

Metro Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes July 16, 2001

Member / Alternate* Attendees:

Councilor Susan McLain, Chair
Councilor Bill Atherton, Alternate Chair
Rick Winterhalter, Clackamas County
Dean Kampfer, Waste Management, Inc. (disposal sites)
*Vince Gilbert, East County Recycling (disposal sites)
Tanya Schaefer, (Multnomah County citizens)
Mike Leichner, Pride Disposal (Washington County haulers)
Lynne Storz, Washington County
Sarah Jo Chaplen, Washington County cities
Merle Irvine, Willamette Resources, Inc. (disposal sites)
Michael Misovetz, Clackamas County
Glenn Zimmerman, Composting Council of Oregon/Wood Waste
Reclamation (composters)
*Robin Hawley, City of Portland
Matt Korot, City of Gresham

Metro/Guests:

Terry Petersen, REM
Janet Matthews, REM
Bryce Jacobson, REM
Meg Lynch, REM
Michele Adams, REM
Julie Cash, REM
Karen Feher, ASD
Eric Merrill, Waste Connections, Inc.

Non-voting Member Attendees:

Kathy Kiwala, Clark County
Chris Taylor, Oregon DEQ

Call to Order and Announcements

Chair Susan McLain called the meeting to order. She reminded the attendees that a Solid Waste Advisory Committee Orientation session will be held on July 25. Chair McLain added that there are no minutes from the last meeting at this time. Chair McLain asked if anyone has a comment or an unanswered question from the last meeting. As no one had any comments, she turned the meeting over to Terry Petersen for his updates.

REM Director's Update

Mr. Terry Petersen stated that Waste Management, Inc. submitted a regional transfer station application for its Recycle America facility in Troutdale. WMI initially submitted an application on June 1 and then revised that application on June 27. The deadline for the Council to take action on that application is October 26. The Council will have to take action on the WMI application during or before its meeting on October 25. The Regional Environmental Management Department is in the process of reviewing the application and putting together a packet of materials to forward to the Council.

Mr. Petersen introduced the new Construction Site Recycling Guide web application to be presented by Bryce Jacobson. The site is intended to target people who are starting to go first to the internet for information.

Mr. Bryce Jacobson explained that the Construction & Demolition Waste Reduction Initiative Work Group, which includes local governments, has helped develop this new web application to help contractors find locations where they can take their C&D debris for recycling or reuse. Mr. Jacobson showed the attendees the paper version of this information, which Metro has been publishing periodically for nine years. This brochure lists about 90 locations that accept C&D debris. Mr. Jacobson reported that surveys have told us that contractors generally find the guide to be a useful source of information and they trust it. But, they also said they would like to see it printed more often with up-to-date information. This web application is in response to that sentiment. This application is targeted to contractors, builders and developers who are likely to self-haul their own debris.

Mr. Jacobson then proceeded to demonstrate the C&D application by going to the Metro web site and clicking on Construction Site Recycling Guide under Current Highlights.

Ms. Kathy Kiwala asked how often this web application will be updated.

Mr. Jacobson explained that the Metro Recycling Information staff can update the web site immediately upon learning of a change.

Mr. Vince Gilbert asked if this will be advertised so that people know it is available?

Mr. Jacobson stated that this is part of the C&D Waste Reduction Initiative Work Group's education and outreach plan, which includes marketing of information. He added that the C&D brochure will continue to be printed and will list the web site as another resource for information. Mr. Jacobson explained that the guide provides information not only on facilities in the Metro region, but also those identified to be of interest to the region's citizens, such as facilities in Clark County, Washington.

Mr. Petersen added that the Regional Environmental Management Department views this as a prototype. Our long-term goal is to put all of our recycling center information on the Internet. He invited all attendees to give feedback to Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Chris Taylor asked if other agencies can place links to this application on their web sites?

Mr. Jacobson responded that he thought so and to please call him.

Draft REM Strategic Plan

Ms. Janet Matthews began the discussion of the draft Strategic Plan by briefly summarizing what was reviewed by SWAC at its previous meeting. A summary of responses to the issues raised in the last meeting was mailed out with the agenda packet. A number of the suggestions were incorporated into the current draft of the strategic plan, as well as suggestions that did not come from SWAC members. At today's meeting, Ms. Matthews will review the current draft of the strategic plan and talk about the implementation plan, which should follow by December.

Ms. Matthews summarized the priorities, corresponding strategies and key conclusions of the Strategic Plan, as laid out in the Executive Summary. She then touched on changes made to the Plan since the last SWAC meeting. First, the Plan is now in a much more readable PageMaker format. Also, The Executive Summary has been significantly revised, making it less dry, emphasizing the link to sustainability and connections to larger Metro issues, and bringing key issues and conclusions to the forefront. She has also clarified and deleted some text. Additionally, page 9 talks about evaluating the phase-out or modification of the regional system fee credit program as the Metro tip fee increases. There will likely be more changes the Metro Solid Waste & Recycling Committee reviews the Plan.

Chair McLain asked if there are any questions before she moved on to the implementation plan. She added that the Solid Waste & Recycling Committee will be addressing the Strategic Plan at their meeting this week.

Merle Irvine asked when the Plan is likely to be adopted by Council.

Ms. Matthews responded that she believed the Solid Waste & Recycling Committee will act on the resolution adopting the Plan at its August 8th meeting.

As there were no other questions, Ms. Matthews moved on to the implementation plan and what it will involve. Basically, the implementation will entail translating this Plan into yearly work plans and incorporating them into the department's upcoming budget development. SWAC can expect updates on the implementation process between now and December.

Chair McLain asked if there were any questions about the implementation plan. As there were no immediate questions, Chair McLain said that the Plan's relationship to RSWMP and to its implementation is really important to her. She also stated that the differences of the Plan and the RSWMP are important. For instance, the Plan will be updated yearly, whereas the RSWMP is not as dynamic. Chair McLain adds that the Solid Waste & Recycling Committee will be looking at things such as the relationship to other Metro documents and responsibilities and mandates as it considers the Plan.

Chair McLain thanked Janet and then introduces the next agenda item – upcoming solid waste system policy decision package.

Upcoming Solid Waste System Decisions

Mr. Petersen began the discussion by explaining that it was important to get the Strategic Plan accomplished before any major changes were made so that proposed changes could be evaluated in context of the big picture. Metro

ownership of transfer stations is a good example. Mr. Petersen said that his hope for today's meeting was to get agreement on the key policy issues and questions that should be addressed by the Council as a package this fall.

Mr. Vince Gilbert requested that the discussion return to the Strategic Plan for a moment and commented that the fee credit program finding on page 9 of the Strategic Plan does not reflect his understanding of the program. Mr. Gilbert suggested that the wording be changed to reflect that the program was set up to encourage recycling, not increase the profit margin of facilities.

Mr. Mike Leichner disagreed, stating that at the time the regional system fee credit was implemented, private facilities were at risk.

Chair McLain suggested that both of these goals could be at the base of the regional system fee credit program.

Mr. Gilbert stated that it would depend on which facility you are.

Chair McLain agrees that both views should be reflected and suggests that the agenda item be resumed.

Mr. Petersen began by saying that Mr. Gilbert's question about the regional system fee credits relates to number 3 on his list of policy questions (see Attachment A). He then summarized the four policy questions, which are local transfer stations; Metro fees (currently being reviewed by the Rate Review Committee); the Regional System Fee credit program; and flow control sections of the Metro Code (5.05). REM will be asking the Solid Waste & Recycling Committee for its guidance, and will be coming back to SWAC with more specific proposals that address these issues.

Chair McLain stated that this list of policy questions was developed from issues raised during the strategic planning process and should be evaluated in the context of the strategic plan. The Solid Waste & Recycling Committee will be looking at these issues. She explains that SWAC attendees are to advise as to whether the list is complete and what information is needed to evaluate these issues.

Mr. Irvine asked about the timing of this package of policy issues because he anticipates that he will have many questions and would like to know the anticipated schedule.

Chair McLain replied that she and Councilor Atherton, Mr. Petersen and Ms. Matthews have met and anticipate the Council taking action on these issues in the Fall – probably in October.

Ms. Kiwala asked how the new recovery rate will affect this process.

Mr. Petersen and Chair McLain responded that achieving the new recovery rate of 62% will influence the decisionmaking process, but it will be addressed more directly in the strategic plan implementation process and through the RSWMP update/review.

Mr. Taylor asked for an example of what Number 2 on this list, Metro solid waste fees, will be addressing.

Mr. Petersen stated that the Rate Review Committee has been meeting for the last month on this very issue. The discussion has been about whom should pay what costs. For example, who is responsible for the debt service on the revenue bonds issued for our transfer stations – the region or only customers of the transfer stations? Another example would be Metro's regulatory costs. The Rate Review Committee is evaluating the allocations of these costs.

Councilor Atherton, in going back to the recovery rate discussion, asked whether this is reasonable? Should we be shooting for gross tonnage or focus on the smaller, more toxic things – one ton of concrete or 50 pounds of mercury switches? Currently, heavier wastes receive more "credit" than toxic wastes.

Mr. Gilbert stated that there are some materials that used to be significant parts of the waste stream that no longer even enter it, hence do not even count as recycling anymore, making it more difficult to reach a goal as high as 62 percent.

Councilor Atherton agreed that this is a fact of the maturing solid waste system.

Councilor McLain agreed that these are valid issues that will be considered as Metro plans to achieve the new recovery goal.

Mr. Irvine commented that this is a lot to get done by October and asked when will SWAC have time to consider these policy issues.

Chair McLain explained that the Council is very interested in having this policy package meet the responsibilities and requirements of the strategic plan. Staff will present recommendations to SWAC at upcoming meetings. A staff/Council proposal will be made that meets the responsibilities of the strategic plan and deals with the status quo. It is anticipated that both the August and September SWAC meeting will be largely dedicated to these issues. Extra SWAC meetings will be considered if needed.

Councilor Atherton stated that the linchpin, so to speak, of all the policy issues is the fee structure. The Rate Review Committee is approaching understanding and consensus on the fees. Once it makes a recommendation, the rate piece will be expedited. However, there is the sensitivity that all of these issues are interconnected.

Chair McLain added that these are not new questions, and that Metro is committed to resolve them this year. However, conversation in these meetings is encouraged during the next couple of months.

Ms. Sarah Jo Chaplan suggested that extra meetings be set up now, and then cancelled if not necessary.

Councilor McLain suggested that REM come up with several dates and then do a phone vote to schedule two extra meetings if possible.

Ms. Chaplan added that it is very helpful to receive information ahead of time, even if it is only one or two days.

Chair McLain agreed that every effort will be made to get materials out with the packet or at least a couple of days in advance.

Mr. Irvine asked whether the policy issues on the handout drive the strategic plan or the other way around.

Chair McLain responded that the strategic plan drives the policy issues. The strategic plan lays out the criteria against which these policy issues will be evaluated.

Mr. Irvine asked if there are any parts of the strategic plan that could be in conflict with the RSWMP.

Chair McLain states that the plans have been evaluated for consistency. Ms. Matthews agreed, stating that they are consistent and that REM has been diligent in letting the RSWMP guide much of the development of the Plan.

Chair McLain asked if there were any other questions or comments. As there were none, Councilor McLain asks if there are any outstanding questions on the Plan from the June 18 SWAC meeting.

Other Business and Adjourn

Ms. Kiwala stated that she missed the last SWAC meeting, but noted that the transfer station ownership question has apparently been answered and inquired as to the discussion surrounding that decision?

Mr. Petersen explained that the Solid Waste & Recycling Committee considered the issue at several of its meetings. Ms. Matthews said that the findings in the issues agenda cover a large part of the discussion and recommendations behind the decision. There are also appendices to the Plan available on request that provide background.

As there were no more questions or comments, Councilor McLain thanked the attendees and adjourned the meeting.

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