

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
December 8, 2010
Approved January 12, 2011

Attendance: Jan Sassaman, Linda Bowerman, Remus Smith, Steve Yuhasz and Al Vickers

Staff: Gayle Wilson, Willie Best, Blair Pollock, Nicole Ard, Cody Marshall, Jane Cousins and Wanda McCain

1. Opening and Welcome

2. Adoption of Minutes from November 8 SWAB meeting Vickers moves to accept. Smith 2nd. Passes unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period - None

4. SWAB 2011 Annual Work Plan Sassaman states this was given out at the last meeting. After you all's input the changes were made. This is the document that has been forwarded to the BOCC.

5. Solid Waste Authority – Ideas for Obtaining Additional Information Wilson states that several people have expressed interest in knowing more about authorities after the presentation (by Kara Millonzi) from the School of Government. I didn't know if we wanted to pursue additional information or wait until the Board and the Towns decided something. There are two solid waste authorities in North Carolina both in the eastern part of the state. Coastal Regional Management Authority is a three county authority -- Craven, Carteret, [and] Pamlico. They have a landfill and at least one transfer station. The other is the Albemarle Regional Solid Waste Management Authority that operates three transfer stations and is a seven county authority – Dare, Currituck, Perquimans, Chowan, Gates, Tyrrell, and Hyde.

Also about three weeks ago a group of department heads and managers went to Albemarle County, VA and they have a solid waste authority called the Rivanna Solid Waste Authority. They have a seven-member board of directors. They operate a C&D landfill, five recycling centers, convenience centers that accept garbage, and a transfer station. Going forward, if it is decided to pursue [this as an] organizational issue we could go to some of these people and have someone come in to talk to us.

6. Programs/Service Update

a. *November 18 BOCC Solid Waste Work Session* Wilson states that the November 18th BOCC work session where one of the key agenda items was solid waste issues, in particular the discussion of the interlocal agreement and the presentation of the solid waste Work Group's recommendation on solid waste convenience centers. The action that you all took on the recommendation at your November meeting was presented to them in a letter from Jan. There was a good discussion and the BOCC agreed that the Chair of the Commissioners would send a letter to each of the mayors requesting their interest in forming some group, or other cooperative situation, to talk about where to

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
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go from here. The commissioners were persuaded that this was a topic that should be discussed above the SWAB level both as it relates to what to do when the landfill closes and any on going long-term relationship.

The letter went out from the chair to the mayors dated December 1st and requested some response by mid February.

Yuhasz states that the discussion covered the need for a new interlocal agreement. There was a general agreement that that was the direction we needed to go. It is now up to the municipalities to respond with their interest and I think we'll move in whatever direction seems appropriate to their response.

Wilson states that the work group's recommendation on convenience centers was also presented. It seemed to have been received reasonably well. There was a good discussion. In gathering inferences from the discussion it appeared that they generally accepted the notion of an annual household fee approach. They leaned toward the tiered approach where there may be a different cost for municipalities opposed to the rural folks. They seemed to understand what we were requesting and why with regards to modernization of the convenience centers and the issue of the phased construction. They seemed to understand and well received the expanded hours and days. They didn't seem to be ready to embrace the notion of going cold turkey from general fund financing of convenience centers operations to household fee but they seemed to think that maybe it was worth considering shifting part of the funding to a household fee and the other part continue to be funded by the general fund. Staff will be meeting with the county manager tomorrow to talk about the follow up from that meeting.

Yuhasz states that there was some concern about going entirely to a fee-based revenue but I think we will get there. It will be a transition.

Sassaman states that the BOCC seemed a lot more engaged with the solid waste issues and more knowledgeable than prior years.

b. *Code of Ethics for Advisory Board Members* Wilson states that you all have received the Code of Ethics for the Board of County Commissioners. The county attorney recommended that these be distributed to all the boards and commissions with the request to comply with the spirit of the code and he highlighted Sections 2 and 4 as ones of particular interest.

You may want to consider since this is an unique type of board to have staff pull out Sections 2 and 4 reword it to make it appropriate and relevant to the SWAB and bring it back to adopt as your own code of ethics.

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
December 8, 2010
Approved January 12, 2011

Smith states that that would be a good idea.

Bowerman agrees. Is there a problem that brought this about?

Yuhasz states that there are no problems on the local level. There were some problems on the state level that motivated the State to require this.

Vickers agrees.

Sassaman asks Gayle to do that and bring it back in January.

c. Solid Waste Management Plan 3-Year Update – Status Pollock states that Monday night the BOCC adopted the solid waste management plan for 2009. We are ready to go forward with the 2012 plan update. From a substantive standpoint it does enable us to come into compliance with the [state] plan and get at the small but significant next year pot of money to support the electronics recycling program. There is also a considerable increase in the amount of solid waste grant money and we have a couple of projects that will be grant worthy. Orange County Voice mentioned they felt like we are not going the direction with the convenience centers that they think we should go. The Commissioners had some good questions.

Wilson states that this does sort of beg the question - is the Solid Waste Plan Work Group to continue work or will the SWAB do the next version?

Pollock states that there will be some moderately heavy lifting with respect to the convenience centers and to whatever involvement you all have with other aspects of the plan unfolding. It will be pushed by the closing of the landfill, what we will have to do financially to the extent that the Board wants to be involved in decisions around single stream and other commercial recycling that might engender re-looking at the 3-R fee. If this board decides it wants to take it on it will be a significant work task.

Yuhasz states that if the elected officials participation on this board could be broadened, that would take the place of the Work Group. That may be a direction to head in. There again it does depend on what direction we go in with the new interlocal agreement whether or not the 2012 plan will include all the county's waste.

Wilson states that going through the process that resulted in the current agreement it is difficult to envision a process less than a year long to come up with a new interlocal agreement. It could end quicker if they decide not to continue to partner for the long term. But if there is a long-term cooperation and partnership agreement it will take a while to work out all the nuances and kinks even if there is general agreement. So I don't know that we have the luxury of waiting until that plays itself out to start working on the plan. We would have to get going next summer.

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
December 8, 2010
Approved January 12, 2011

One of the things you all could be thinking about is what issues are significant enough to address. Are we going to get down in the trenches and figure out a deliberate way to get to the 61% rather than the meandering house of cards we are building? That is moving us in that direction, but sometimes you feel like it is based on good intentions rather than a plan. Also with the landfill closing we will have to focus on becoming as efficient as possible. Is there any interest at all in discussing garbage collection? Do any of the municipalities want to look cooperatively at waste collection across jurisdictional boundaries? Is there interest in expanding organics management and food waste composting? It came up with the solid waste plan presentations for Carrboro and Chapel Hill. It has come up in the past until a site had to be chosen. It's fine in the abstract but when you tell them you need thirty acres, they stop talking. If the BOCC is interested in doing anything substantive with the convenience centers that will be a fairly big occupation of the staff for a few months and likewise for single stream recycling. We need to figure out what are going to be the subjects of the next plan. Will we talk for three years then focus on just one topic or maybe we can be more deliberate.

Sassaman asks Blair when will you start putting pencil to paper.

Pollock states that the kind of direction we get on the convenience centers and some of the financing and planning issues around that will help galvanize some of the future interest and if so, that becomes a cornerstone of work and that pushes the planning work until the summer at the soonest. Some of the questions about organics and other topics would help us shape what you think. The SWAB could certainly advise on the 'laundry list on pages 13 and 14. Is that a springboard for discussion? There is a lot of opportunity for this board to create some direction.

Sassaman asks is it unreasonable to expect that perhaps we can sit down and come up with a plan for the plan. It might be possible for the SWAB to be the heavy water carrier for the plan and not have the elected officials and the municipal staffs come in as frequently as they were early on in the planning for the current plan.

Pollock states that it is a good idea for us to prepare a plan for the plan.

Yuhasz states that particularly if you can identify the plan decision points that will need to be made by or agreed to by the elected officials as soon as possible.

Sassaman adds and by the SWAB, what is the way we need to give you direction.

Pollock states that there are the two cornerstones [of] the waste reduction element, what's going to drive that forward in the context what sort of systematic approach do you want to take to get the tough [last] 5% or 6% and the other thing looming is the

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
December 8, 2010
Approved January 12, 2011

landfill. Do we want the 2012 submittal to point in a strong direction about our post landfill future? This is a great opportunity for us to reengage in the wake of the transfer station debacle.

Sassaman states that there are several issues. The issue of finances and how we are going to finance the monster. What are we going to do with the landfill? What are we going to do with the solid waste? How do we achieve the 61% goal?

Pollock states that in doing the arithmetic a percent [of waste reduction] is about 1400 tons that has to shift out of the garbage.

Wilson states that generally staff has been looking at it as if and when we go single stream we ought to pick up a couple thousand tons from that because typically going to single stream gives a bump. Looking at one of the reasons we wanted to focus on the convenience centers even prior to the budgetary problems was try to make room to add some new materials and create new opportunities at convenience centers. Recycling is still very much a matter of convenience, so if it's not important enough for them to load it into their vehicle and take it to the convenience centers but if you come to their driveway, they will put it out. There is the commercial sector. There was a little bump with the ABC law where all the restaurants and bars had to recycle their containers. There are still some areas out there such as the hospitality industry and the schools could do better. We sort of know where almost enough of it is to get there, but can we formulate that into a plan that is acceptable to the public.

Bowerman states that on the 61% goal if people reduce what they throw away by 3% how does that factor in figuring this out.

Wilson replies significantly.

Pollock states that North Carolina measures what is not there.

Sassaman asks if there is data on the University student population particularly those that are living off campus. Do we know how good they are?

Wilson states that they are good at creating waste.

Marshall states that when the students came back in September Blair and I talked about the cardboard recycling for off-campus housing because it is terrible. The County, Town of Chapel Hill and the University have not reached students in off campus housing very effectively with messages about how to recycle or manage solid waste. That is something that we need to think about because they are coming from all over the country and they all recycle differently. The way we have tried to reach them is going door to door. It is difficult to keep a hold of it because the students

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
December 8, 2010
Approved January 12, 2011

change from year to year. There is no good data that captures the off campus population.

Sassaman asks about the apartment complexes.

Marshall states that we capture the apartment recycling well and have a grasp of the big problem areas. We have the multi-family data and we could find out which apartments are mainly students.

Yuhasz states that regarding finding a place to do composting does that mean that you believe that the Commissioners' statement that there will be no more solid waste activity in the Eubanks area would include using some of that property for composting?

Wilson replies no, there is not a lot of property there to use. Depending on the type of composting done and the amount of materials a little larger area would be needed than we have here. Assuming the Green Tract is off limits, there is a very small amount of useable land left.

d. *Landfill Gas Project Construction – Status* Wilson states that construction is underway. The contractor is on site and seaming together pipe. They are doing all the preparations necessary and working towards completion of this phase of the project around April or May. That phase does not include the pipeline from here to the University property on Homestead.

Pollock asks what is the expected income to the county. I know that it has been expected to be relatively small.

Wilson states that once the full project is built and operating the estimated annual income would be approximately \$130,000 to \$140,000. We have incurred some ongoing expenses with a consultant to make sure the University stays compliant with the contract and to verify that we are getting paid and also because of our interaction with our ongoing landfill operation with the landfill gas infrastructure it is causing us not to be able to mow the landfill with a bush hog anymore and will need to weed-eat out around the wells about 10 feet to protect them from the equipment. That just means that we will not be putting all that money in the bank but we will be making money.

Sassaman states that there is also the non-financial benefit of reducing odors.

Wilson states that we hope that there will be a noticeable impact. We've been reluctant to guarantee that because anything can happen. It also can have a positive impact on the ground water.

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
December 8, 2010
Approved January 12, 2011

Yuhasz states that the income estimate is for once the University starts burning the gas to actually generate power.

Wilson states that once phase 1 is complete – the construction of the gas recovery system on the two landfills and the centralized flare on landfill property – we start getting paid, but that is more in the \$40,000/year range. Once the pipeline is built and the gas powering the generator and generates electricity it jumps to the higher amount.

Yuhasz states that the University will not build the generating facility until they are well on their way with Carolina North, I would think.

Wilson states that I think they plan on moving deliberately. Initially they wanted to use the tower to power Carolina North but Carolina North development was so uncertain the way it is now the gas is going to be so tight with the generation unit then it is going to be put on the grid. Once that starts going on the grid our income jumps up.

e. *Single Stream Curbside Collection Planning* Wilson states that in recent conversation with the county manager, he has indicated that he was like for us to move with the intention of trying to implement single-stream curbside in calendar 2012. We would have probably been moving on that but there have been staffing shortages and freezes but the manager has approved filling one of the key positions. Once we get some competent body in that position that is going to be something that we start planning and focusing on. We hope to implement that sometime by mid-2012.

That will involve bidding for a private contractor to pickup curbside. The collection cost will be less than picking up dual-stream because it is more efficient to collect without the separation. It will allow for more households in a day. There will be a comprehensive re-routing which takes some time. There is the issue more in the rural areas about what if any rollcarts will be provided in the unincorporated areas. We will have to obtain rollcarts and distribute those. Do a massive educational campaign. There is some new equipment involved. The trucks we have now are for curb-sort. For single-stream our trucks could be used, but we have held off replacing them waiting on single-stream. What we'll want are trucks that cycle much quicker, that are made for single-stream to gain all the advantages and efficiencies single-stream gives. Implementing with the trucks we have now will get us only part of the efficiencies.

There is also the decision to go single-stream on the commercial routes, multi-family and the issue hanging on the convenience centers. It is a good hard year of planning.

Smith asks in single-stream what sort of things don't you want to pickup.

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
December 8, 2010
Approved January 12, 2011

Wilson replies it will pickup everything we pickup now. It's just that it can all go in one bin.

Smith asks what handicap items do we pickup now that might be detrimental to single-stream.

Wilson replies we will be able to pickup everything we pickup now. In rollcarts it will be easier because you don't have to worry about the spillage on the ground bundling cardboard or things blowing around.

Smith states that I was more concerned about cardboard in single-stream and if it would be allowed.

f. *Other* Wilson states that next week we will have the privilege of providing orientation for new county commissioner.

7. **Board Member Comments** Smith states that I ran into Bonnie Norwood the other day. We had a nice chat and wanted to wish all a Merry Christmas.

I pass by Cameron Park School frequently and I would like to suggest some method we could get the school systems to do better in their separation of their garbage. I see things going in the big cans that can be saved and used again.

Pollock states that I attended the Carolina Recycling Association construction waste meeting in the last day and a half. There is a huge amount of excitement out there with the horribly shrunken in construction waste stream at getting it more recycled. The biggest single buzz was around shingle recycling.

Vickers moves to adjourn.

Bowerman 2nd.

Adjourn 8:25pm

Next meeting: January 12, 2011