

MINUTES OF THE PLASTICS RECYCLING TASK FORCE
OF THE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

September 24, 1990

Council Chamber

Task Force Members Present: Chair Corky Kirkpatrick, Jeff Gage, Russell Browner, Dennis Denton, Carrie Heaton and Sara Vickerman

Others Present: Don Carlson, Eric C. Lincoln and Allen M. Hurst, Jr.

Don Carlson, Council Administrator, called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

1. **Presentation by Bill Kovacs Regarding Experiences Working on the Resource Recovery Act During the Carter Administration**

Bill Kovacs said he was asked to come and discuss plastics recycling at this meeting. He said most of his career had been devoted to environmental law and the creation/acquisition of businesses for recycling a variety of materials. He said recycling plastics would provide many opportunities and there was no reason why plastics companies could not make a decent living and fulfill public demand.

Mr. Kovacs proposed venture capital funding to facilitate plastics recycling. He said the current infrastructure was under-capitalized and discussed the public's perception of plastics recycling. He said such issues began to be addressed 17 year/s ago by the paper industry with the use of paper depots and newspapers were successful in using the paper industry to the optimum advantage.

He discussed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates of landfill numbers. He said 10 years ago there were 15,000 landfills. He said there currently were 6,000 landfills and the EPA estimated there would 1,500 landfills in the year 2000. He said no one was considering how to compensate for the loss of these landfills. He said municipal landfills usually turned into Superfund sites. He said in 1972, Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI) was a small company and Waste Management, Inc. had just gone public. He said the same growth could happen in the plastics industry.

Dennis Denton said the haulers' definition of clean plastic was not the required cleanliness necessary for processing. Jeff Gage said processing would get more expensive and asked what companies could do to enhance current technologies. He noted a regional landfill was sited for regional disposal and would last approximately 100 years. Mr. Kovacs said Oregon could raise funds and noted Germany and Japan utilized alternative technology. Mr. Denton said Germany and Japan really utilized

industrial recycling which the United States had had for years. Mr. Kovacs said German and Japanese recycling was more sophisticated than industrial recycling and Santa Barbara planned to utilize German/Japanese programs and technology. Mr. Kovacs said New Jersey realized higher recycling statistics than originally estimated and said there was no problem with paper recycling. He said glass recycling involved some tipping problems, but that plastics recycling had a pitifully low rate. He said he was approached on a daily basis by large plastics companies for advice and action.

Mr. Gage noted glass was heavier than plastic and curbside collection for both involved different techniques. Mr. Kovacs said Portland needed a franchised collection system. He said Portland could provide enough materials to make such a system work. He said in smaller communities, the cost of transportation was prohibitive. He said the market would be temporarily glutted and did not know if plastics recycling should be pushed in all communities.

Ms. Vickerman asked about activity at the Santa Barbara technical center. Mr. Kovacs said environmental issues could be financially feasible and Oregon should dedicate specialists to different technologies and do an offshoot of Rutgers University's fieldwork; obtain information; financing; obtaining the necessary materials; and then the marketing and technology center could pull all the technologies together for a feasible implementation plan. Ms. Vickerman asked about costs. Mr. Kovacs said fees, licensing and consulting costs could be utilized. He said paper companies resisted recycling originally, but said companies which participated in recycling 10 years ago were reaping the benefits now. He said the hazardous waste industry got licenses/permits that would be impossible to get today.

Ms. Vickerman asked what the appropriate mix of public and private involvement should be. Mr. Kovacs said it was important to just get started. Mr. Denton said he did not know how Rutgers University got a return on their efforts. Mr. Kovacs said their program was not overly-capitalized and they had gathered useful information. Mr. Kovacs discussed funding mechanisms for the Resource Conservation Trust Fund (RCTF). He said the government had set up many large corporations. He said a board of private citizens should serve in an oversight capacity if such an entity were set up. Ms. Vickerman asked what qualifications board members should have.

Jerry Herrmann asked if competing industries should network. Mr. Kovacs said they should. Those present discussed the issues and financing further.

Those present discussed Ballot Measure No. 6. Mr. Gage said the measure if passed would result in thousands of product exemptions. Mr. Kovacs said the fiscal impact of Measure 6 had been under estimated. Mr. Denton said only polystyrene foam could be used if Measure No. 6 passed and noted Portland had banned the use of polystyrene foam. Mr. Kovacs said there should be a trade association to collect and assemble data. He said New Jersey had good data on percentiles of materials recycled. Russell Brownier noted he participated in the Oregon Recycling Markets Strategy group. Those present discussed recycling options. Mr. Kovacs said other states such as New York were more likely to fund alternative recycling technologies.

2. Discussion of the Purpose and Future of the Plastics Recycling Task Force

Chair Kirkpatrick said the Plastics Recycling Task Force (PRTF) could be set up as a subcommittee of the Council Solid Waste Committee or structured like the 1% for Recycling Subcommittee. Mr. Herrmann said the PRTF should be formalized but not restricted in terms of the number of persons who would serve. Chair Kirkpatrick noted PRTF membership had dwindled. Carrie Heaton noted Portland and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) each had their own plastics committees/task forces. Chair Kirkpatrick said there might not be a need for the PRTF to continue. Mr. Herrmann said he had told Karla Forsythe, Council Analyst, the PRTF should continue in a formalized manner. He noted Portland's task force would terminate December 30, 1990. Mr. Gage said a formalized PRTF could be ban-oriented. Mr. Gage asked if there were any other committees set up to deal with the practical problems of industry. Those present discussed other entities/groups which could also cover the same or similar issues. Mr. Brownier said legislation was needed for research and product production. Ms. Vickerman said the PRTF was a good group and simply needed to define its goals further. Ms. Heaton said Metro was close to defining its position on plastics recycling. Ms. Vickerman said Metro should rely on the PRTF because it had been active and functioning for two years. Chair Kirkpatrick said she would continue to work with Ms. Forsythe on PRTF objectives. Ms. Vickerman said the PRTF should work on market development. Mr. Denton said markets existed; the problem was diversion at an economical rate. Mr. Gage said there should be support and subsidies for private industry just as there were for public entities.

Ms. Vickerman noted the July 23, 1990, minutes said "establishing minimum content requirements and incentives and compatible labels replacing establishment of a dedicated fund to finance recycling

PLASTICS RECYCLING TASK FORCE
September 24, 1990
Page 4

and wildlife conservation." Ms. Vickerman said the language was inaccurate and should be corrected for the permanent record.

Those present discussed possible agenda items for the next regular meeting October 29, 1990.

Chair Kirkpatrick adjourned the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Paulette Allen
Committee Clerk
PRTF90.267