



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

December 7, 2022 Meeting Notes
Webex
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Chair: Brie Kuhn

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff /Guest	Role
Danny Barksdale	Y	Quinn Apuzzo	SPU – SWAC Program Coordinator
Rina Fa’amoe-Cross	Y	Susan Fife- Ferris	SPU – Solid Waste Planning & Program Management Division Director
Brie Kuhn	Y	Jeff Fowler	SPU – Solid Waste Deputy Director
Hannah Scholes	Y	Diana Wadley	Guest – Department of Ecology
Adrian Tan	Y	Heather Trim	Guest – Zero Waste Washington
Ming-Ming Tung Edelman	N		
Michael Johnson	Y		
Chelsey Evans	Y		
John Martin	N		
Erin Gagnon	Y		
Wendy Weiker	N		
Steven Walls	Y		
Yongkang (YK) Zhou	Y		

1. Welcome & Introductions

- SWAC Chair, Brie, called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.
- Members and guests introduced themselves. Prompted by the SWAC Chair, they each shared their name, affiliation, and favorite holiday tradition.
- November meeting minutes were approved by SWAC members in attendance.

2. Comments on Solid Waste Line of Business (SWLOB) Updates for SWAC

Updates were provided to the committee in writing in advance of the meeting and shared on the screen during this time. Jeff Fowler was present to answer SWAC’s questions.

- **A SWAC Member asked,** What happens to plastic clam shells?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded,** We will follow up with that answer. [UPDATE: Plastic clam shells are baled at the MRF and marketed with #3-7. Republic Services says that 99.5% of the #3-7s are staying in North America.]

3. SWAC Officer Election Announcement

Quinn announced the results from the 2023 SWAC Officer Election: Brie Kuhn will return as the Chair, Wendy Weiker will be SWAC Vice/Co- Chair, and Michael Johnson will be SWAC Secretary.

4. Solid Waste 101 Presentation

Susan Fife-Ferris provided an overview of Seattle’s solid waste history and the core programs within SPU’s Solid Waste Line of Business.

- **A Guest asked,** In 2006, the train carrying Seattle’s waste to the Oregon landfill used to be a mile long (100 train cars in length). After the zero waste plan was implemented, the number of train cars was reduced to 50. This made for a great visual. Do we know how many train cars of waste leave the city each day now?
- **A SWAC Member asked,** What is an acceptable amount of recycling contamination? And what would be an example of a strategy that SPU implemented to try to reduce it?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded,** Ideally, we would have no recycling contamination. Nationally, recycling contamination rates are around 20%. In Seattle, our contamination rate is around 10%. Contamination rates vary depending on the commodity. In the early 2000’s when Seattle transitioned from a source-separated recycling system (where multiple smaller bins were used to collect different categories of recyclable materials) to a commingled system (where one large bin is used to collect a larger range of recyclable materials), the decision was made to accept a higher contamination rate in exchange for capturing more recyclable material overall.
- To combat recycling contamination, SPU conducts extensive outreach and education, a recent example is the regional “Empty, Clean & Dry” campaign, where we work to teach customers how to correctly prepare and sort their recyclable materials.
- Recently, SPU worked with our MRF (Material Recovery Facility operated by Republic) to upgrade and modernize the facility.
- SPU is also working in support of EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) legislation because it will create a system where producers will be held responsible for properly managing their materials at end of life and help fund recycling system infrastructure improvements.

5. 2023 SWAC Work Plan

Quinn shared an overview of SWAC’s 2023 work planning process and asked for member feedback. Members shared topics that they are interested in covering in 2023 and will be able to provide additional feedback through a post-meeting survey.

- **A SWAC Member shared,** I’m Interested in the Waste Prevention Strategic Planning process but also want to learn about what waste prevention actions are currently underway. I’m also interested in learning about Targeted Universalism, and specifically interested in collection sites and accessibility for materials such as batteries, electronics, household hazardous waste, and other hard-to-recycle items. I’m interested in better understanding these programs and which communities are best served by these programs (and which are not).
- **A SWAC Member shared,** I’m interested in getting more information on operations and transfer stations. I know self-haulers are a huge opportunity area and it would be great to understand the inner working of these facilities and their operations.
- **A SWAC Member shared,** I would be interested in continuing to meet remotely most of the time but meeting in-person a few times a year.

- **A SWAC Member shared**, I would be interested in learning more about the Strategic Business Plan update and Waste Characterization Study results.
- **A SWAC Member shared**, I'm interested in accessibility and curious about how SPU sets priorities.

6. Around the Table

- SWAC Member Erin Gagnon shared that she has accepted a new position at DTG Recycle and will be departing Ridwell at the end of the year.
- Diana Wadley, from the Department of Ecology, offered to provide a presentation or information on the recently passed Organics Management or Compost Procurement laws. Ecology is conducting a [“Bring Your Own Bag” outreach campaign](#) and has resources available to help amplify the message. [Ecycle Washington website](#) has a new mapping feature making it easier for residents and businesses to find recycling locations.
- Cedar Grove is hiring an [Outreach and Waste Diversion Coordinator](#).

7. SWAC Chat

- Café-style conversation with the group on the topic of what members and guests are doing to advance sustainability in their personal or professional lives.

Adjourned 7:20.