



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

October 1, 2014 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue
Room 5965
5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Co-Chairs: Wendy Walker & Heather Levy

Secretary: Chris Toman

Present: Heather Levy, Katie Kennedy, David Della; Erika Melroy, Joseph Ringold, Stephanie Schwenger, Chris Toman

By Phone:

Absent: Dan Corum, Wendy Walker

Guests: Susan Robinson, Waste Management (presenter), Ben Grace; Eberley Wedlake (prospective members)

Staff: Dick Lilly, Heidi Fischer, Linda Rogers, Sheryl Shapiro, Liz Fikejs

5:32 pm Call to Order

1. Regular Business –Heather Levy, Co-Chair

- Meeting notes approved – Sept. 3, 2014
- Report on outstanding items from Sept. – none
- Chair report – none

2. Changing Composition of Recyclable Materials Coming to MRFs – Susan Robinson, Waste Management, Federal Affairs Manager

- See PowerPoint presentation
- Review changes in materials that come through the waste stream, and how they have changed
- Object is to get materials to the best place to get to the highest value
- Have become a service society, generating less waste per person
- Evolving ton – seeing less paper
- Contrasted items that are declining against items increasing in prevalence
- Reviewed history of change
- About 35% of WM’s recyclables are sent offshore – probably a higher percentage along the West Coast. Recycling centers originally built for paper; as items change, the revenues change
- China has built mills that can accept a broader mix of materials than older North American mill.
- Changing waste stream means we process more volume with less weight which leads to higher processing costs
- Reviewed evolving packaging – glass to plastic; plastic to lids; can to multi-layered foil-lined flexible film
- New impact on MRFs summary – lighter inbound materials
- Higher percentage of glass and residue overall stream changes to more lighter materials
- Collection – single stream recycling is growing
 - Reviewed pros and cons
- Processing – statement “anything can be recycled” has perhaps been taken too far

- Film plastics biggest challenges to MRF operations
- Contamination of loads in single stream recyclables is up to average of 16%; up to 50% of incoming loads in some parts of the US (not the PNW);
- End markets – function of price and volume
- Changes mean for recycling
 - Increased costs
 - More non-recycling materials being generated, such as flexible packaging
 - Lighter recycling stream makes it harder to increase recycling rates
- Puget Sound has some of the best programs in the country; WM has taken some of the programs to share around the nation
- Sustainable recycling requires broad multi-stakeholder support
 - Goals must be realistic
 - Regulations and recycling contracts must be aligned to ensure development of economically sustainable programs
 - Must include public education

3. Textiles Recycling Increase Plans – Liz Fikejs, SPU, Resource Conservation

- See PowerPoint for details
- The public can “give” more than “gently used” textile items
- Growing interest nationally and internationally focusing in recovery on the collection end
- Interest in textile recovery is showing up in mainstream and social media
- 85% going into landfills; most are recyclable
- Post-consumer textiles value chain
- Reviewed barriers of residential customers
 - 50-65% of survey respondents reported discarding items instead of donating
- What would motivate the consumer to donate more? Clear message & convenience
- San Francisco – zero textile waste initiative started in 2014
- Reviewed end markets
- Looked at global markets – issues and trends
- Local partnership opportunities
 - Educate public
 - Ensure collections options are convenient and accessible
 - Support local market development
- Collections Campaign
 - Crafting a consistent message – get all collectors on same page
 - Inviting partners – Goodwill, Salvation Army, USAgain, Savers and more
 - Official launch March-June 2015
 - Working with collectors to identify and address potential messaging issues
- What are pain points for collectors?
 - Collectors may be concerned about public distinguishing between “take all textiles” but only give “gently used” other items (furniture and other hard goods)
 - Changing public perception around “gently used”
 - Collectors are in a very competitive market
- Are the collectors savvy enough to send textiles overseas? Resell what can; broker the balance; most grading and sorting is off-shore

- Will connect with multi-family properties for additional opportunities
 - Locating bins
 - Provide list of collectors who provide boxes on locate on-site
- Identifying issues
 - Collectors' messaging
 - Avoiding customer confusion
 - Navigating imperfect information tools

Questions:

- Why is SPU not considering curbside collection of textiles?
 - Other cities in King County who have curbside collection do not have good participation.
 - There is already an excellent infrastructure in place, well known by the public so SPU does not need to change that by adding collection to curbside. Instead, we need to promote existing collection opportunities and raise public awareness about what is accepted and the range of available collection options.
 - Also don't want to cause customer confusion which could result in textiles being placed in the recycling bin and causing costly problems at the MRF.
- Isn't a tax donation motivating for customers and yet how are the recyclable (vs reusable) items tax deductible?
 - All items are accepted and can be identified for tax deductible purposes as long as they are given to a nonprofit.
 - Value Village and USAgain are for-profit and so items given to these companies would not be tax deductible.
- For consumer convenience, has there been some thought for special collection events?
 - In early stages of developing the 2015 campaign; have not identified all strategies yet.

4. Visit to Lenz Composting – Stephanie Schwenger, Katie Kennedy, SWAC members

- Lenz now receives 40% of Seattle's residential organics
- Purpose of visit to see operation as it's different than Cedar Grove
- Aerated static piles (ASP) used – located closer together than aerated static rows, such as at Cedar Grove
- Receives materials from CleanScapes, Bellingham.
- Low residual rate – around 1%
- The company also includes a meat packing company, truck transport, sand & gravel in addition to its compost business
- Not getting odor complaints from surrounding neighbors
- Not having issues with birds
- Pick-sort on all piles – sorters work on incoming materials to remove contaminants (unique from Cedar Grove)

5. 2015 Issues/Topics SWAC Work Plan – Dick Lilly, SWAC Policy Advisor

- Initiated discussion to begin planning what SWAC members want to focus on in 2015
- Requested group input before Policy Advisor offers SPU perspective
- **ACTION** - Discuss further at next meeting
 - Carve out more time for group discussions for next year

- Want more meaty presentations – limit one per meeting to allow for deeper discussion, questions, etc.
 - Presenters tend to underestimate time presentation will take – create buffer for questions and discussion
 - As the Strategic Business Plan (SBP) and Composting Ordinance unfold, would like more presentations on these, especially, where SWAC’s input is requested
 - Allow time to share and review lessons learned from other cities as they are happening – what’s going on in the world
 - Review current work plan, determine what topics want to save time for; have time at next meeting to discuss
 - Reserve 30 minutes each of the next 2 meetings for discussion with finalization in January
 - **Dick will review 2014 work plan** for updates and send out again
- Water Systems Advisory Committee (WSAC) meeting on 10/15 will include a presentation and discussion on SPU’s strategies for alerting our customers for the need to boil water or drink bottled water (in an event such as Mercer Island’s recent E.coli alert)
 - All are welcome to attend
 - Tap Water Campaign (Cross-CAC Group):
 - Katie and Heather (SWAC) – working on research on bottled water industry; working on presentation. Will present to SWAC if interested; if have white papers, documentaries, etc., we should see, please send to Katie and Heather
 - Chris (SWAC) and Kyle (WSAC) – working on position problem statement; frame issue; put together outline

6. Around the table:

- What members are hearing about food waste ban:
 - Feel ban is intrusive
 - Same criteria for recyclables
 - Word “ban” is negative; separating is what is really happening
 - Lot of attention to the fines imposed
 - Education in languages other than English are important for many ethnic, minority-owned businesses
- Field trip – **10/22 in afternoon** for field trip to North to Cedar Grove and Waste Management – end up at wineries; time to be verified; 1 hour for each location visited –
 - Cedar Grove at 1
 - Transportation to be determined
 - Waste Management
- Sheryl Shapiro, CAC Program Manager - Tap Water Campaign – Meeting on 9/17 was canceled at last minute due to the need to assess where the effort fits in with SPU’s new goals and objectives based on the SBP, as well as upcoming internal realignment and new Executive staffing. Apologies for late notice of cancellation.
 - SBP - will be reviewed again in 3 years; staff is going over the experience of creating the SBE: what went well and need to continue; what were some things that didn’t go so well, and not repeat in next round; what should happen that didn’t before.

- Requested that SWAC members identify potential areas for skills development, including RSJ
- Will attend national conference in mid-October: National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation

- CA legislation – bags ban made news all around; passed regulation prohibiting use of certain materials as alternative daily cover materials (ADC). State action important supporting compostables.
- What was the problem with glass? Hard to find markets. Because of contamination, hard to work with. Technology trying to work with this issue and.

7. Wrap-Up

- **Action items:**

- Members to review work plan items for 2015; bring to next meeting for further discussion
- Dick will review 2014 work plan for updates and send out for further review on what has been done in 2014, and what remains. Consider if unfinished items should be carried over to 2015.

8. Preliminary agenda for next meeting:

- 2015 SWAC Work Plan

Next meeting is November 5, 2014 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

7:32 PM - Meeting adjourned