

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
April 3, 2008
Approved May 1, 2008

Attendance: Bonnie Norwood, BJ Tipton, Linda Bowerman, Al Vickers, and Remus Smith

Staff: Blair Pollock, Paul Spire, Wanda McCain, Nicole Ard and Harv Howard

Guest: Charlie Zimmerly and Rich and Joan Lieber

1. **Adoption of Minutes from February 7 SWAB meeting** Norwood moves to accept. Bowerman 2nd. Passes unanimously
2. **Board Member Comments** Vickers states that prior to board comments we will have citizen input as some citizens are here.

Pollock explains the genesis of the cardboard ban and that it's been effective in reducing cardboard from over 10% of non-residential waste to less than 3%. Residential cardboard was excluded from the ban, so when those [loads containing residential cardboard] show up at the landfill, they are not penalized for holding cardboard. The concept of a residential cardboard ban would be coupled to adding residential cardboard recycling collection at the curb.

Charlie Zimmerli from the Timberlyne neighborhood, states that I got involved in the corrugated cardboard [recycling] issue because of walking through the neighborhood and saw it sometimes next to the recycling bin and sometimes next to the trash bin. I talked to Blair about it and he stated that the Advisory Board is coming up with some thoughts of how to increase the landfill time.

I emailed several people about that including commissioners when I found out it would be coming before them. What I did in the mean time was to talk to folks. I talked to neighbors, they are all for it. I talked to staff people in the Town and County. I also talked to the recycling people at the curb and the trash collectors at the curb. Everyone I talked to was for having the cardboard in the recycling bins. What happens is that recycling doesn't take it because they don't have anywhere to put it. The trash folks have an option and they do take it because they don't want to have it blown over the neighborhood and have it get wet and rained on. Staff folk have said that they could get into fining but it would be hard to administer and of course this is Chapel Hill. The only way that it seems to go is with curbside pickup.

I understand that there is some increase in value with the cardboard in terms of recycling. Its expense is low, less than \$4.00 per household per year. And the fact that it would extend the landfill [life] and would give the County some time to deal more effectively with the transfer station is another point in its favor. In my view it really is an easy one to recommend that it be part of the budget for 2008-09. Staff, citizens, waste collectors, the SWAB and Commissioner Jacobs want it.

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Pollock states that the contractor for urban states that they would charge 20 cents more a household or \$2.40/year added to the collection fees. In the rural area where our trucks collect it is not obvious to us what the marginal cost of adding it to our volume would be. There is really no additional cost to us. We will have to enforce a cut down requirement and the trucks will probably pack out sooner so having to come back to the yard a little sooner there will be some marginal cost to us for labor and truck time.

Zimmerli asks if there would be an off set to the drop off sites.

Pollock states that that is still an open question based on our experience with mixed paper. We thought when we instituted mixed paper at the curb last year that there would be a decline in the use at the drop off sites and the tonnage and we've seen no slow down. In fact there has been an increase at the drop off site. The other side of that is since cardboard is the last thing that we do only at the drop off sites and not at the curb it may be the item that tips the balance.

Richard Leber states that we have been residents here since 1995 and [his family] have been involved in recycling our whole lives. It is good to take a historical perspective on things at times. We look back to 1995 one of the controversial things that happened was the elimination of twice-a-week pickup with backyard pickup. That was a tremendous issue in Chapel Hill and today it is a non-issue.

The addition of mixed paper was a tremendous asset to us personally because we would generate by far more mixed paper than we would the weight of our normal garbage and we had to go out of our way to drop it off at the centers.

Charlie and I have a common interest. Part of our interest is early morning walks and seeing the amount of cardboard at the houses on a weekly basis. I would go a little stronger in my recommendation and that is to consider the mandatory cardboard pickup and recommend to the Towns not to pickup cardboard in the trash pickup and to offer that either the convenience centers have some provision similar to what's done with major appliances which is in Chapel Hill to send in a check to have an appliance picked up. That sends a strong message to say this community is interested in recycling. I would go further to support pay-as-you-throw. At the time that the once a week pickup was enacted there was a lot of discussion around pay-as-you-throw. At the time it appeared there was a lot going on. Our elected officials and appointed staff need to do what is right and if pay-as-you-throw is a way to reinforce recycling then I support pay-as-you-throw. The need to reduce waste is especially important as we are not building a landfill in our County.

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Vickers states that the SWAB is interested in having cardboard pick up with recycling. The garbage issues are each Towns'. Therefore the mechanism for pay as you throw would be for the Town. Each Town has gone to automated pickup to save labor and cut from three staff to one in the garbage truck. In Carrboro they do not pick up cardboard if it's on the side of the cart. They do collect it if it's in the cart. This will of course demand an education effort.

Howard states that the Town [of Chapel Hill] wants residential cardboard [recycling] collection. Pay-as-you-throw is in our comprehensive plan and the strategic plan to implement that. We use the 68 gallon cart and that is the smallest in the state; it is a first step in moving towards pay as you throw. We have tested the automated trucks as well and in most neighborhoods they do well but we would need staff in other areas.

No Board Comments

3. **Presentation of Interim Solid Waste Plan** Pollock states that the attachments represent the bare bones of our interim plan. Page three at the bottom gives a snapshot of current activity regarding solid waste disposal. We measure how much isn't there. Our waste reduction rate has increased – we are making less garbage than before. We reduced from 1.36 tons per person to 0.711 tons per person. This includes waste landfilled out of county *originating* from Orange County.

We have added small quantity generators to our hazardous waste program and added the Sanitation Division of Public Works to our Department.

The last chapter of the plan describes our planning efforts. For the last three years we have engaged in a rigorous planning process where we've engaged with RRSI, a consulting firm which has helped us look at a bunch of different elements of how to reduce waste and increase recycling including:

- should we build a materials recovery facility or not,
- how we might change the nature of rural waste collection and change the number and type of the centers people use,
- if we should charge at the centers in lieu of having them be tax-supported,
- if we should reduce the number of unstaffed drop off sites to improve efficiency,
- the notion to franchise solid waste collection and recycling along with it as a way to bring recycling to the commercial sector, and
- the consideration of franchising rural solid waste collection.

Going forward looking at the last page of the memo there is a table that lists the most pertinent things in terms of the future planning efforts that you will be facing as part of the work group. We plan to submit some version of this interim solid waste management plan with not a clearly defined timeline; we do know that these are the

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elements that will have to be part of the plan. In terms of tonight's discussion I ask that you contemplate three things –

- Do you have any comments, questions or criticisms of the over all interim plan?
- Secondly, in terms of the actions that will be facing the advisory board or the work group, I tried to define where action is either pending or current work is required and which things you think the work group should attack, which should not be attacked, and what should be added or deferred and not made part of this plan.
- Third whether you all wish to make a recommendation to the BOCC about this particular interim plan.

What we are looking at, based on the December memo to the Board of Commissioners, is the idea that if you choose to adopt the interim plan, it would go to the BOCC asking to allow for the SWAB to call a public meeting that is required as part of the plan after that we gather citizen input and deliver to each of the Town boards for feedback. With that compiled plan it would go back to the Commissioners. We would get direction on how to go forward.

Tipton points out a problem with the flow of the document agenda item numbering.

Vickers clarifies that the staff request is for the SWAB to host the public meeting on the plan and that we have enough time to get it on the agenda.

Howard states that on page 35 there is a discussion of franchise and it seemed from the Work Group meeting, there was a consensus that Chapel Hill businesses and others liked what we're doing right now and there was little interest in franchise now.

Vickers states that the report seemed to show that overall it seemed very much like a franchise already for the most part in the incorporated areas and there was no interest in County-wide commercial waste franchise.

Pollock notes that there will be a detailed report on community-wide commercial recycling study.

Norwood states that the 61% is only addressed once on page 28 and it should be mentioned more. [NOTE: it is in the executive summary to the plan at the beginning].

Pollock states that in Appendix E the Goal sheet there is detailed sheet, but we can put that up front.

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Tipton states that the recyclables processing there was a cell with a recommendation to move forward on that.

Pollock notes that the short term plan shows more commingling and the labor saved from not processing was to be devoted to collecting more recyclables.

Tipton then notes that the next thing is saying the [issue of] rural residential is still out there for discussion. The next is the drop off centers [which] are still out for discussion. The commercial/non-residential waste and recycling collection is that county, city, is it waste and recycling? I'm not clear on that one.

Pollock states that it incorporated all the governments' activities and the private activities, so trying to summarize and put it in one cell in a table limited that amount we could detail. At the time this memo went out, what we were trying to convey was those were the pieces that were being worked on last week. That could become part of action pending in the sense that it was clear in our next communication with the work group we will define the waste part, as there seemed to be a consensus among the work group to let commercial garbage continue to be collected as it is now. [This would] separate out the part about recycling and provide essentially an option that was going to be a publicly financed and operated recycling program but also leave some sub options in there [about how this could be practically done]. For example, now most businesses have cardboard recycling dumpsters but markets have changed enough so most paper could also be put in there. Should a sub option be to look at that as a sub option for recycling or should the County take it over or franchise that element in what would otherwise be a publicly controlled or operated

Tipton states that I would recommend that the waste part should be separate from the recycling part, as decisions have been made on waste.

Consensus is achieved on this by SWAB.

Vickers notes there seems to be no cost savings for franchising commercial waste, but possibly for residential or commercial rural waste.

Pollock states that it is fair to state where the work is and isn't in the document going forward. Bear in mind this memo was prior to making that decision. We will separate the decision on commercial, show there is not a lot of potential savings and the recycling piece will have some further analysis on commercial. Action is needed on rural residential collection that is integrally related to the option of charging at the convenience centers. Without a charge at the centers or prepaid collection like recycling there is no good price savings likely from franchise.

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Smith asks what is needed to send this to the Board of Commissioners in terms of a resolution/motion from the SWAB.

Pollock replies we need a motion from the SWAB stating with the changes we have described we'd like to adopt the interim plan and move it for a public meeting and as described in the December memo, then go to the three boards.

Smith states that he would like to make such a motion.

Tipton asks to emphasize how the rural waste collection franchise has to be integrated with the operation of the convenience centers and acceleration of rural curbside recycling expansion.

Pollock reiterates the changes: separate commercial waste and recycling, indicate that urban commercial waste collection is satisfactory as is, commercial waste franchise is not going forward, a stronger and earlier emphasis on the goal, accelerating rural curbside recycling, and integrating it with residential waste collection and convenience center operation.

There is a general discussion about carts v. bins and agreed to delay that decision for a future plan, going to single-stream is implied by going to carts. Now paper goes one way and containers another; we would lose some of the \$500,000 income we now get from paper and it's a big financial decision as fiber is worth so much. If we keep the commercial cardboard separate, we're effectively three streams for now.

Norwood 2nd

Votes, passes unanimously.

- 4. Preliminary Budget Presentation** Pollock states that highlights of the budget expansions are no locally generated tip fee increases in either solid waste, construction waste or the 3-R Fee. The state is going to purpose a \$2/ton solid waste tax that will apply to everything that comes across the scales [to be buried]. We will have the highest tipping fee in the region.

One of the things we are looking at budgetarily is the commingling of recyclables. There are three parts to that one is for the request for a loader, other hardware, and the last is renovations to our recycling processing area to accommodate the commingling,

Corrugated cardboard at the curb will be another area that will cost over \$40,000 for the urban area. It will not be reflected in a 3-R Fee increase for FY2008-09.

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There is extra money in the budget for more CRTs and TVs - if we ban them we expect to see more of them. The county has acquired land for a new Hwy 57 site in the Schley Rd. community. We have money in the budget for design and permitting, but not construction next year. It will be a super center with compactors that you can drop your waste down into.

On the staff level we are looking to get another mechanic to help with repairs on the sanitation trucks and a new staff to help with the different enforcement duties with the regulated recycled materials ordinance we are trying to enforce on the commercial sector.

We are also looking at adding big rigid plastics like buckets, pools and “Big Wheels” at the drop off sites. We would bale those and use a more robust baler. The sites are constrained but we’ll try to work in another container.

Tipton asks about staffing to support the programs.

Pollock states that the only new staffing that could be considered as support for the programs is the person to be the additional enforcement officer.

Spire adds that the commingling will add more labor availability by eliminating labor from processing. That is our ‘new labor’

Vickers asks on the status of shipping the mixed recyclables, are the BOCC on board at this point?

Spire notes that they have approved it conceptually but they have not approved it in the budget.

Pollock states that they are there conceptually but haven't approved the budget details. It includes a rubber tire loader and a walking floor trailer, and we will lease a tractor. These will be considerable expenditures we can absorb in our current capital budget. We are not aware of any objections and hope to present details at their May 1 meeting.

Norwood states that sheds at the sites need some extended roofing for when it rains and the guys can stand outside and watch what's going on instead of having to be in the building when it rains. Also who is going to pay for the compactor?

Spire states that it is coming out of the operations budget at the landfill. It is borrowed money that will be paid back over time. The income that is anticipated to be generated through the extra compaction of waste will pay for the machine.

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5. Solid Waste Management Plan Work Group Process – debrief and next steps

Previously discussed. Pollock state that the specific next step is going to engage in a fairly detailed cost and operation study of commercial recycling.

6. Programs/Services Update

Changes in C&D Landfill Rules Enforcement Pollock states that last month we got a visit from the State inspector who stated that sometimes construction waste isn't construction waste. The difference she stated was a 2 X 4 in the shed and the 2 X 4 that held the shed up are not the same. Those in the shed must go into the MSW and those that hold up the shed go in C&D. She also stated that carpet is not C&D but MSW. We now take in about 16,000 tons of C&D a year, about half of which will shift to the MSW lined landfill and eat up our space savings. We now get 8,000 new tons to the MSW landfill that will cost more to bury. This reduces our capacity an estimated five months. It is a statewide ruling. The only thing we can do is react.

Solid Waste Operation Center Pollock states that we broke ground and the rain came.

Landfill Leachate Sewer Project Spire states that it is moving along. The main holdup was getting an easement from one of the property owners. They have agreed in principle to the easement. The County attorney is currently producing the easement document. Once it is complete it will be signed and we can go out for bid. We are anticipating this will be constructed in the summer and be on line in late August.

Orange County Comprehensive Plan. Pollock states that the County is holding an open house today and then the 9th and 26th {actually the 23rd} they are having public meetings about it. You have amply commented about the solid waste issues.

Landfill Gas Recovery Pollock states that we are still in negotiation with the University with this. It looks like the University wants to build a landfill gas recovery facility of some kind. The initial phase of flaring the gas may go forward in 2010. Building a turbine to make electricity from combusting the gas for Carolina North would be 2011. Within 30 days they plan to hammer out the bones of the agreement and move forward with actual documents and a final contract.

Spire notes that the development will be within Town limits and therefore, due to buildings being constructed, this will have to go through the Town's planning process which is an eight to ten month permitting process. The concept is favorable to the County with money paid out and paid back including potential revenue from the carbon credits. UNC wants to begin offsetting carbon from Carolina North by 2012.

Extending Landfill Capacity/Landfill Compactor Recommendation Pollock states that the compactor passed and we think that space-wise we will break even. By adding

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corrugated cardboard and big rigid plastics we hope to gain one to two months from that.

BOCC Request for Technology Assessment of Landfill Alternatives Pollock states that it is still in the preliminary scope of work. [Olver will be doing the work. It will not be bid out.]

Other Spire states that there is a public hearing tonight on the transfer station in Hillsborough. There will be another one on the 10th. This is to discuss the technical criteria and the site-specific/community criteria. After the meetings we will be reporting back to the Commissioners. At that time they may adjust their criteria to reflect the citizens' input.

Pollock states that Orange County won the best in the Carolina's hazardous waste program. We were awarded that at the CRA annual meeting.

7. **Other Business** Norwood asks what will happen with the compactor when the landfill closes.

Spire states that it will be sold.

Smith moves to adjourn.

Adjourn 8:40pm

Next meeting May 1, 2008
Government Services, Hillsborough