



**SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)**

**January 7, 2015 Meeting Notes**

**Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue**

**Room 5965**

**5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

*Co-Chair: Heather Levy*

*Co-Chair: Wendy Walker*

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Dan Corum	Y	Tim Croll	SPU Presenter, Solid Waste LOB Division Director
David Della	Y	Eberley Wedlake	Guest
Ben Grace	Y	Jamie Lee	Guest
Katie Kennedy	Y	Holly Griffith	Guest
Heather Levy	Y		
Rodney Proctor	Y		
Joseph Ringold	Y		
Stephanie Schwenger	Y		
Chris Toman	Y		
Wendy Walker	Y		
Heidi Fischer, CAC Program Support	Y		
Dick Lilly, Policy Liaison	Y		
Sheryl Shapiro, Program Manager	Y		

**PLEASE NOTE ACTION ITEMS ARE ✓ MARKED AND HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW**

**1) Regular Business**

- Committee Members and guests introduced themselves.
- Notes for Dec 2014 are approved by unanimous vote.
- The Program Manager thanked and honored Wendy Walker, who is leaving SWAC after two terms. She noted that Wendy’s service, thoughtful questions, and energy have been very valuable.
  - The Co-Chair added that Wendy was very helpful to her when she began serving as Co-Chair of the Committee.
  - The Program Manager gave Wendy a mug to thank her and read aloud the inscription honoring teamwork.

## 2) Presentation: Solid Waste Strategic Outlook for 2015: Tim Croll, SPU Solid Waste Division Director

- Tim began by distributing a one-page handout, “2015 Outlook for SWAC 01/07/15.” Items highlighted in yellow may be of particular interest to SWAC. The handout lists SPU’s new initiatives. Keep in mind that in addition to these enterprises, SPU’s Solid Waste Division continues to provide waste collection and other baseline services.
  - The first item on the list of new initiatives is implementing the Strategic Business Plan (SBP).
    - The SBP is an important responsibility; it provides a program plan and a financial plan for the next 6 years (to 2020), identifying improvement projects and limiting the average total rate increase to 4.6% (**across all lines of business**, or LOBs).
    - As part of the SBP implementation, SPU is reorganizing its structure around its three lines of business: Solid Waste, Drinking Water, and Drainage and Wastewater. There will be one Director for each Branch. The Director for Solid Waste has not yet been identified but will be in the next few months.
    - The SBP identifies Capital and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) spending projections for the Solid Waste Fund. We need to pay attention to revenue and adjust spending to match it.
    - The SBP identified 71 action items relating to all three LOBs. However, only one is targeted specifically at the Solid Waste LOB, which is to conduct an efficiency/customer service study for problem resolution.
      - Solid waste is the most complicated area of service when it comes to customer bills, and SPU is considering the possibility of having call center agents be experts in a particular LOB, so that a caller would press a number to be directed to a solid waste call center expert. This may complicate matters for call center management, but may also reduce the number of calls a customer has to make to resolve her or his issue.
      - We are also considering whether there may be a less expensive way to bill customers for extra garbage. We used a sticker approach in 1989 and 1990, and may try this again.
    - The Department is reviewing all 71 action items in order to prioritize those to be addressed in 2015 and succeeding years.
  - The second item on the list of new initiatives is meeting the 2015 60% recycling and related goals.
    - The new compost requirement will help to achieve the 60% goal. We’ve welcomed a lot of free media coverage on this new requirement.
      - Right now, we give warning stickers for violations of the compost requirement by multi-family residences.
      - In the past, we did not collect garbage if it had recycling in it, but because of sanitation concerns, we will still collect garbage if it has food waste in it. However, there will be warnings first, and then fines.
    - We have been diverting some construction and demolition (C&D) debris as part of a pilot program to Republic Services’ Black River Facility. This program will end in 2015, and depending on the cost and number of loads, we will implement as much of a regular C&D diversion program as possible.

- Clean wood is now banned from C&D debris, and asphalt shingles will be banned beginning in July 2015.
- We are also tracking the reduction in waste generation that began with the recession.
  - A complicating factor is the temporary closure of the North Transfer Station. Even considering that, waste generation seems to be lower.
  - We want to know what, if anything, bigger customers are doing differently with their waste: are they reducing it in some way (perhaps, for example, by doing mulch mowing)? Or are they taking it somewhere else?
- The third item on the list of new initiatives is capital project development.
  - Construction on the new North Transfer station in Wallingford continues.
    - There has been some delay due to soil issues. We are giving the contractor incentives to speed things up because having the North Transfer Station closed is costing SPU several hundred thousand dollars per month.
  - Planning for best uses of the old South Transfer Station site is underway.
    - SPU has an old water quality lab on Beacon Hill which needs to be torn down. Graffiti Rangers have some warehouse space there.
      - ✓ SWAC might consider commenting on the priority use of this land.
- The fourth item on the list of new initiatives is operational activities.
  - The Waste Management/Teamster labor contract ends this quarter, and we hope that the parties negotiate the new contract with minimal service interruption.
  - We are working on a contract to establish a full permanent organics processing site in Eastern Washington.
  - We will be developing a detailed plan for the efficient staffing of the transfer stations once the new North Station opens in 2016.

### ***Some Questions and Comments from the Committee***

- Question: Could big customers be taking their C&D debris to the Shoreline Transfer Station?
- Answer: Big customers are typically not self-haulers, but we think there has been some “leakage” of self-haul to Shoreline.
- Question: Are other cities seeing a similar decrease in waste tonnage?
- Answer: King County has, and Tim believes this is also the case at the state level.
- Comment: The reduction is a two edged sword: good to have less waste, but that also means lower revenues for SPU.
- Answer: We’ve managed reductions before. During the 1990s draught, water use went down, and it never came back to where it was.
- Question: Will there be a ban on plastic wrap in the C&D waste?
- Answer: There will be soon, but not this year.
- Question: Has SPU done an Options Analysis for using the old South Transfer site?
- Answer: Yes. It’s on an old landfill, and some of it may be used for a future materials recovery facility (MRF). We will need some of the space for trailer and tractor parking. Some may be used for a retail, reuse facility. A formal options analysis is underway now.
- Question: Did SPU do a MRF feasibility study?
- Answer: We did, and some of the space may be used to process commercial loads for more recyclables.
- Question: What is the time frame?

- Answer: We hope to select options by the 3rd Quarter, and start designing in the 4th Quarter.
- Question: To which historic landfills is handout referring?
- Answer: Kent Highlands and Midway. All historic landfills are superfund sites and have to be monitored for methane and leachate.
- Question: What items concern you most on this handout list?
- Answer: The most concerning possibility would be a service disruption, and we are already doing everything we can to avoid that. Hitting our 60% recycling goal is very important, and we are trying some new things to help us achieve it.
- Question: When will we see garbage tonnage numbers that reflect the impact of the compost requirement?
- Answer: By mid-January we'll have the December tonnage, and we may see an uptick in compost. There aren't many other factors right now that would otherwise explain an increase on the residential side.
- Question: Is the C&D waste diversion pilot program pretty robust?
- Answer: We had to extend our contract with Black River because we've had some delays. It's proven difficult for them to give us a real number about what percentage of the diverted material is recyclable or reusable in some way; the eyeball rate is 80%. The pilot program material is mixed with materials from other sources because we don't have enough materials for Black River to do ours alone. Now we're going to do some large drop boxes so they can really sort and weigh. The program has moved more slowly than we'd hoped.
- Question: Are you still planning the rollout of the textile recycling program?
- Answer from the Policy Liaison: The program is on schedule to begin in March. The challenges had been with the collectors adopting consistent messaging, but this has been resolved, and collectors are accepting items that are worn, not just gently used. The program employs numerous ways of collecting, but not curbside.
  - ✓ The Policy Liaison will look into getting SWAC an update on the program in March or April.

### 3) Brief Update on WA State Paint Product Stewardship Legislation: Dick Lilly, Policy Liaison

- We are quite certain that there will be a paint product stewardship bill which is likely to pass the House and may or may not pass the Senate.
  - A SWAC letter of support similar to that from last year would be helpful.
    - ✓ The bill number will be available soon and the Policy Liaison will pass it along to SWAC.
      - The Program Manager noted that SWAC's letter from last year is available in the archives.

### 4) Discuss & Approve 2015 SWAC Work Plan, Heather Levy, Chair, and Chris Toman, Secretary

- The Co-Chair noted that while the Work Plan covered the whole year, it wasn't practical to plan too far in advance, so the chronological organization is tentative.
- The Work Plan starts with Item #2, since Item #1 regarding rate increases was done in December 2014.
- The Strategic Business Plan (SBP) is on the Plan for SWAC to receive quarterly updates, as is the Solid Waste Tonnage.
- A Committee Member asked whether the Work Plan should include further exploration of the reduction in waste generation.
  - SWAC could add that topic to Item #13, the Recycling Report, or Item #18, the solid waste tonnage updates. Might be best to look at it with the Annual Recycling Report.

- There was discussion about how the quarterly updates on solid waste tonnage differ from Tim Croll's materials, and how the recycling report compares with this data.
  - SWAC gets the tonnage charts every month, and the quarterly updates provide an opportunity to talk about these charts and identify trends.
  - The annual recycling report explores the trends in more depth.
  - Raw data gets packaged into the annual recycling report, and the report explores what is needed to further reduce waste, and then SWAC puts that information into a letter of support.
  - The Policy Liaison reported that commercial recycling is private sector, and therefore we can get a report only yearly. However, we may be able to get quarterly recycling reports for residential customers, including multifamily residential.
- A Committee Member suggested that an update on the textile recycling program should be added in February, a month before the program begins. She also suggested an update on the asphalt single ban prior to its launch in July.
- With regard to Item#8, Food Packaging Ordinance Improvements, SWAC will probably write a letter and testify. These actions should be added to the SWAC Activities, and this item should be moved to March at the earliest.
- A Committee member suggested that any SWAC actions that go to City Council be tagged.
  - The Policy Liaison and the Co-Chair did consider that in making the Plan, and the wording of the SWAC Activity – write letter or testify – indicates action that goes to the Council.
  - We know that the Compost Ordinance, the Recycling Report, and paint stewardship legislation all require action that goes to the Council.
- With regard to Item #7 in the Work Plan, New MRF Request for Proposal (RFP), SWAC will be told how many bidders have submitted proposals. The criteria by which they will be reviewed is listed in the RFP itself.
- Some committee members suggested that a mid –year review of the Work Plan be built into the Plan, or perhaps 5 minutes of each SWAC meeting could be used for updates to the Work Plan.
  - The Co-Chair reported that the officers use the Plan to create upcoming agendas, so updates are already actively done throughout the year. However, suggestions for Work Plan adjustments could be included in each meeting's "Around the Table" section.
- ✓ **Heather Levy will make the following changes to the Work Plan:**
  - Item #8: Change date to March, and add in SWAC letter and testify to Council.
  - For February, add an update on the textile recycling program.
  - For June, add an update about the asphalt shingle ban.
  - For June, add a mid-year review of the Work Plan.
  - Note that some item numbers may change with these additions.
- With these anticipated additions, there was a motion to approve, which was seconded.
  - The 2015 Work Plan is approved.

## 5) Election of Officers for 2015

- Wendy Walker, the outgoing Co-Chair, will facilitate the elections.
- The Committee is returning to the Chair/Vice-Chair Model, rather than the Co-Chair model.
- Secretary
  - Heather nominated Chris Toman to continue as Secretary. He started in this position late in 2014 when the previous Secretary moved away.

- David Della seconded the nomination.
- Chris will remain Secretary by a unanimous vote.
- Chair
  - David Della nominated Heather Levy as Chair (she is currently Co-Chair).
  - Stephanie noted that she supports Heather continuing as Chair; she started late in 2014 and has done a great job.
  - Ben Grace seconded the nomination.
  - Heather Levy will serve as Chair by unanimous vote.
- Vice Chair
  - The Committee discussed the role of the Vice Chair.
    - The Vice Chair is expected to fulfill the duties of the Chair when the Chair is not available.
    - Some Members noted their preference for the Vice Chair to actively participate in planning sessions with the Chair and Secretary.
    - Whether the Vice Chair would be slated to move into the Chair's position at the end of the Chair's term was discussed but undecided. One Committee Member noted that it should at least be an informal expectation.
    - Terms for SWAC officers have historically been one year, with elections meant to occur in January (though they have sometimes been later in the year).
    - The Program Manager is working on an updated charter for the CACs which will include guidance on term limits for officers.
    - For now, the Committee will consider today's elections to be valid for one year.
  - David Della has expressed interest in the Vice Chair position.
  - Ben Grace nominated David Della for Vice Chair, and the nomination was seconded.
  - David Della is elected Vice Chair by unanimous vote.
- One Committee Member noted that the elections this year were very efficient.

## 6) Around the Table

- One Committee Member reported that Sightline.org reported some great news about the new compost requirement.
- SWAC has its own listserve that the Members use to share interesting articles and other information: a Google group managed by Committee members and not SPU staff.
  - ✓ **New members Ben Grace and Rodney Proctor need to be added to the group.**
- Another Member reported that in New York, Manhattan is pursuing residential composting for multifamily units. They don't have a compost requirement, but may be moving towards that.
- Another Member reported reading in Wired Magazine about a new low-cost water treatment plant that transforms sewage into clean water, which could be used in the developing world to help prevent diseases from inadequate sanitation. <http://www.wired.com/2015/01/omniprocessor/>
- Another Committee Member reported reading about a fire involving a compost facility in another state, and noted that compost material is combustible, and fires at compost facilities are not uncommon.
- The Committee needs a Member to volunteer to organize a field trip, perhaps to Recology and to the new South Transfer station.
  - Chris Toman volunteered; Stephanie Schwenger will help.

- Dan Corum reported that the Woodland Park Zoo, where he works, does have a humble compost facility with open wind rows that he could show to SWAC.
- Another Member suggested a field trip to Ardagh and/or Verallia (glass recycling).
- Another Member mentioned Nucor, which uses scrap metal, as a possibility.
- Another Member suggested a gypsum recycler.
- Another Member suggested Strategic Materials.
- The Committee would like to choose two places that are close enough to each other to visit in one field trip.

✓ The Secretary will come up with a couple of possible itineraries, and then the Committee will vote. The Policy Liaison will give the Secretary more contacts to help in the planning.

- The Committee discussed how it might create a plan for community outreach.
  - Outreach is a very big issue.
  - The role of SWAC in this area is somewhat unclear: are Members to bring input from the communities back to SPU, or to take messages from SPU to the communities, or both?
  - The Chair noted that the Committee has discussed outreach quite a bit in the past, and that the Program Manager is focused on this issue and would like to develop an approach that includes all of the Community Advisory Committees.
    - The Program Manager has also suggested bringing in an SPU communications person to provide SWAC with background on the broader SPU communications approach.
    - She will also be considering this area when updating the CACs Charter.
  - One Member said that SPU's view of outreach may be different than the Committee's, and wondered how Members can best connect with the communities they hope to represent.
    - Many people don't know about SWAC.
    - Because outreach is such a big issue, he felt that SWAC needs a sub-committee to begin work on a concrete plan.
  - In the past, SWAC has discussed the possibility of each Member attending a different neighborhood meeting.
    - Another member noted that in the past, SWAC had 3 goals for the Neighborhood Councils: to tell them about SWAC, spell out actual deliverables, and then accomplish them.
    - Several SWAC members already attend Neighborhood Council meetings.
    - One Committee Member said that it's important for SWAC to go out into the community and be better informed of their concerns; whether it helps SPU or not, it will help SWAC members to be better informed as they fulfill their Committee responsibilities. It also helps with Committee recruiting.
    - Another Member reported that he had attended some neighborhood meetings in the past, and found that people often relayed specific complaints to him about SPU services (which actually need to be reported through other channels), and that people's interests often are directed elsewhere. However, he does think it important for SWAC members to know their neighborhoods, especially when particular communities are going to be impacted by specific SPU projects.
  - The Chair added that she wants to be sure that the CACs have a clear set of guidelines to respond to complaints when they get them, while maintaining an appropriate role with regard to SPU. She is looking forward to gaining more clarity on this issue from the forthcoming discussions with SPU communications staff and from the soon-to-be-updated charter.

- The Policy Liaison reminded SWAC members that the January 13<sup>th</sup> Joint CAC Meeting will be addressing the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan (SBP), and SPU communications staff will be there. He hopes that SWAC members will attend.
- Another member noted that the 2015 Work Plan includes a number of topics that will impact both smaller and larger businesses, and that it might be helpful for members to chat with their friends who own small businesses and/or live in multi-family units to gain some perspective on these topics.
- ✓ Rodney Proctor and Ben Grace would like to hold a subcommittee meeting on the topic of outreach. They will choose a time and place and send out an invitation to SWAC. Anyone with the time and interest is welcome to join them. The meeting will be one session, an hour to an hour and a half.
- ✓ The Chair will connect with the Program Manager on further next steps with regard to outreach.
- ✓ Another member noted that it might be helpful to see the SWAC meeting notes from last year to see what was discussed and/or done about outreach. Heidi will review last year's notes for relevant information.

## 7) Wrap Up

- Wendy Walker, who is leaving SWAC after serving two terms, may speak with the Program Manager about serving on another CAC.
- The Policy Liaison, Dick Lilly, is retiring in March.

Meeting adjourned.