



METRO

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

MEETING SUMMARY
Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Metro Regional Center, Council Annex
December 13, 2004

Members / Alternates Present:

Councilor Susan McLain, Chair
Janet Matthews
John Lucini
Matt Korot
Heather Hansen
Brian Heiberg

Dean Kampfer
Mark Altenhofen
Mike Leichner
Jeff Murray
Anita Largent
Mike Miller

Loretta Pickerell
Ray Phelps
Rick Winterhalter
Dean Large
Paul Edwards

Guests and other Metro staff:

Easton Cross
Roy Brower
René Eyerly

Lee Barrett
Melissa Finn
Jan Whitworth

Jan O'Dell
Karen Blauer
Gina Cubbon

I. Call to Order and Announcements..... Susan McLain

- Councilor Susan McLain convened the meeting, and introduced Loretta Pickerell, who will be representing the Oregon DEQ, replacing Mary Sue Gilliland. The other members introduced themselves.
- The Councilor asked if there were any “loose ends” from the November meeting that anyone felt had not been addressed since the meeting; there were none voiced.
- Clackamas County’s Rick Winterhalter presented corrections to the minutes (involving the presentation by Legacy Health System’s Tom Badrick). With those corrections, he then moved to accept the minutes; Ray Phelps of WRI seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

II. Solid Waste & Recycling Director's Update Janet Matthews

- In Mike Hogle’s absence (having left town to celebrate his 50th birthday, it was noted), SW&R Program and Policy Manager Janet Matthews updated the group.
- Ms. Matthews handed out copies of the 2003 DEQ Materials Recovery Report for Metro, as referenced by David Allaway at the November meeting. The findings, she said, show that the Metro region reached a total recovery rate of just under 57%, “...inching ever closer to the 2005 62% recovery goal.” Waste generation was also up, unfortunately. The statewide report will be released on December 20.
- Ms. Matthews introduced René Eyerly, who recently joined the Department as a Senior Planner. “René is developing a spread sheet cost-projection model,” Ms. Matthews said, “...to help us get at the question of whether the 62% regional waste reduction goal is economically

attainable.” The model should be ready to present to SWAC in February, and is intended to help calculate the system cost of the region’s recovery goal..

- Recommendations to Council for a new policy to help increase dry waste recovery has been postponed. Staff are talking to stakeholders about how a mandatory MRFing program may affect recovery, system costs, system fee credits, and other issues.
- Continuing, Ms. Matthews told the group that a public hearing had been held December 2 regarding Columbia Environmental’s transfer station application. Council action was planned for December 16, following research into related rate impact issues and how the facility would reach recovery goals.
- Council is also looking at a dredge disposal policy; staff has presented recommendations for reducing the level of Metro fee and eliminating exemptions. The goal is to landfill only contaminated dredge. If Council gives the go-ahead to proceed, SWAC and stakeholders will be brought into the discussion, which involves several hundred tons of dredged material per year.
- Lastly, Ms. Matthews informed the Committee that the proposed budget for FY 2005-06 will be presented to the Council President on January 7. After reducing the Department’s budget by \$2.5 million in the previous two years, the proposed budget strives to “live within current resources for the program budget.” More information will be presented at the January SWAC meeting.

III. Let’s Talk Trash: Public Input for the RSWMP UpdateJan O’Dell with Karen Blauer

Jan O’Dell, of SW&R’s Community Relations, said she had recently presented an update at a Council Work Session. The report findings from the public forums was e-mailed to SWAC members; the full report (with full appendices) will be on Metro’s website within a week. “Specific comments in the appendices are where some of the flavor and texture [of the meetings] reside,” Ms. O’Dell noted.

The intent of this presentation was to go over highlights of the report and solicit comments from the Committee. Ms. O’Dell said she’d also like to hear about any particular areas the group felt should be emphasized in the draft Plan.

Ms. O’Dell gave a brief history of the talks, adding that the subject of disposal system planning had been set aside to be discussed with the Council and industry stakeholders. She emphasized that the project involves only residential recycling issues, not business recycling. Following the initial focus groups, presentations were made to several public groups, including four neighborhood associations and one local high school. The Let’s Talk Trash web page had 1,300 visitors, and 151 questionnaires were filled out.

The comments and knowledge levels were as varied as the attendees themselves; it was very illuminating, Ms. O’Dell commented: “There may be some indications here for our education and outreach in terms of what people think they know.”

Going over some highlights of the report, Ms. O’Dell noted that overall, people are fairly satisfied with current curbside services. There is a strong desire for improvements such as making information and sorting requirements consistent throughout the region. More types of plastics were mentioned repeatedly as a material the public would like to have picked up at the curb. “There was also a number of comments relating to larger, covered bins, and more frequent yard debris pick-up,” she said. More education / information was strongly supported, as well as a willingness to “..pay something more for some expanded level of service or education to improve recycling,

though it's a little hard to figure out how *much* more," Ms. O'Dell continued. To determine the level of price-sensitivity would take more research.

"Lastly and maybe most importantly, resource conservation above and beyond any other attribute for future services is what people really want to see emphasized," Ms. O'Dell told the Committee.

Regarding recycling, respondents weren't all that satisfied with the current offerings. More curbside options were requested; expanded types of plastics, even electronics. They preferred the idea of more - and regionally consistent - information and education over regulation. However, there was some support for a degree of government regulation to help increase recycling.

Ms. O'Dell said that the concept of sustainability or "zero waste" was not exactly common among the public. "The questionnaire seemed to indicate," she said, "that the more participants understood the broad meaning of sustainability, the less satisfied they were with current efforts." Many did feel that manufacturers should become more responsible for the end-of-life of their products. Insofar as "greening" the culture, there was wide agreement among respondents that government and schools should lead by example.

There were wide differences in satisfaction level between urban and rural residents, Ms. O'Dell pointed out. Rural residents are not feeling well-served at all - they say they can't co-mingle, recycling isn't picked up often enough, and cost of recycling is said to be higher for them.

The group briefly discussed the fact that the Let's Talk Trash meetings didn't attract the number of public participants originally hoped for. "I have to be honest," Councilor McLain commented, "...even though you could do a direct mailing to everybody's household, unless you told them you're going to put a landfill or a transfer station next to their house or in their neighborhood, we just simply haven't gotten gung-ho folks out to talk about recycling." There are specialists, industry people, and green clubs in high schools, but the general public doesn't get very enthusiastic one way or the other on the subject. The opportunity was provided, Ms. O'Dell said, and the website did get 1,300 hits, so there's no reason to be discouraged.

Ms. O'Dell asked the Committee for their thoughts regarding what points should receive focus in the draft RSWMP. Comments included:

- Mr. Phelps observed that, "With the thousands of people you reached out to, I'd say the results show that yeah, nothing's perfect, but you've got a pretty good system."
- Matt Korot of the City of Gresham said that he felt the report shows a general satisfaction with current practices. The populace is informed enough to want to do more, he said, but there's not a strong link shown between knowledge of the system and a willingness to pay more for expanded services. "That's an area that we, at the local level, need to explore more with our customers," he said.
- The public seems to want more outreach and education, Far West Fiber's Jeff Murray commented.

Councilor McLain brought up the issue of consistency, as mentioned by several constituents. "What do you think they mean?" she asked the group.

- John Lucini, SP Recycling, said that service levels vary from community to community, such as bins versus roll carts.
- Mr. Phelps added that some areas allow co-mingling and others don't.

- Mr. Murray said he's often asked by friends and neighbors what is and isn't allowed at the curb, and how it should be put out. That varies depending on where people live, so it's hard to answer.
- Local jurisdictions have different rates, Mr. Phelps said; suggesting "More engagement with local governments on improving service levels, and are people willing to pay for it."
- However, Mr. Lucini cautioned that before recycling services can be increased, "Make sure there's an infrastructure out there that can accommodate that." The public would certainly find it convenient to put toxics or electronics, etc. at the curbside, but what are the cost and other ramifications?
- Brian Heiberg, of Heiberg Garbage & Recycling, said that he's very impressed with Clackamas County's newsletter that explains what happens to material picked up at the curb. "It's been our experience with customers," he explained, "...that if you tell them to do something, they're less likely to do it. If you tell them why it has to be done such a way, or prepared such a way, they're more likely to want to participate and do it." He'd like to see that kind of model used regionally.
- Washington County has done something similar, Mr. Murray said, and it was very helpful and impressive.

Ms. O'Dell asked the Committee what they each would like to see emphasized in the Plan.

Comments:

- More education, Mr. Murray reiterated. Get the word out through various types of media, emphasizing elements that are common across the region. Be sure that there's been enough education regarding the current system before changing or adding components.
- Mr. Winterhalter added that education programs need to be regarded as a constant in order to get the message out. "There just should not be a bus driving around this city that does not have a recycling message [for instance]."
- Ms. Hansen said that, as a rate-payer, she'd be interested to know what kind of alternatives there are for bulky items. She'd be willing to pay more for more services, but is interested in knowing the options.

While acknowledging the desire for more education, Ms. Matthews noted that some respondents thought that more regulation was warranted to improve recycling efforts. "At what point, in a 10-year plan cycle, do you say we need to bump it up from education to regulation?" she asked.

In response to a question about what Metro's regulatory role would be, Councilor McLain said that Metro could, for instance, institute a landfill ban of certain materials, or saying that something (such as dry waste) has to be processed. "We put \$2 million plus into programs every year... how many Councils and how many years can Council budgets continue to put that education in if we don't have any way to say it's being successful?... As stewards of the public's dollar, we're trying to analyze where it's going and how successful it's been."

Mr. Murray said that people with whom he has spoken have said that they don't think the system has reached it's full potential from an outreach standpoint. When it does, if more is still needed, then regulation can be considered, but not until. "We haven't taken advantage of the system we have, yet, I don't think," he concluded.

Mr. Phelps said that he feels it's time to "sharpen up" what Council wants to recover. "I think we've gone from 'let's recycle' to 'we're going to be more aggressive in this particular segment of the waste stream.... You could maybe get to your 62% through C&D and be done with it," he ventured. Mandatory measures have to be the last choice.

A brief side discussion ensued regarding the disconnect between business and residential recycling. The behaviors don't seem to cross over from home to work as much as could be assumed. Mr. Lucini said that could be an area for further education: "From a paper-consumer standpoint, there's probably less onerous material in a collection program out of a business than there is in the home, because you don't have the food waste, etc."

Mr. Murray commented that his business has seen some consistency develop between business and residential recycling. Councilor McLain added that a very simple message to use for outreach could be something along the lines of "You can recycle at school, you can recycle at the office, you can recycle at home."

In closing this agenda item, Ms. Matthews had one more question for the Committee. Regarding the question of sustainable practices, "greening the system," how do issues such as manufacturer responsibility, become implemented? "[It's] a very big issue that goes beyond the bounds of local, regional, even state government to some degree. We can all, in concept, support manufacturer's taking responsibility, whether it's electronics or other products or packaging, but when you think about implementing the goals that are articulated in this Plan...what do you come up with for that particular topic?"

Mr. Phelps replied, "I think it's fairly simple. Metro Council represents about 40% of the state's population. If they adopted a resolution and sent it off to our congressional delegation, that would be an implementation. If they continued to do that, then it would eventually gain traction. In other words, take advantage of your 'bully pulpit.' ... I think the bully pulpit here is valuable, and we're not taking advantage of it."

Dean Large, substituting for Eric Merrill, added that in the 1970s, Oregon was unique for adopting mandatory biodegradation of six-pack holders for pop cans and bottles. Manufacturers weren't very happy with Oregon at the time, but "...it becomes a difficult thing to take an implementation, a program that says let's have sustainability, and we Oregonians believe that sustainability looks like this, and take it to the national level, or at least say that no one is going to deliver any product to Oregon that looks, smells, or tastes like this. I think that the manufacturers are astute enough to know that Oregon has a big enough marketplace, that they are going to pay attention to statements made by the governors, mayors, and Metro. I think you'll have some bully pulpit impact, but I'd be fearful of some specific sustainability concepts." He commented that people need to know more about the good things they're doing through reuse and recycling, "...rather than constantly hammer them."

Councilor McLain said that a big point made by the Natural Step classes is that "...you start with your own company; be a model."

Ms. Hansen agreed, saying that there are a lot of companies located here that could help lead the way. "A lot of Oregon products now nationally and internationally have a green image, and that would just further that," she said, suggesting Metro reach out to them more.

Mr. Korot agreed with Mr. Phelps assertion that the state needs to play a strong role. "But as the biggest region, we need to push that a long. On the Council level, push the Legislature, but also committing staff resources to build the data that helps the policy decisions go along." He said he personally supports Metro's role in this, such as Scott Klag's work with electronic waste issues. Metro Council needs to consider this type of program an important part of budget discussions. It also supplies a base for local governments to build on.

A few years ago, Mr. Murray said anecdotally, he heard a speech by then-Governor Kitzhaber regarding the concept of sustainability. The bottom line of that speech, which really got attendees attention, Mr. Murray said, was “Sustainability is good business. Sometimes it’s hard to do because you have to admit you haven’t been managing things very well, or you’ve been wasting dollars by wasting resources.” What that did for Far West Fibers was to make their business much more efficient.

To conclude, Ms. O’Dell said that respondents proved that people do want to recycle. One gentleman she met even recycles the backs of matchbooks. She said there would be extra copies of the report available for anyone who would like one.

IV. 2005 SWAC Workplan Janet Matthews

Councilor McLain informed the group that towards the end of each year, the Council President looks at Councilors’ workloads and decides who will be sitting on each committee, including SWAC. She has told Council President Bragdon that she would be happy to remain with the SWAC, and suggested that Councilor Park may be interested in the Rate Review Committee. No decisions have been made yet, however.

Regardless, the Councilor continued, she and Ms. Matthews have been looking ahead at potential topics for 2005. Ms. Matthews handed out tentative schedules, and said that the RSWMP update would be continuing through the first half of the year. An RSWMP topic will be at least a large part of every SWAC agenda through that first six months.

Ms. Matthews asked that Committee members’ give thought to any additional items for SWAC discussion. “I always appreciate it if members or alternates of this group have particular ideas that they’d like the staff here should develop, or they think another member could contribute.” Also, two SWAC meetings per month may be needed in February, March, and June 2005 to accommodate all the topics the Committee will be asked to discuss. (Schedule is tentative and flexible.) The second meeting in June would be a new member orientation.

Regarding “Useful Material Exemptions” listed as an April topic, a significant amount of tonnage is taken each year to landfills at no charge because it has been deemed “useful” by Metro Code. Many materials qualify at this time, and as Ms. Matthews said, “..it’s worth asking at this point, after a number of years of having that exemption – what sorts of materials are qualifying? What are they used for? Is there a limit that ought to be placed on this sort of exemption, and if so, what would that limit be?” Staff would like to take a broad look at the topic with Council and with the SWAC.

Ms. Matthews briefly explained other possible topics, and reiterated that she would like to hear from members regarding these or other ideas.

Councilor McLain mentioned that three topics she’s particularly interested in are e-waste, tire recycling, and business recycling assistance. She’ll be working on those issues whether or not she chairs the Committee next year., she said.

V. Other Business and Adjourn..... Susan McLain

With no other issues raised, Councilor McLain adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

**Next meeting:
Monday, January 24, 2005
Room 370 A/B**

Documents to be kept with the record of the meeting (copies available upon request):

- 2003 DEQ Materials Recovery Report for Metro
- Potential SWAC Workplan Items Through July 2005

gbc

M:\rem\od\projects\SWAC\Agenda_Minutes\Minutes\2004\SWAC121304min.DOC
Queue

POTENTIAL SWAC WORKPLAN ITEMS THROUGH JULY 2005

JANUARY

- Proposed budget
- Draft revisions to RSWMP direction
- Implementation of an organics recovery system

FEBRUARY (possibility of two meetings)

- Recovery goal examination/spreadsheet model
- Sustainability indicators for the solid waste system
- Proposed revisions to current RSWMP (toxicity and waste reduction, disposal system)

MARCH (possibility of two meetings)

- Annual waste reduction plan
- Regional education campaign: draft RFP review
- Dry waste recovery/Business recycling policy options
- MC/MS material recovery
- Other RSWMP-related issues

APRIL

- Budget issues
- Useful material exemptions
- Draft RSWMP update review

MAY

- Regional education campaign details
- Enhancement fees at solid waste facilities

JUNE (possibility of two meetings)

- Review of public comment on RSWMP draft/Metro responses
- New member orientation

JULY

- SWAC final review and vote on RSWMP

Your thoughts on additional items for regional SWAC discussion?