



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

May 6, 2015 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue

Room 5965

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Chair: Heather Levy

Vice-Chair: David Della

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Dan Corum	N	Mendy Droke	King County Local Hazardous Waste Management
David Della	Y	Tim Croll	Solid Waste Planning and Program Manager
Ben Grace	N	Anna Dyer	Guest
Holly Griffith	Y	Jen (Myeongjin) Lee	Guest
Katie Kennedy	Y	Erica Newman	Guest
Jamie Lee	Y		
Heather Levy	Y		
Rodney Proctor	N		
Joseph Ringold	Y		
Quinn Schweizer	Y		
Stephanie Schwenger	Y, by telephone		
Chris Toman	Y		
Heidi Fischer, CAC Program Support	Y		
Sego Jackson, Policy Liaison	Y		
Sheryl Shapiro, Program Manager	Y		

ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS MEETING:

- ✓ Sheryl will send an email to SWAC members reporting on how SWAC's current membership represents the Council Districts.
- ✓ Heather will send out a list of multi-family unit outreach activities after she receives it from Marcia Rutan.
- ✓ If SWAC Members have outreach updates, they should report in June or send them out over email (since we ran out of time for this in May's meeting).
- ✓ SWAC may want to consider a letter concerning the CPG funding cuts.

- ✓ Jamie will consider in more depth what the compost requirement awareness targets should be before fines are implemented. She may communicate with Tim directly, and she will report back at the June SWAC.
- ✓ Sego will follow up with Mendy to find out specifics on how SWAC might be involved with the paint stewardship legislation.
- ✓ SWAC Members should let Heather know if they are interested in doing more for the CPG and/or paint stewardship programs.

Regular Business

- Committee members, staff and guests introduced themselves.
- The Committee welcomed three new Members: Jamie Lee, Quinn Schweizer, and Holly Griffith.
- April meeting notes are approved.

Joint CAC Meeting Debrief, Sheryl Shapiro, CAC Program Manager

- Sheryl gave a brief description of the April 29th Joint CAC Meeting.
 - The Committees received an update on the Strategic Business Plan (SBP), including the Action Items planned for 2015, the format and schedule of progress reports to the City Council, and an overview on service equity.
 - SPU's City Council Liaison also gave a presentation on the new Council Districts and how the new dynamic may affect SPU's operations.
- Sheryl asked the Committee Members for their feedback about the joint CAC meeting.
 - A number of Members responded that they found the presentation on the new Council Districts useful and informative.
 - One Member noted that it would be helpful to see SWAC's coverage of the districts with regard to membership, which could inform the Committee's recruiting efforts.
 - Sheryl noted that she does consider geographic distribution in her recruitment efforts.
 - Some SWAC Members reported what district they live in:
 - Katie is in District 2
 - Heather, Ben, and David are in District 7
 - Joseph is in District 3
 - ✓ Sheryl will send an email to SWAC members reporting on how SWAC's current membership represents the Council Districts.
 - One Member wondered if SWAC might gravitate towards an "ombudsman" role now that there are Council Districts, like the Council itself.
 - Another Member noted that a CDWAC Member, Suzie Burke, was one of the advocates for going to a District system, and was questioning some of the presentation's predictions about how District elections would affect City-wide and regional issues.

- Another Member noted that the presentation touched on the need for SPU to be aware of the reasons for any service inequities that may exist among the districts.
- Sheryl noted that political boundaries are not the same as ecological boundaries. She further reported that the SBP covers many overlapping topics, and she will work on selecting topics for the remaining 2015 Joint CAC meetings soon. These might include rate design, service levels, and performance measurement systems. There are also going to be outreach opportunities for interested Committee Members.
- The Policy Liaison, Sego Jackson, added that SWAC's input for the SPU website design update, as well as with billing improvements, will be additional topics for CAC input. SPU is particularly interested in how these will work from the customer's perspective.
- A number of Members also expressed appreciation for the presentation on service equity, noting that the slide that depicted the difference between equality and equity was clear and meaningful.
 - The slide showed three people are trying to watch a sports event from behind a tall fence.
 - Equality: illustrated giving each person the same thing - one wooden crate to stand on to help them see. But the tall person could already see, so the crate doesn't provide much of a better view. The crate enables the average height person to see the event, where she couldn't before. But the small person still cannot see over the fence with just one crate.
 - Equity: illustrated a different distribution of the crates so that all three people can see the sports event over the tall fence. The tall person doesn't need the crate, so she now has none. The average height person keeps his one crate. The small person now has two crates, which is enough to allow her to see over the fence.

Outreach and Education Monthly Debrief

SWAC has previously decided to incorporate regular outreach updates from Members into each meeting. This is the first of these updates.

- One member reported that he had met with some members of Chinatown's Business Improvement District (BID), which represents many local businesses.
 - A big concern they had was missed waste pickups. They report that service providers are not coming as frequently as the contract states (which is supposed to be several times a day), and they would like more fines imposed on the providers for these missed pickups. They have contacted SPU about these issues, and SPU usually gets the immediate issue resolved.
 - Another concern was that cardboard boxes are often piled up in the waste area, where they get damaged to an extent that prevents recycling. The BID is working to change

this, and to have businesses tie up bundles of cardboard boxes to ready them for recycling. In some cases, language barriers present a challenge to communicating with the business owners.

- The BID Members also reported that the market for selling used cooking oil has been reduced because of the cooking oil recycling programs.
- SWAC Members had some discussion about the role of SWAC in processing this kind of information.
 - One Member noted that he could share what he knew from SWAC meetings, and be open to hearing feedback.
 - Another Member noted that it's important to listen, to try to understand barriers and challenges, and to know where to direct questions that are beyond the scope of SWAC.
- The SWAC Chair reported that SPU's Marcia Rutan, who does outreach to multi-family units (MFUs) about recycling and compost, will be at SWAC's June meeting. Marcia is retiring at the end of June, so her visit to SWAC is earlier than originally noted in the workplan.
 - There's lots of diversity in the MFU sector.
 - Marcia's group does technical outreach as well as cultural educational outreach.
 - Right now they doing a pilot program for the East African community, and has been working through the Friends of Recycling and Compost (FORC) Program to train multi-family unit property managers.
 - Marcia will demonstrate the "Where Does it Go" game, and will discuss outreach opportunities in which SWAC might be able to participate.
 - ✓ Heather will send out a list of multi-family unit outreach activities after she receives it from Marcia Rutan.
 - ✓ If SWAC Members have additional outreach updates, they should report in June or send them out over email (since we ran out of time for this in May's meeting).
- The Program Manager reported that she had attended an Earth Day concert in which the Co-Chair of CDWAC had participated. The song "Reuse Me," about recycling, was a highlight, and the concert made good use of SPU's recycling-themed costumes.
- The SWAC Chair reported that she had received a lot input about the SWAC one-pager (the document created to give SWAC Members talking points about the background and purpose of SWAC). She did her best to incorporate all of it.
 - SWAC Members should let her know if any corrections are needed.
 - Unless she hears from any of the Members, she will consider the document completed.
 - She noted that it was a good exercise to get SWAC Members on the same page, and that it is suitable for public distribution as well.
 - The Program Manager added that it may be appropriate to put it on the SWAC website.

Solid Waste Line of Business Update

Tonnage, Segó Jackson, Solid Waste Policy Liaison

- Segó referred to a table and two graphs showing the amounts of municipal solid waste (MSW, otherwise known as the garbage that goes to landfills) from the SPU service area since 2007.
 - After the recession hit in 2007, MSW tonnage decreased, and bottomed out in 2011.
 - Strangely, the MSW tonnage has remained almost as low as it was in 2011.
 - Tons disposed of per person is decreasing.
 - We don't know why. It may be that business has changed, or it may be that we haven't really bounced back from the recession yet.
 - We are not the only area to experience this sustained decrease in MSW. Snohomish County saw the same dynamic, and we've also seen it statewide.
- ❖ Question: Has there been any research on why MSW disposal decreases during recessions, and in what areas?
 - Answer: Tim Croll responded that he's not aware of any studies on this topic about the last recession. But if the makeup of the commercial sector changes, such as some manufacturing jobs replaced by service jobs, a reduction in MSW generation might be a result.
- ❖ Question: Do these numbers include construction and demolition debris (C&D)?
 - Answer: No, this is just municipal solid waste.
- SWAC will continue to receive updates on this topic.

Political Landscape - State

CPG Funding Issues, Segó Jackson, Solid Waste Policy Liaison

- Segó referred to a handout, "CPG Overview for SWAC."
 - Coordinated Prevention grants (CPG) are administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology. The source of the funding is a tax on first possession of hazardous substances in the state. This includes oil, and taxes from oil are the largest contributor to the fund. As the price of these substances rises and falls, the revenues from this tax also increase or decrease.
 - The taxes collected go into several accounts: 56% go to the state toxics control account, 44% go to the local toxic control account, and, due to recent revisions to the law, after a certain amount is reached, the remaining funds go into an environmental legacy stewardship account.
 - These accounts fund numerous programs to control and clean up hazardous waste and solid waste, including the Coordinated Prevention Grant (CPG) Program, which funds local hazardous waste plans and programs and solid waste plans and programs.
 - Coordination of applications and activities is required between the counties, their cities, and their health district. King County leads the coordination effort that includes Seattle.

- Sego is addressing the CPGs provided to local governments on the regular cycle, which are available on a biennium basis and are non-competitive.
- Each Solid Waste Planning Authority (typically counties, but in some cases cities, such as Seattle) have implementation funds available to it, based on population. Base amounts are also provided to each county in the amount of \$100,000.
 - Washington State has many small counties that rely on this base amount to do solid and hazardous waste planning.
- Based on the Governor's budget, the draft allocation for SPU for 2015 – 2017 is \$1.2 million.
- SPU uses these funds for:
 - Business Waste Prevention and Recycling
 - Natural Soil Building Program (soil quality reduces the need for herbicides and pesticides)
 - The Garden Hotline
 - The Master Composter/Soil Builder Volunteer Program
- However, a steep decline in oil revenues resulted in the budgets of both the Washington State House and Senate likely cutting CPG funding in half.
 - The Washington State Recycling Association has sent out alerts about this, and King County coordinated a letter by concerned cities and sent it to local legislators, and then to the Senate and House.
 - Still, it looks unlikely that this will turn around.
 - If the funding cut proceeds, a CPG advisory work group is being reconstituted to advise on how to fairly divide the remaining funds between local governments.
 - King County and Seattle don't rely on the CPGs as much as rural counties, so funding may prioritize these smaller cities and counties.

❖ Question: Would it be worthwhile for SWAC to send a letter at this point?

➤ Answer: I think it would be. Letters are not likely to change the funding amount, but could make legislators aware of the impacts.

- Sego noted that SWAC Members may want to view the policy debates on TVW.

Paint Stewardship, Mendy Droke, King County Local Hazardous Waste Management

- Mendy referred to a power point presentation.
 - Efforts are underway to pass a paint stewardship bill in Washington State.
 - The problem is that unused, leftover oil-based and latex paints pose a health risk to our Washington families and the environment. Current methods for recycling and disposing of paint in Washington are not meeting consumer needs.
 - Right now, latex paint goes into a landfill if there's no processing plant. Some landfills even use latex paint as an alternate daily cover.

- A paint stewardship law would require consumers to pay a small assessment for interior and exterior house paints that would be built into the paint's price at purchase. Then, consumers can take unwanted leftover paint to one of many collection sites for easy recycling, at no additional cost.
 - The current assessment under consideration is 75 cents per gallon of paint, which would be used to administer the take back program.
 - Some think this is too high.
 - Some would prefer that the assessment be internalized (assessed on the companies that produce paint).
 - There are a lot of startup costs for the program, and there may be more discussion about the amount of the assessment.
- The bill's supporters have done a lot of stakeholder engagement. The Northwest Product Stewardship Committee has highlighted the benefits of this bill to businesses.
 - Local paint stores and contractors will have opportunities for increased foot traffic, and to provide additional services and information to customers.
 - A painting contractor estimated that, if the paint stewardship bill becomes law, he would be able to provide the service of cleaning out a customer's unwanted paint closet for about \$11.
 - There's a paint recycling facility in Oregon that produces Metro Paint, a high quality paint that comes in many colors, and sells for less than \$12 a gallon.
 - The CEO of Miller Paint, Steve Dearborn, has been very involved with stewardship efforts.
 - If the paint stewardship bill passes in Washington, Steve Dearborn would like to set up a paint processing plant here, which would create 30 -40 jobs.
 - Clark County is setting up its own processing plant.
- The bill will be active again next year.
- Consumer outreach about this bill is challenging, and SWAC may be able to help in this area. The public needs to advocate for the paint stewardship approach for it to be successful.
- Sego noted that the CPGs mentioned above are used to collect oil based paint, and the Department of Ecology has said that CPG funds will be not be reduced in response to passage of a paint stewardship bill. Therefore, passage of the program will allow local governments to use CPG funds to clean up and control hazardous and solid waste in other high priority areas.

Political Landscape - Local

Food Packaging Ordinance, Tim Croll, Solid Waste Planning and Program Manager

- SPU is considering whether to move forward on a new ordinance that would: a) require most eat-in food service packaging to be compostable, OR b) keep the current requirement that food

service packaging be either compostable or recyclable. If (b), then the ordinance would include the following additional requirements:

- PLA foam meat trays shall be tan in color (EPS foam alternative)
 - All compostable packaging must have the word “COMPOSTABLE” placed on it.
 - All recyclable packaging MAY have the words “PLEASE RECYCLE” placed upon it.
 - Sites using recyclable and compostable packaging must have SIGNAGE at point of sale, pick up, and discard locations.
 - No green tinted plastic bags allowed – not from produce department or at check out.
 - All compostable bags must be tinted green.
 - All compliant thick plastic bags 2.25 mil or thicker must be marked as such (the thinner, single use plastic bags have already been outlawed).
- SPU is considering the more incremental approach that allows eat-in food service packaging to be either compostable or recyclable because local restaurants are facing other challenges right now (such as the new \$15 minimum wage and the recent elimination of Styrofoam), and we want to be sensitive to their needs.
 - However, making food service packaging compostable rather than recyclable is a better strategy for reducing waste in the long run, because food service packaging usually is contaminated with food waste and there’s no way to clean it, which makes recycling difficult.
- ❖ Question: Do you know how many food service businesses use recyclable packaging vs. compostable packaging?
 - Answer: We don’t have numbers on that, but we do see a lot of recyclable packaging, with no way to clean it.
- ❖ Question: Do you know how much it costs to use compostable packaging vs. recyclable packaging?
 - Answer: We’ve looked at this and it’s a mixed bag, often depending on the container’s size. Both are more expensive than disposable packaging.
- ❖ Question: Will there be anything in the ordinance to encourage more bins in restaurants that offer recycling and compost, rather than just garbage?
 - Answer: Not at this time.

Composting Fine Suspension, Tim Croll Solid Waste Planning and Program Manager

- The City of Seattle has suspended the fines for noncompliance with the composting requirement that were to have taken effect in July.
 - The new requirement, which began in January of this year, is already on track to compost about 19,000 additional tons of organic material.

- SPU recently received the results of a telephone survey on customers' awareness of the food waste composting requirement and fines. Half of those surveyed were contacted on a cell phone, and half on a landline.
 - Awareness levels were not as high as we would like.
 - About 75% of single family customers were aware of the requirement, and about 71% were aware of the fine for noncompliance.
 - But for non-white single family customers, only 62% were aware of the requirement, and 61% were aware of the fine.
 - In households with a primary language other than English, only 49% of single family customers were aware of the requirement, and 45% were aware of the fine.
- We did not want to fine people who were not aware of the compost requirement.
- Therefore, we suspended the fine and plan to do more outreach to publicize it.
 - We will employ a big direct advertising campaign in May, June, and July, and then do another survey in July to gauge awareness.
 - More outreach is planned for August and September, and then another survey.
 - We'll be placing yellow tags on customers' garbage cans notifying them of the compost requirement in multiple languages.
 - We've had a pretty good response in the past from information taped to garbage cans, and we'll be placing big stickers on the cans about the requirement.
 - We are also planning to do some robo calls, especially in areas with high levels of ethnic minorities. We may do some with access to other languages (Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese).
- Tim explained that SPU is thinking that a level of 80-90% awareness in the general population would be a good goal before fines are implemented, but that he wanted SWAC's feedback on defining the target.
 - One Member replied that setting a number is arbitrary, and perhaps a more useful goal would be for all groups to be at the same level of awareness.
 - Another Member said that adding an equity factor makes sense, but some higher number of awareness overall would also be better.
 - Another Member noted that the disparity of awareness among the general population compared to that of nonwhite single family customers and speakers of a primary languages other than English was the most important result.
 - Tim agreed that SPU needs to direct efforts to achieve more equity in awareness.
 - Another Member asked how SPU would be fining people for noncompliance.
 - Tim responded that when the fine is eventually implemented, garbage collectors will report to SPU when they see food waste in the garbage, and SPU will add the fine to that customer's bill.
 - Another Member asked when the next awareness survey would be done.

- Tim responded that it would be done in the 3rd week of July.
- Another Member suggested that SPU look at a comparable program that was rolled out before, and consider using similar measures of awareness.
 - Tim responded that SPU has never before done a rate increase awareness survey before implementing a rate increase, which is somewhat similar to a fine.
 - Tim explained that the plan is to have fines implemented on January 1, 2016, but we could delay that if needed.
- Another Member suggested that telephone surveys might not be the best way to reach people who don't speak English as their primary language.
 - Tim responded that SPU is considering surveying people in person at grocery stores.
- Another Member suggested that outreach for the requirement should include East African languages.
- A guest suggested that where a customer lives might matter more than her or his race when it comes to awareness of the compost requirement.
 - ✓ Jamie will follow up with Tim to consider his request for feedback about awareness level targets in more detail.
 - ✓ Heather will put Jamie on the June agenda to report back to the Committee.

Wrap Up

- One Member noted that she would like to know more about how SWAC can help with the paint stewardship program.
 - ✓ Segó will follow up with Mendy to get more information and find out about any constraints.
 - ✓ SWAC Members should let Heather know if they are interested in doing more for the CPG and/or paint stewardship programs.

7:40pm, meeting adjourned