of prevention programs?

Ms. Dunton responded that they don't have sufficient statistics to make a determination.

Ms. Thomas commented on two additional reasons why the Program is so important. One, is reducing the driver for crime, and the second is to protect our water resource from flushing the drugs into the waste water system.

Vice-Chair Jacobs inquired as to whether the Stewardship Program will cover the Cities as well.

Ms. Dunton responded that the Health Department serves the entire county, Municipalities, incorporated and unincorporated.

Vice-Chair Jacobs inquired whether it will be necessary to sign an Interlocal Agreement.

Ms. Dunton responded that it will not be necessary. The Board of Health serves the entire county. If and when the County Commissioner's adopt a program, they do so in the capacity of the Board of Health; serving the entire populous of Skagit County.

Ms. Thomas inquired as to whether excess drugs are considered Solid Waste.

Ms. Dunton responded that, by definition, they are Household Hazardous waste, or Moderate Risk waste. The program only covers the household hazardous waste component. Businesses must access the Small Quantity Generator program (SQG) to dispose of pharmaceuticals, or mail-back programs. (The Program covers only medications and not Sharps needles or syringes.) Pharmacies in grocery stores need to hear requests for a drop box location for waste prescriptions from their customer base to strengthen interest and support the Program. The County Transfer and Recycling Station could show support by passing out envelopes to the public.

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Ms. Martin commented that part of the history of the opioid epidemic stems from nursing pain management, who emphasized that part of the 7 steps of good nursing care is “pain free” or “no pain” care.

Ms. Thomas inquired whether the method of disposal is incineration through all mechanisms of disposal. Is there any reason why you wouldn't want to dispose of Sharps in the same manner?

Ms. Dunton responded that the main disposal facility in Washington State is Stericycle in the Centralia area. Disposal is through sterilization and not incineration. The licensing is different for Sharps. DOT regulations prohibit shipping uncovered Sharps in with medications.

Nothing is needed from SWAC regarding this presentation. The handouts were provided at today's SWAC meeting for informational purposes only. The ordinance will be posted to the County website. Lending support on an individual or Municipality basis would be beneficial to the Health Department.

e. Discussion of goals and programs for 2018

Ms. Gillaspay and Ms. Martin worked together with the Sustainable Communities class at Western University over their last quarter. Four groups of students were presented with 4 different ideas in the hope that one group would choose 1 idea for discussion and develop recommendations.

The students were interested in putting together Outreach Programs for C&D Recycling, Food Waste Reduction, Textile Recycling and Multi-Family Recycling. Each topic was discussed and recommendations were suggested for each category.

Thread-Cycle, a program developed by King County, promotes keeping Textile Recycling from the garbage. This program was the most favorable to pursue in 2018. Old cloth, shoes, and most cloth items can be donated to any Goodwill or Value Village store. A list of acceptable items can be seen on the King County Thread-Cycle website. Currently, everything is sorted, baled and shipped to a recycler. Goodwill was contacted by the students and they appear to be enthusiastic and willing to participate. An Agreement would be signed agreeing to use King County's Thread-Cycle materials. Currently, Goodwill and Value Village sort everything on a small scale from wearable and non-wearable items and then send everything to their sorter to be baled. We would be advertising a program that already exists, so this would be a low cost program that could be implemented in 2018.

Also suggested was a Social Media Outreach regarding Food Waste Reduction.

Multi-Family Recycling would be more challenging and may not be addressed in 2018.

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C&D Recycling discussions provided recommendations for comprehensive packets to be provided to the Planning Department for handouts in the construction and demolition permitting process. This issue has been addressed in the past in the Flow Control issues. The students developed recommendations; but with the quarter ending, did not have sufficient time to follow-through. Topics can be further addressed with the students in future quarters if desired.

Vice-Chair Jacobs commented that he has been working on packets for The City of Sedro-Woolley. The City would like to avoid any un-due burden by being the first lone source to break ground in developing a new packet enforcing the Flow Control with the builders. He requested forming a sub-committee extension from SWAC. He would be very willing to share his years of research with a sub-committee as a joint venture. The Skagit County Governance Board made a request at one point to create a task group to address Flow Control.

Vice-Chair Jacobs addressed Multi-Family Recycling. Since taking over in Sedro-Woolley for Waste Management, their multi-family has been exploding with the co-mingled recycling. They have expanded from using totes to front-load containers including the use of signage and pictures for the bins. The bins have been surprisingly clean coming from the apartment complexes.

Ms. Martin shared that she was contacted by her Master Composter volunteer who just applied for the program. Her residence is in a Mount Vernon complex that provides recycling bins, but little options for Food Waste Reduction composting and limited options for recycling.

Vice-Chair Jacobs has much information that he would like to share, a lot of which is already on graphics.

Ms. Martin commented further on Food Waste Reduction. The Western students' primary focus was trying to enter schools, which is a very good venue to create change. Solid Waste has quite a number of school programs, unfortunately the staffing is not wide spread enough to establish just a schools program. Whatcom has a program that only focuses on sustainability and recycling in schools. The student group could have focused a bit more on Skagit County's lack of knowledge that if they are serviced with a green waste cart, then they can put food into that green waste cart. Rolling out a campaign providing this information is critical.

Ms. Thomas commented that one of the reasons that the information is not well known, is that even though Waste Management collects the carts, they don't seem interested in educating people with that information.

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The SWAC roster has multiple vacancies that need to be addressed and hopefully filled in 2018. With the retirement of Mr. John Doyle, the Member position representing The Town of La Conner needs to be filled.

Representatives for *Agriculture, Haulers, District 3 Citizens, Town of Concrete, Town of Hamilton and Town of Lyman* need to be secured.

Ms. Gillaspy commented that there is a new contact at Waste Management that she would like to reach out to for the position of *Hauler*.

Any recommendations for the *Agriculture* representative would be welcomed. Ms. Gillaspy will run an advertisement for the position as well as considering any recommendations.

Ms. Martin is often contacted by those wishing to address agriculture waste and their options for recycling. Adding an *Agriculture* representative would provide a very necessary source of information.

Announcements/New Business

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

Vice-Chair Jacob requested creating a sub-committee to address Flow Control. The next SWAC meeting may possibly be scheduled for March, 2018.

Public Comments

Chair Koegel, opened the floor to address any public comments.
There were no Public Comments.

Unfinished Business

Chair Koegel, opened the floor to address any unfinished business.
There was no Unfinished Business.

Adjourn

Chair Koegel thanked everyone for attending the meeting.
The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m.