



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

October 4, 2017 Meeting Notes
 Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue
 Room 4901
 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
Chair: Holly Griffith
Vice-Chair: Quinn Apuzzo
Secretary: Emily Newcomer

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff	Role
Quinn Apuzzo	Phone	Susan Fife-Ferris	Division Director, SPU Solid Waste Planning and Program Management
Anna Dyer	N	Sego Jackson	Solid Waste LOB Policy Liaison
Holly Griffith	Y	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Jamie Lee	Y	Sheryl Shapiro	CAC Program Manager
Heather Levy	Y	Veronica Fincher	Waste Prevention Program Manager
Emily Newcomer	Y	David Hare	Planning and Strategic Advisor, Solid Waste Planning and Program Management
Chris Toman	Y		
Colin Groark	N-ex		
James Subocz	Y	Guests	Affiliation
Alan Garvey	Y	Heather Trim	Zero Waste Washington
Amelia Fujikawa	N	Kyla Wilson	Zero Waste Washington, Plastics Pollution Campaign
Adam Maurer	Y	Rachtha Danh	SCIDPA, and CID Property Manager

ACTION ITEMS:

- Sego asked SWAC members to provide their feedback, thoughts, and insight to SPU on what the impacts might be following the Chinese ban and/or restriction on American scrap and waste imports.
- SWAC members were encouraged to email grant program name ideas to Sheryl and Natasha, and they would share the ideas with Veronica.

1. Regular Business

SWAC Chair, Holly Griffith called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM

- Members and guests introduced themselves.
- SWAC Members approved the September meeting notes.
- Sheryl indicated emergency exits and bathrooms, and provided a brief safety overview. She reminded attendees to sign-in.
- Sheryl announced the 10/25 All-CAC Meeting about personal and emergency preparedness.

2. Solid Waste LOB Updates

SPU Solid Waste Planning and Program Management Division Director, Susan Fife-Ferris and Solid Waste LOB Liaison, Sego Jackson, provided a few Solid Waste Line of Business and legislative updates.

- **Upcoming “Moving Towards Zero Waste: Defining Success in Materials Management” Symposium:** November 2, 8:30-4:30PM. Susan encouraged SWAC Members to register as soon as possible as it is an invitation-only event, and registration is required to reserve their space. She noted that this symposium would be informing SPU’s Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan Update, so it would be helpful to go in order to help further prepare them for the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan Update process.
- **Collection RFP:** SPU received four proposals, and the evaluation process has begun. Questions should be directed to Lisa Hill.
- **North Transfer Station Recycling and Reuse Center:** The contract with the vendor to provide reuse activities at the Recycling and Reuse Center is close to being signed, and customers should be able to begin dropping items off by the end of the year.
- **Strawless in Seattle:** (Covered in more detail later in the meeting) Susan said there was a lot of press around the campaign, and that it had been “a great success in SPU’s eyes,” raising awareness about SPU packaging restrictions and the temporary exemption that will be lifted in July 2018.
- **South Transfer Station Phase Two (STS2):** STS2 will be sited on an old landfill, and there is a Committee working with South Park and Duwamish Valley area residents and business representatives regarding tree preservation on the property and in the vicinity. Susan said it was a great example of how Solid Waste staff is working with a local community to address their concerns and needs.
- **China Ban:** SPU has been receiving a lot of questions about what will happen in January when a Chinese ban and/or restriction on American scrap and waste imports goes into effect. Materials most likely to be impacted are loads of low grade mixed plastics and mixed waste paper. Seago felt this would likely have a large impact on where recyclables might go in the future. Seago asked SWAC members to provide their feedback, thoughts, and insights to SPU on what the impacts might be once the China Ban goes into place.
 - **CAC Question:** Is that just between the U.S. and China?
 - **Response:** My understanding is that it’s an international ban on everything coming in, but acknowledging that the U.S. is probably the biggest exporter. The ban is a response to the poor quality of recyclable materials shipped from the US, Australia, and Europe, severe impacts to environmental and human health caused by poor recycling infrastructure in China, and China’s desire to develop its own domestic markets for recyclable materials.
- **Kevin Snipes has been promoted to SPU’s Chief Administrative Officer.** He will continue to be Solid Waste Deputy Director in the interim.

3. Community Waste Prevention/Reuse Grant Program

SPU Waste Prevention Program Manager Veronica Fincher presented on a newly revived Community Grant Program. The new Community Grant Program will award small grants to anyone in the community focused on prevention and re-use, and hopes to spread the grants out geographically, across sectors, and across different kinds of projects. She said she is in the early development stages of this program, and would be looking for feedback. SWAC members provided comments on the following sections:

Grant Criteria

- **CAC Member:** Do you have expectations for grant recipients around measurable outcomes, reporting, tracking of success?
 - **Staff Response:** Last time we ran this grant program, we had a reporting system in place, and each project tracked their project on their invoices and in an end of project report. How would you imagine tracking looking this time around?
 - **CAC Member:** I think it should connect into SPU's desire to someday start tracking waste prevention. How does this process inform the City's ability to do that?
 - **Response:** Last time (we had this grant) the focus wasn't so much on waste prevention; so things may have been more measurable.
 - **CAC Member:** It's a difficult question: How do we quantify the reduction in waste generation? In the grant application, we shouldn't be telling them how they need to go about it, but asking them how they plan to go about it. It would be interesting to see their response
 - **CAC Member:** You could track the number of people contacted.
 - **CAC Member:** In terms of the selection criteria; evaluating the grant applications from the lens of "are there measurable outcomes?" – it helps SPU to meet the potential for expanding our reach. This could be embedded in overall criteria.
- **CAC Member:** Is it open to folks outside of Seattle?
 - **Staff Response:** Yes, as long as it serves Seattle residents.
- **CAC Member:** Will the application be online?
 - **Staff Response:** We'll get to that.
- **Staff Question:** Do you have any criteria around partnerships?
 - **Staff Response:** Only within the constraints of benefits to community, but not explicit. Can you flush that out?
 - **Staff:** If it's connected to partnerships, sometimes that impact is larger.
 - **CAC Member:** Could have a range of funding amount that could be linked to partnership criteria. Partnerships could be folded into 'Benefits to the Community', as a sub-criteria.
- **CAC Member:** Maybe this is a sub-criteria, but in terms of what you're trying to target in terms of benefits to vulnerable populations: How is building jobs and job skills built in?
 - **Staff Response:** That is taken into account in the sub-criteria.
- **CAC Member:** Is there a weighting in the criteria?
 - **Staff Response:** We haven't decided. We did not last time. We need to think about it a little more.
- **Guest:** Since the grant maxes out at only \$15k, I caution about the measurement aspect. I am a huge proponent of the measurement, but \$15k is a small amount for doing meaningful measurement. I would focus on the output.
 - **Sego:** That's similar to what I was thinking. We know how challenging measurement around waste prevention can be, so having that be a main tenant of the grant would be unfair. Maybe one of SPU's roles in this is Program is to provide technical assistance, once there are projects that have measurable impact. It would provide an opportunity for SPU to help.
 - **CAC Member:** May get more out of smaller grants than bigger grants.

Advertising the Grant

SWAC members were encouraged to email ideas to Veronica that should be added to the list.

- Elementary schools; get them while they're young.

- University students.
- Arthur W. Buerk Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Washington.
- University of Washington Campus Sustainability Fund. Only funds university projects, so if a student wants to do something in their community this grant would help.
- University of Washington Green Greek Coordinator
- CaFÉ (CallForEntry.org) City website for Arts and Culture grants.
- Buy Nothing Groups
- NextDoor
- Environmental Leadership Program (ELP)
- Press Release (may not get to it this time around)

Equitable Access and Outcomes

- **CAC Member:** Will the same panel review the letter of intent (LOI) and application?
 - **Staff Response:** Yes.
- **CAC Member:** I would suggest doing the LOI and Application together, to eliminate a step in the process.
 - **Staff Response:** We didn't want folks to go through the whole process, if they're not eligible. We also didn't want it to be intimidating to folks. Helps us as reviewers; don't have to review as much info.
 - **CAC Member:** It's not a huge grant, so both an LOI and an application seems a little cumbersome. Some grant offices will just have you send an email with their idea. If it was a bigger grant, I'd say LOI + application is fine.
 - **CAC Member:** You've given so much thought to providing alternative ways to submit an application. Are you going to provide the same level of equitable concern to the LOI?
 - **CAC Member:** I do think writing a letter of interest would feel less of a barrier.
 - **CAC Member:** 250 words or less, a paragraph of interest.
 - **CAC Member:** Given that you want projects that are viable, I would say that the application should use criteria that drives home what really makes a project viable.
 - **CAC Member:** I am very supportive of a template letter idea, with set "boxes" to fill out. I would recommend a word limit.
- **CAC Member:** I would recommend having a workshop for folks that are interested. Not just North and South, but also Central and possibly elsewhere.

Timeline

Some SWAC members felt the timeline was reasonable, others less so.

- **CAC Member:** For some folks, December is difficult because they're finishing out fiscal year, holidays, sales cycles.
- **CAC Member:** Would it be more reasonable to do a February timeline? Or is there any reason not to wait even longer?
 - **Susan:** If we push the workshops out any further, we may shorten the timeline with respect to the projects. We want to spend as much of the money as possible, by the end of December.
 - **Guest:** You mentioned targeting schools, etc. Have you thought about how this timeline will impact students who are planning to use this funding? (Relative to summer schedules, school schedules).
 - **Staff Response:** The schedule will always be impacted by Council approval on the budget. Any thoughts on that?

- **Guest:** Could you start your project at a date other than July 1? Summer is often the best time for outreach.
- **Staff Response:** We'll see if we can work that out with the budget schedule.
- **Sego:** Maybe I missed something, but on that school year discussion... these don't have to run for a whole year. You could design a project that runs from September – June.
- **Staff Response:** We thought about splitting it into two cycles. Going to think through again... what that would look like budget-wise.
- Susan provided a brief overview of the City Council *adoption* versus *approval* budget schedule.
- **Guest:** It looks like a 4-month process from LOI to hearing back: That might be a barrier for a small project. They could probably raise that money in four months another way. Wonder if it's going to be worth it for people to go through the whole cycle for such a small grant?
- **Veronica asked the Committee:** Is one month enough time to complete the whole application?
 - **CAC Member:** Depends on how lengthy it is.
 - **CAC Member:** Seems reasonable.

Grant Program Name

Veronica asked for feedback regarding some terms and possible names for the grant. **SWAC members were encouraged to email their ideas to Veronica.**

1. "Grant" vs "Fund"

SWAC Members were unanimous that "grant" was better.

2. "Prevention" vs "Reduction" (application)

There was not a clear consensus among SWAC members on this one.

- a. **CAC Member:** SWAC may be the least qualified to answer this question
- b. **Guest:** Reduction
- c. **CAC Member:** Prevention
- d. **Staff:** *Preventing and Reducing* (noun is a sticking point)
- e. **CAC Member:** Prefer prevention, but unfairly biased because institutional knowledge

3. Title options (passed around the list and SWAC members voted)

- a. **CAC Member:** These are very specific, industry words. They seem formal and bureaucratic. I lean towards something like "Waste-Free Communities." Would resonate more with an average community member.
- b. **Guest:** Captain Planet Program
- c. **CAC Member:** Zero Grunge

4. Mid-Year Review

SWAC Chair, Holly Griffith, provided a brief update on the 2017 SWAC Workplan. She said that everything is on track to be presented this calendar year, except Electronics Recycling. She was hoping to get a pulse on how everyone is feeling, and noted that we would be beginning the work planning process for 2018 in November.

- Heather Levy said she is tentatively available to discuss the Organics Contamination Workgroup at the November Meeting.

5. Plastics Summit: Report Back

Heather Trim of Zero Waste Washington provided a brief intro on the Plastics Summit. SWAC Members who attended shared their experiences.

- **CAC Member:** I would be interested to see the data of who attended.
 - **Heather:** It was quite a diverse group, including volunteer groups/advocates, businesses, EPA, waste industry, and a number of folks out of Seattle. The low price point may have helped with that. Videos and PowerPoints from the presentations will be up in a few days.
- **CAC Member:** I enjoyed the presentations on socio-economic approaches and behavior. Also, it was nice to get the scientific perspective. A lot of good, hard data and evidence around the assertions. Gave a deep breadth of knowledge to the event.
- **CAC Member:** The most frustrating part of the presentations for me was how plastics get downcycled and how it's really hard to make the plastics you capture into the same plastic. Also, that there's a limited amount of recycled plastic they can take; composite deck industry is only so big and can only take so much.
- **CAC Member:** I thought the part on machine washing clothes with plastic fibers was interesting.
 - **CAC Member:** I wondered how much of the plastic is just in the air, and will end up in the water anyways.
- **CAC Member:** The first panel talked all about the challenges. It might have been nice to have a follow panel that talks specifically about solutions. Seemed to talk about solutions only at the 11th hour.
 - **CAC Member:** I'll second that. Are there plans for a 2.0 or next steps?
 - **Heather:** Yes, would like to do an annual event. Would like to have a planning event, and would be interested to see if SWAC would like to serve on it.
- **CAC Member:** I thought about all three parts; the science aspects were interesting but there's so much lack of standardization that it's hard to build a case for anything. Hard to defend your case. People love plastic. We need to love it from the moment we buy it to the moment we get rid of it. I think the only solution is going to come from people like Dennis Denton of Denton Plastics who can process it and turn it into something useful.
- **CAC Member:** I was hoping to dive more into the China regulations. I think that's going to be a huge factor in the next couple decades. It's a huge, overwhelming problem, the elephant in the room, and I feel like we don't have much control over it. So, hearing about Dennis Denton talk about a plant locally; Does every region need to have a regional economy? Can we no longer think about shipping our stuff overseas? Would be a big deal to have that conversation as a Committee or as a City? Maybe we should be consider making things that we know how to handle within our systems, within our economy. I hope the China disruption is going to spur more innovation.
 - **Sego:** It's very clear to me that we need to do more processing of our plastics, at least to resin type, and sort that out. Rather than shipping bales of stuff. There are dynamics that make that difficult financially.
- **CAC Member:** 3D printing: It would be cool if you could recycle your own plastic into it.

- **Sego:** There is a parallel concern going on about the plastic that is being produced from these 3D printing machines.

6. Around the Table & Community Insights

- **Straws and Utensils:** Sego Jackson, Solid Waste LOB Liaison provided a high-level overview of the existing ordinances. He then reviewed the new food packaging requirements mailer, and the results and response to the #strawlessinseattle campaign.
- **A Committee member shared:** I visited the Cherry Street Coffee house and asked for no straw. They said I was the third person that day who had asked for no straws. They already used durable straws, but he said he'd talk to their manager about going strawless.
- **A staff member shared:** I had a conversation with their waitress at LouLay. The whole wait staff was excited about the *Strawless in Seattle* campaign. I started keeping track of how many straws I would use; it adds up quickly because I drink iced tea, and they give a new straw with each refill. The problem is, they still throw out straw, even if you don't use it. You have to proactively ask them to not bring you a straw.
- **A Committee member shared:** When you go to a restaurant with children, you have to tell them when you're being seated that your children can drink without a straw, otherwise they will bring it by default.
- **A Committee member shared:** I had a "Strawkward" moment where I was forced to take a straw at Costco.

Adjourned 7:30PM