



## SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

June 7, 2023, Meeting Summary  
Webex  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

*Chair: Brie Kuhn  
Co-Chair: Wendy Weiker  
Secretary: Michael Johnson*

Committee Members	Present	SPU Staff /Guests	Role
Danny Barksdale	Y	Quinn Apuzzo	SPU – SWAC Program Coordinator
Rina Fa’amoe-Cross	Y	McKenna Morigan	SPU – Strategic Advisor, Waste Prevention & Product Stewardship
Brie Kuhn	N	Angela Wallis	SPU – Contracts Manager (OCC)
Hannah Scholes	Y	Dan Ward	SPU – Compliance Manager
Adrian Tan	N	Tracy Cramer	SPU – Illegal Dumping Enforcement & Education Manager
Ming-Ming Tung Edelman	N	Diana Wadley	Guest - Department of Ecology
Michael Johnson	Y	Heather Trim	Guest - Zero Waste Washington
Chelsey Evans	Y	Joe Camero	Guest - WM
John Martin	Y	Valentina Rappa	Guest - Rheaply
Erin Gagnon	Y	Caitlin Singer	Guest
Wendy Weiker	Y		
Steven Walls	N		
Yongkang (YK) Zhou	Y		

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

- SWAC Vice Chair Wendy called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.
- Members and guests introduced themselves. Prompted by the SWAC Chair, they shared their name, affiliation, and favorite summer activity.

### 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. Quinn was present to answer questions.

### 3. Illegal Dumping Proposed Fee Schedule

Following the presentation at SWAC’s May meeting on this topic, Tracy Cramer and Dan Ward returned to discuss SWAC’s feedback and answer questions.

- **A SWAC Member asked:** Under the proposed options, would first-time offenders receive a fine? Or is there a grace period?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** The program leads with education and outreach. Currently, SPU sends deterrent letters to known violators. From an administrative perspective, our goal is to change behavior, to prevent illegal dumping from happening in the first place. Our preference

is to do this through education and outreach. Issuing a notice of violation is expensive and administratively burdensome but can be an important “tool” for motivating behavior change.

- **A SWAC Member asked:** Did you interview any illegal dumpers? Do you have a sense of why people are illegally dumping?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** When have been able to identify and contact a person who has illegally dumped, they typically deny it or refuse to speak with us. Or, they have been dumping in a specific area for years and it’s become a habit in the absence of any real enforcement or accountability.
- For example, we conducted an outreach campaign in the U District. For years, people have routinely dumped furniture in the median on 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. When we spoke with the people who were dumping, we learned that they had been doing this for years and believed it was sanctioned by the city. We had to explain that what they were doing was illegal and explain the correct process for disposing of waste, including providing maps to the transfer stations.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Are there programs that help subsidize the cost of disposing and/or recycling items like mattresses or couches for low-income residents?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Yes, SPU offers the [Utility Discount Program](#) that provides assistance for income-eligible customers. The program includes two free vouchers for bulky item pick-up or passes to the transfer station.
- **A SWAC Member commented:** I am in favor of option 3. It seems like it’s the most straightforward option to educate the public on and for staff to administer.
- **A SWAC Member commented:** I am in favor of option 3 for the same reasons.
- **A SWAC Member commented:** I am in favor of option 3. The complexity seems high for both other options.

#### 4. Organics Processing

Angela Wallis provided an overview of SPU’s recent organics procurement process.

Incumbent contractors, Lenz and Cedar Grove, will continue to serve as the City’s two organics processing providers. The new contracts largely represent a continuation of current services with some enhancements, including clearer standards for compostable food serviceware and additional capacity during peak periods. The new contracts commence in 2024 and include a base term of 6 years with 3 x 2-year extension options. New rates fall within SPU’s rate path.

- **A SWAC Member asked:** Would the City ever choose to extend a contract with one contractor but not the other?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** In theory, yes, although it’s unlikely.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Under SPU’s current agreement, the tonnage split between the two contractors is 60% Cedar Grove and 40% Lenz. Can you explain why the % split changed under the new agreements?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** This was a competitive procurement process and Lenz offered more competitive rates.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** A few years ago there was talk about a new organics processor entering the market. Is that the case? Did you receive more than two bids?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Lenz and Cedar Grove were the only organics processors who submitted proposals. We did receive proposals from a few digester companies. Responses from these companies were not financially competitive or feasible, so they were not offered a contract.

- **A SWAC Member asked:** How did SPU consider the state’s new organics law in the development of the new contracts?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Seattle already had policies in place that address many of the new statewide requirements so the only real impact is related to organics procurement. Seattle’s new organics procurement ordinance, which has already been adopted, includes a commitment to purchase compost from the processors that process the materials that are collected under Seattle’s program. The other piece from HB 1799 that represents a shift for Seattle is related to the compostable product labeling requirements. This states that any product claiming to be compostable must be certified by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party in accordance with industry standards. This was a big part of the motivation and justification for negotiating consistent standards for compostable products in the new organics processing contracts.

#### 5. State Legislative Session Recap

McKenna Murrigan provided an overview of the state’s new battery law (SB 5144). The new legislation represents the most comprehensive and forward-looking battery law in place to date. The law goes into effect in 2027, with a phased timeline for different types of batteries, and will require manufacturers to fully fund collection and recycling programs.

#### 6. SW-500 Director’s Rule

McKenna Murrigan provided an overview of proposed updates to Seattle’s food serviceware requirements. The proposed updates seek to: clarify compostable packaging requirements, interpret the existing rule to require single-use serviceware for dine-in service must be compostable, interpret the existing rule to prohibit brown-tinted paper takeout boxes unless they are compostable, and remove the temporary waiver for portion cups for hot foods or with lids.

- **A SWAC Member asked:** What does enforcement for this look like?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Our approach to enforcement leads with education and compliance assistance. Enforcement activities will be focused on large generators and only occur after 3+ instances of non-compliance.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Has there been thought given to working on this upstream with food serviceware vendors?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Yes, absolutely. One of the challenges we have faced is that as a city, we do not have authority over products that are being sold in to the state. Over the years, SPU has done a lot of work to engage manufacturers about our policies to varying degrees of success. The good news is that that state-wide Styrofoam food serviceware ban, compostable labeling requirements, and plastic bag ban are set on *producers* not on food service businesses.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Is there anything that we as consumers (and SWAC members) can do to help support these policies?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Yes. Please share with your communities and networks. We’re also in the process of developing outreach tools to support compliance and would love your input on these.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Do these rules apply to food trucks?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Yes.

#### 7. Around the Table

- **A Guest shared:** WM Rethink Waste Grant application is open through the end of June: <https://www.wmnorthwest.com/seattle/pdf/rethinkwastegrant23.pdf>
- **A Guest from the Department of Ecology shared:**
  - Today Ecology sent SPU the letter of approval for the City of Seattle’s solid waste management plan update. As of June 1, 2023, expanded polystyrene (EPS) packing peanuts and void fill will be banned for sale and distribution in WA.

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Waste-reduction-programs/Plastics/2021-plastic-pollution-laws/Expanded-polystyrene-ban>.

- New Recycle Right – Don't Bag Your Recyclables Campaign Launched – Local Tool Kit available - <https://app.box.com/s/txby3dph61dh1vgirrrjygzrts233zpt>
- Public Works Board - Public Works Financing (wa.gov)  
(<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/pwb/pwb-financing/>) The funding cycle for the 2023-25 biennium opens on May 8, 2023, and closes on July 7, 2023. Workshops are planned in early May. Details can be found in this fact sheet. Contact: mark.rentfrow@commerce.wa.gov, (360) 529-6432.
- **A SWAC Member Shared:** Republic Services recently opened a new Education Center at their Seattle Material Recovery Facility. SWAC is invited to tour the facility.

**Adjourned [7:10 PM]**