



**Joint Meeting of Water System Advisory Committee (WSAC)
and Creeks, Drainage, and Wastewater Advisory Committee (CDWAC)**

May 10, 2017 Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue

Room 4901

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
WSAC			
Rodney Schauf	Y	Sheryl Shapiro	CDWAC Liaison and CAC Program Manager
Melissa Levo	Y	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Teresa Stern	Y	Alex Chen	Director, Water Planning & Program Management
Paul Reed	N	Kathy Curry	Water LOB Liaison
Michael Godfried	Y	Rachel Garrett	SPU Customer Programs
Joel Carsley	Y	Ellen Pepin	SPU Communications
Steven Cole	Y	Madeline Goddard	DWW Deputy Director
Michael Williams	Y		
CDWAC			
Ben Billick	Y	Guests	
Christina Ciampa	Y	Wendy Walker	Guest
Schyler Hect	Y	Maria McDaniel	Guest
Patrick Jablonski	Y		
Colum Lang	N		
Seth McKinney	N		
Gary Olson	Y		
Devin O'Reilly	N		
Mariella White	Y		

ACTION ITEMS

- Sheryl will send an email to collect additional feedback on the water quality report design and content.
- Sheryl suggested that additional review of the report could take place in either small groups, via email, or even conference calls. Those interested in this opportunity should let Sheryl know.

- Committee members expressed interest in future presentations from the Wastewater Education Program. Sheryl and Natasha will send out topic ideas from Rachel's PPTX to get input on which topics are of most interest.

1. Regular Business

- WSAC Chair, Rodney Schauf, opened the meeting at 5:31 PM and reminded attendees to sign-in.
- Committee Members, SPU staff, and guests introduced themselves.
- Meeting notes from April were not yet ready for review; they will be distributed electronically.
- Natasha indicated emergency exits, exit procedures, and bathrooms.
- Rodney introduced new Water LOB Liaison, Kathy Curry.

2. Welcome new WSAC LOB Liaison: Kathy Curry, WSAC LOB Liaison

Kathy provided a brief overview of her personal and professional background. Kathy is Seattle born and raised, with 22 years of experience working in both the private and public sectors on developing and implementing environmental policies and plans that reflect community priorities. She shared that some of her favorite projects have involved working with citizen advisory committees to develop public programs & services that align with community needs and priorities. She emphasized that she would like to hear Committee member input on how we can best engage with the topics that we will be exploring, and she welcomes opportunities to meet outside of, or ahead of, regular CAC meeting times.

3. 2016 Drinking Water Quality Report: Ellen Pepin, SPU Communications

Ellen returned to the Committee to provide an update on the Water Quality Report themes. Ellen shared a draft copy of the Water Quality Report content outline, and said she would be looking for initial feedback on the content. She said additional feedback could be provided electronically by FRIDAY, May 12th.

- SPU went with a design that has 3 foci, pulling the word "essential" from the Strategic Business Plan.
- The map is just a placeholder; once they get to the City section it will demonstrate how the water system works.
- The big takeaway they hope to achieve for non-english speaking audiences will be that Seattle's tap water is clean and is much cheaper than buying bottled.
- They will include language that notes how Seattle's water source is unique; that it is only one of 5 systems in the country with mountain-sourced water.

Feedback on the title, "Quality Water Naturally"

- **Committee member comment:** I like it.
- **Committee member comment:** Pretty good.
- **Committee member comment:** I get the double meaning; but again, natural water quality is the clean way (as opposed to water quality naturally)
- **Committee member comment:** I like it too, also for the double meaning. But wonder if it only works in English?

Concern that the word "naturally" is overused:

- **Committee member comment:** In the Pacific Northwest, we wear that term as a badge of honor. We have access to the Puget Sound, to lakes, to forest and the word is used to promote it, but we wear it as a badge of honor.
- **Committee member comment:** I think you've highlighted the point that we're one of 5 cities with a protected watershed. So, I think using it in that context makes sense.
- **Committee member question:** Was the term "naturally" ever used in the water quality report before?

Reactions to the report as a whole:

- **Committee member comment:** On the "Essential to Wildlife" the background image can be a bit distracting.
- **Committee member question:** Did you say that it's still open whether it's "Wildlife" or "Environment"? And will the colors be set in stone?
- **Committee member comment:** You seem to rely heavily on paragraphs of text; consider using some of the image space for more graphics (to replace some of the text).
- **Committee member comment:** I like the graphic between tap water and bottled water; it really communicates the savings.
- **Committee member comment:** I'm concerned about the number of statistics you're putting in the report which is great for someone who is analytical, but it could turn people off who aren't into that. Maybe consider using 25-35% of the statistics you think are important, but not all of them.
 - **Staff:** Can you give a specific example?
 - **Committee member comment:** 200 miles of pipes, etc. I think it's interesting, but it may not be valuable for everyone.
 - **Sheryl:** Of those statistics, which do you think are most important?
 - **Committee member comment:** I think the ones that protect people's health and the cost of the water.
 - **Committee member comment:** What about putting some of the statistics into an infographic?
 - **Guest comment:** In reference to calling out fewer statistics- the purpose of the document is to inform people. Although we may think the information may be above their head, some people scan it and it's important not to dumb down it down.
- **Committee member comment:** Should there, or will there be a more specific tie-in to the Strategic Business Plan?
 - **Staff:** Do you think there should be?
 - **Committee member comment:** Probably.
- **Committee member question:** Are you putting in what the average person needs (for water) versus the average amount the person uses? Make sure the statement matches the statistics. Then later, when I read the section on conserving water, the comparison will make sense.
- **Committee member comment:** The purpose of this document is that it is required by EPA, and you're also using this as an opportunity to do some education. But there is this tension between creating something that is as big as this is, and "will people read it?" Are there opportunities to make it slimmer? I do really support doing education, but I wonder at 16 pages if it's something that people really dig into.
 - **Guest comment:** I've been a homeowner for 16 years and I've read this every year, and I think it's hugely important and there is value in it. I think it's important to know what my rates are paying for and what it takes to do that.

- **Guest comment:** A few comments about things that feel redundant: page 4 and page 10 the first paragraphs are the same. I'd wonder if that was a mistake.
- **Committee member comment:** Wondering the fit of 'system leakage' in the Environment section. Prevents an issue without showing how we plan to rectify that. A little more context would help.

Ellen reminded Committee Members that they really do use this feedback; she said that input from the previous years' Committees was incorporated. She also noted that they have received feedback from Committee Members on the order of content, which has helped to tie the report together better. She encouraged members to not only submit feedback on the layout and content, but if they see opportunities to shuffle content to let them know as well.

Timeline: SPU staff have until June 9 to produce the final content before the document will go to the printer.

4. Wastewater Education Program Overview: Rachel Garrett, SPU Customer Programs

Rachel provided an overview on her background and the work she is doing in Wastewater Education. She then reviewed the principles of social marketing, an approach used for outreach in Customer Programs. When services are running smoothly, she explained, it's "out of sight/out of mind" for customers. The social marketing approach helps build awareness while helping customers take actions by addressing barriers and providing benefits. In the long term, these actions save customers' money and help protect human health and the environment. If CAC members are interested in the social marketing methodology, she said to let us know and we can come back with more information.

- **Committee member question:** That side sewer graphic shows it dropping out of the slab of the house and going straight to the sewer. Are all side sewers on the side of the house?
 - **Answer:** There is a variety of side sewer setups; some side sewers are even shared between multiple homes. "Side sewer" is a term that can be confusing to people and is one of the reasons we want to do some of this research and see what resonates and reaches our customers better.
- **Committee member question:** Does every home have a side sewer?
 - **Answer:** Yes, if connected to the SPU-managed wastewater pipes.
- **Committee member question:** Do you get information from the plumbers in Seattle about where they're making repairs?
 - **Answer:** We're planning to talk to plumbers this summer as part of our research. We'll also be talking with real estate agents on side sewer issues.
 - **Committee member question:** I imagine you would also talk to contractors that work in the business?
 - **Answer:** Yes, we will be talking to registered side sewer contractors. The outreach work I am doing will be focused on maintenance and prevention, while Kevin Burrell will be looking at what happens once side sewers fail. Rachel provided a dental analogy to the cost of these actions, explaining that the education and outreach program is preventative, like flossing, while potential SPU programs to help customers after sewer damage has occurred are more like a root canal.

Committee members were given a questionnaire on common behaviors related to Sewer Drains (Kitchen and Bathroom) and Side Sewer to complete before the presentation. (see Handout)

Results and discussion:

Question 1: After cooking meat or poultry, I remove the remaining fat/grease before washing the pan.

Some Committee members admitting to putting fats and grease in the compost. Others mentioned pouring oil on shredded paper.

- **Committee member question:** During an earlier Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG presentation), I learned about collecting grease and oil in a plastic jar and put out with recycle bin, an alternative to throwing it in the garbage.
- **Committee member question:** The other program that is closely related is composting. Before that, we were using our garbage disposal. Now it goes into compost. Compost collection has been a big deal for protecting our sewers.
- **Committee member question:** The messaging related to fats/grease versus oil can be very confusing.
 - **Answer:** The amount you would wipe off with a paper towel is not going to be problematic, but a can full of grease could be problematic (it changes composition of compost and can be difficult for waste handlers to manage).
- **Committee member question:** Are white bleached paper towels compostable?
 - **Answer:** Rachel said she will get back to the CACs on this. **Response from Solid Waste:** *All white paper products are bleached. Plates, cups, napkins, paper towels, etc. Plastic coating is the problem for composting packaging items. However, paper towels and napkins are fine to compost, even napkins that are full color 'holiday' or 'birthday' theme printed can be composted.*
- **Committee member question:** Is there any future pilot program where we can recycle used cooking oil?
 - **Answer:** Yes, it can be left out at the curb for collection with recycling for single family households. But SPU is still figuring out how to do it with multi-family residents, who currently have to take it to the Transfer Station.
- **Committee member question:** If I'm dumping spoiled heavy cream, what should I do?
 - **Answer:** The quantity is probably not going to cause problems, unless you're a coffee shop.
- **Committee member question:** Some of the items we talked about are not on the "Where does it go" flyer?
 - **Answer:** That is a challenge. For example, what do we tell our customers to do with soupy mixtures? Soups that have grease and meat and liquid? SPU is working on developing clearer messaging around disposal of grease and solid waste, and will make this information available to customers.

Question 2: Scrape or wipe uneaten food, grease and sauces into the garbage or a compost bin.

- **Committee member question:** I'm in the "often" category; if it's a little amount and easy, I might turn to the garbage disposal. Maybe you should incentivize removing the garbage disposal?
- **Committee member question:** Does a garbage disposal enable bad behavior?
 - **Answer:** Yes, it can – and they are often seen in affluent households.

- **Committee member question:** Wondering if SPU can give away compost containers. It's important for us in our behavior choices.
 - **Answer:** One thing we'll be looking at is the main behavior barriers. If lack of a convenient receptacle is the main barrier, then we'll be looking at doing that.
 - **Committee member question:** Odor in the compost might be a barrier.
 - **Committee member question:** We keep ours in the fridge, but then it's Catch-22 because it makes it more difficult.
- **Committee member question:** Having worked in a commercial environment and knowing garbage disposals are prevalent among that industry; I wonder how many who work with huge garbage disposals go home and use their compost.
- **Committee member question:** When we have an influx of newcomers in Seattle, it complicates things. People aren't always aware. Perhaps they should get a welcome packet that says "this is the way we do things here." What better time to learn new habits!

Question 3: Use a sink strainer to capture food waste, then throw it away or compost it.

Committee Members had a discussion around existing awareness, behaviors and priorities. They also discussed their thoughts on renter awareness versus homeowner awareness.

- **Committee member question:** Knowing how expensive it is to repair a side sewer, that is very motivating to being careful with what you dump down the drain. You said a lot of folks don't know they have a side sewer, or that it's their responsibility, or that its incredible expensive to fix. That's concerning.
- **Committee member question:** Even as a condo owner, it was easier to take one bag down (recycling) and use the garbage disposal for compost. You might consider working with the building owners and facility managers to make it easier to collect the food waste. Another idea, which might cost the homeowner association more, but it might make sense to have maintenance pick it up from each condo/apartment each day rather than expecting them to bring it all down.
 - **Additional comment (Committee Member or guest?):** In general, I wonder if multi-family residents cook less, and if grease might be less of an issue? But if you're bringing food home a lot, it might make sense to provide messaging around collecting grease in the take-out containers.
 - **Answer:** Another issue we have is asking people to rinse out recyclables. There are conflicting messages about encouraging folks to not wash grease down the drain, while also encouraging them to thoroughly clean their recyclables.
- **Committee member question:** How are food trucks disposing of grease? Not connected to the sewer.
 - Rachel will look into.

Question 4: Use compost bin instead of garbage disposal to dispose of food waste.

- **Committee member question:** I struggle with that last little bit in the container; it's just so easy to wash down the disposal!
- **Committee member question:** I hate the smell of bacon grease so we put it in the freezer. And then I put it in the compost. Easier to deal with solids than liquids.
- **Guest:** My husband likes the smell of citrus and puts it in the garbage disposal for the smell. But we also use the garbage disposal for the little bits, like rice bits. I didn't choose to have the garbage disposal (it came with the house)

- **Committee member question:** Soap cuts grease, doesn't it? I think it's worthwhile to understand what happens to the grease once it goes down the pipe.

Question 5: Flush only toilet paper and human waste down the toilet.

- **Committee member question:** Didn't realize there was no advertising on "flushables" not really being flushable.
 - **Answer:** There is strong lobbying from industry groups to keep "flushable" products marked "flushable". Personal wipes are often advertised based on convenience, so there is some tension there. Some cities are trying to ban flushable wipes or have more information made available.

Discussion on side sewers: If you currently own a property with a side sewer in the City of the Seattle, what motivated you to clean/inspect your side sewer?

- **Answer:** A sewer backup.
- **Answer:** Our first house had a side sewer replacement so we made sure to inspect our second house before buying. We had it scoped and discovered it was cracked.
- **Answer:** Our house is new and our realtor recommended we didn't need to have it inspected, but I've wondered about having it inspected. Cost and process to having it scoped is a barrier for us; We don't know how to go about it.
- **Answer:** I had a roots problems. Had to have that fixed.

Are folks interested in future discussion presentations on this?

- **Committee consensus:** Yes
- Natasha / Sheryl will share list from slides to see what future topics they would like to hear more about.

5. CDWAC and WSAC Commitment to Public Engagement

Sheryl reminded Committee members of the commitment outlined in the Member Agreement. Sheryl will be gathering information on opportunities to participate in SPU outreach events, but the homework to CAC members is to reflect on where are already connected in their communities and where opportunities exist. We want to expand the circle of community, hear what is being discussed in the City, in part because we can't have everyone at the CAC table. Sheryl will be sending out an email on this in the next week or so.

6. Around the table

- **Staff:** There are a number of "Don't Drip and Drive" free auto-leak testing events happening. You can see all of those dates here: <https://fixcarleaks.org/workshop-events/>
- **Staff:** W. Kamau Bell, a social-political comedian, will be at the Neptune on May 20. A different way to spark discussion around race and social justice issues.
- **Committee Member:** The Seattle Mariners are having a "Don't Drip and Drive" night; Ben will send that information out.
- **Committee Member:** Green Schools workshop; Greenlake Elementary on Tuesday evening, May 16th. Green Schools resource kit is available.

- **Committee Member:** I am going to the National Citizen Science Association Meeting in Minnesota next week to learn about how different groups are getting citizens involved in their communities. Could bring back info for our Committees. If folks are interested, happy to share that information.
- **Staff:** “Dignity of Rivers”; May 23rd at Naked City Brewery in Greenwood.
- **Committee Member:** CDWAC WSAC Happy Hour: First Tuesday evening of every month; suggestion to do it once a quarter. Christina asked Committee members to email her directly if they need to discuss. Hoping to start it in June.

CAC Program Updates

- Look for the Q1 report on 2015-2020 Strategic Business Plan. (Sheryl will send link).
- Sheryl will be gone in June.
- Sheryl will be emailing folks about whether we should meet in July.
- Sheryl working on an August field trip at Duwamish sites (on meeting night, or other nights? Or a weekend? Sheryl will inquire).
- Kathy Curry is looking into a tour of the Beacon Reservoir seismic retrofit that could occur in September or October during weekday daytime hours, which may be a challenge for some to attend. After more information is available on the timing, she will gauge Committee member interest and availability.

Adjourned 7:33 PM