

Minutes – Regular Meeting  
Solid Waste Advisory Board  
February 5, 2009  
**Approved March 5, 2009**

Attendance: Jan Sassaman, Bonnie Norwood, Linda Bowerman, Al Vickers, Remus Smith, Doug Guild, and Michelle Grunwald

Staff: Gayle Wilson, Blair Pollock, Paul Spire, Harv Howard, Bob Sallach, Olver Inc., Ernie Parker, Olver Inc., and Wanda McCain

Guest: Orange County Voice – Bonnie Hauser, Susan Walser, and Tony Blake

1. **Opening, Welcome and Tour of New Administration Building** Sassaman suggest that the tour happen after the meeting.
2. **Adoption of Minutes from August 7 SWAB meeting** Norwood moves to accept. Vickers 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passes unanimously
3. **Board Member Comments** Sassaman states that the facility is really nice and something we can be proud of. There are a lot of re-use of materials, something that we in Orange County think is important.

Norwood requests that at the Eubanks Rd. site the sign on the dumpster closest to the office be moved from the side of it to the end.

4. **Transfer Station Site Search Update and Discussion** Wilson states that at the BOCC last meeting two decisions were made. One was in response to the proposed citizen advisory committee to be established around the location of whatever the decision of the transfer station would be. The eligibility for that would be expanded from those that lived within the general proximity to include those that lived in the Towns or anyone that had an interest in how that facility might be developed and operated. The charge was amended to also address the concern of citizens and the goal of minimizing the impact on citizens of the facility. A letter will be sent to the Towns informing them of the Boards decision to encourage people who live in the Towns to participate on the committee once a decision is made of where the site will be.

Sassaman asks if there are any details of charter of that committee in terms of size.

Wilson replies that there was a recommendation made based on a model used in Wake County that it not be highly structured but essentially an open advisory committee so that anyone that is interested could come and participate. It would have to have a chair and meet regularly.

The other thing that was decided at the meeting was commensurate with the evaluations on the two final candidate sites, both of which are on Hwy 54 West, that we would initiate another process that would include investigating alternative approaches, partnerships and methodologies for waste disposal in Orange County in

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consultation with the SWAB. The kinds of things that are being worked on are to re-review the alternate technology options that were looked at back in the Fall and also include the University in that.

Vickers asks if it has been made clear that the studies have nothing to do with the immediate transfer station issues, that they are all too long-range, ten years or more out.

Wilson states that it has been made clear in some fashion. The Board has asked for additional information and we're going to provide it. Part of the additional tasks are to complete development of the contingency plan to handle the waste in the event and increasing likelihood that the transfer station will not be ready by the time the landfill reaches capacity. We have been asked to evaluate the proposal from Orange County Voice and to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the proposal and our financials going forward and looking at all the options both public and private options. The hauling and disposal was always intended to be contracted out but the issue now is should there be a local transfer station at all or should a private transfer station be relied upon. If there is a local one should it be public or private? We will be looking at all those angles as well as cost and the implications of moving it in various directions.

We have also been asked to contact adjacent local governments to again see if there might be some partnering opportunities. There have been significant talks in the past with Alamance and Durham Counties and off and on with Chatham County including as recently as this week. Most of us understand that landfills are not going to be the ultimate destination for waste and at some point alternate technologies will have to be developed and most of those are going to have to involve partnerships and joint arrangements. Wake County may have enough to pursue things by themselves. Orange County does not have enough quantity to justify most of the technologies available. So we will look to Chatham and others to partner in the future not only in disposal of waste, joint transfer stations but joining together in private contracts to leverage better deals because you have more waste, and ultimately partner in some non-landfill disposal option that could take advantage of economies of scale. It will take local government involvement to get these technologies off the ground and financed. We will be establishing contact to see where they are now and the direction they're going and maintain continuing contact to take advantage of future opportunities. Hopefully in April we'll come back with a comprehensive analysis from speaking to various parties including the private companies in this region.

Board member Doug Guild states that he has some experience with plasma arc technology, I contacted a company in Washington State and they have some new systems being produced and coming out in the Spring that will deal with smaller quantities. I've given them the numbers we are looking at. They're running some

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costs on that this spring. That technology has gotten a bad name and it is expensive, but this company has been doing it for quite a while, they know what they are doing and have well-designed systems. I have seen them and what they produce.

Wilson asks if there is a by-product.

Guild replies that all kinds of things can be done with it. It is kind of like glass. It's inert and can be used for road bed, tiles. It's a slag.

Wilson asks about feedstock.

Guild replies it's MSW.

Wilson asks if Guild thinks that Orange County could be the location for a prototype.

Guild further mentions that Wilson said at the last meeting there was mention of a long list that the Revered [Campbell] had agreed to of how things got paid.

Wilson states that there is a list of agreed-to community amenities that resulted from a County/Rogers Rd. Enhancement Task Force, a list of about 20 community amenities which range from bus service, utilities, sidewalks, a community recreation area and a number of other things that the Task Force recommended to the Commissioners, but it hasn't been acted on yet. One or two Commissioners have raised it in recent meetings so they aware of it [the list]. For instance bus service, they're ½ mile from the bus garage but it doesn't run there.

Vickers states that Chapel Hill and Carrboro both pay for the buses, but not the County.

Wilson states that a number of things are still on the list going back to the Landfill Owners Group time period.

Guild states that it seems that if it appears to be reasonable and the economics are there it makes sense.

Sassaman states that the SWAB's recommendation that elevated the issue to put the waste transfer station at the Eubanks landfill contained stipulations that those things that the community needed to mitigate the affects of the solid waste operation be a part of that whole action and that was part of the resolution passed by the Board of Commissioners. Our recommendation included those improvements.

Wilson states that my interpretation of the question is that the community believes that they should obtain those amenities for what they have already endured and I

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don't think they would accept the transfer station in exchange for those amenities. A stipulation they had was to put the transfer station elsewhere.

Norwood states that part of the problem there is jurisdiction. The neighborhood is now split between Chapel Hill, Carrboro and the County.

Pollock notes the combination of other extraterritorial jurisdiction, rural buffer, OWASA services boundaries. Some of the community is served by sewer and some isn't.

Wilson states that since the Board has assigned some responsibility for the SWAB for helping to review and look at the information, there may be a need for additional meetings as we start producing some more analysis and work.

Sassaman states to Gayle that once we have finished discussing this, I'd like to invite Orange County Voice and anyone else in the audience to speak to this and then ask you to be a little more specific about what the SWAB's role will be as you see it or you think the BOCC might see it.

Vickers states that one of the issues from the Towns' point of view when looking at different options for transferring waste is each city will have a different financial impact depending on the final destination of their municipal waste (i.e. distance to the transfer station will matter differently to each of the three Towns and the County)

Sassaman states that there are other issues in addition to financial that are important. The issue of carbon footprint, impacts on road structures, effect on traffic quantity. Also what is important, whatever evaluation is done or the considerations made, incorporate how this will fit within the interlocal agreement. It should be recognized that solid waste is a complex system in Orange County; it not only involves waste collection and disposal but also recycling. Layered on top of that is the goal as a county to achieve 61% waste reduction.

Pollock asks Harv Howard of the Town of Chapel Hill as the opportunities to look at privatizing go forward, does the Town have any position they plan to put forward regarding what might happen if all the waste in the Town is privatized and out of your control if you will.

Howard states that solid waste collecting in Chapel Hill is not just going to someone's house and picking up the garbage. There are parties, events, dead animals, and a large recycling program. Anytime you look at privatizing a system you have to look at the entire aspect of community values. There is a cost for everything that you would bring in a private company to do. It's not just a hauling and collecting type of business. If something happens at 5pm in the afternoon, most private guys are gone.

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The job at Public Works is if the public demands something to happen we do it. Something that people look forward to is exemptions. There is an extremely high exemption rate in Chapel Hill. All those things are pro forma costs for a private company and they will give you a price to do all that stuff. The reason that Chapel Hill hasn't privatized collection and hauling is because they can't do it any cheaper than we do it. We look at it every year.

Sassaman states that there are some other things about your service. There is staff there that when there is a storm, things disappear. Trees that fall, etc. they're gone, cleanup is quick. Part of that is because there is a place for you to put the debris.

Howard states that calls come in from all over the State from municipalities that have gotten out of the business and want to know how to get back into it. It is an extremely difficult thing to do. If you sell your equipment, it's expensive to replace. Rules have changed, if it's franchised you can't just take it away, you have to pay them. It's complicated.

Bonnie Hauser, Orange County Voice asks isn't it so, that roughly half of the collection in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough is private including the private collector at UNC. Those are the numbers I've seen on solid waste.

Pollock states that in terms of out-source there is the question of Carrboro just made it open market versus the Town to compete dollar for dollar. UNC out-sourced the collection but kept control of where they send it. How much of it do public agencies still control that is hauled in a private truck? Hillsborough franchises but they control where it goes. Their franchisee has to abide by the County's and Towns' rules.

Hauser states many private companies are very interested in our waste. Being relatively new to the waste business, it is quite interesting. There is waste transfer station and there is waste-to-energy. Our group has been researching both. Back in December, when the County said lets look at the [Hwy] West 54 site and the decision had to be made quickly, if not the garbage would pile up. We came back stating that before moving too quickly maybe a vendor could be used. We started calling Durham Transfer Station run by Republic Allied, Waste Management and Waste Industries and they said they would take the garbage. They have the head room for 240 tons a day. They would take the garbage on an interim basis if your landfill runs out of capacity. So there is no rush if the County needed a little more time to find a site that is better. I don't want to get into if this is the right site or not.

In December when the Howell site came up and the estimate came from the County of \$5-\$7 million dollars to build a waste transfer station plus another \$2-\$3 million for the land that is \$7 - \$10 million to build it - no cost was provided to what it would cost to operate it. The vendors say \$1 - \$2 million to build a waste transfer station.

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We are not sure why ours is so much more expensive but believe part of the reason is that it is out in the rural county with no water and sewer and would need a lot of additional waste water capture designed into the facility.

Sallach states that hauling water is not what's intended. [What is intended is] to do wash down is to use a combination of wells on site. You'd certainly consider recycling technology for volume reduction. You might use a small reverse osmosis technology to recycle some waste water as car washes now do.

Susan Walser, Orange County Voice states that there are residents around there that can't use their wells because of contamination and they've dried out during the drought, such as farmers that rely on ground water for their animals. The transfer station could be competing for water from that same aquifer. We were told I thought it was by Olver, that water would be hauled in.

Sassaman states that the other issue was quantity. What is the waste a transfer station typically use in a day compared to a month?

Sallach unintelligible.

Sassaman asks of the monthly withdrawal of water to the nearest 1,000 or 10,000 gallons.

Hauser states that what we tried to do was bottom line. We took the numbers \$7-\$10 million to build compared to Waste Industries \$1million to \$2 million and because we didn't have the numbers, we took the best practices from web sites for all other operations, shift operation, equipment, and figured between a half million dollars and a million dollars (a year) to operate.

Wilson states it would depend on what else was being done. If it' also includes storm and yard debris, etc.

Hauser states that this would be just for the transfer station, nothing that is being done at the landfill. The equipment, maintenance of the equipment, hauling and whatever related to garbage, how many shifts would that be.

Wilson we plan to do one shift.

Hauser: Greensboro runs 6am to 6pm.

Wilson states that we are conducting an analysis on that now and will present that number [cost of operations].

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Hauser states that we started down this path to say what if had a little delay and needed to use a vendor while we built capacity. Now looking at a \$7 - \$10 million capital investment plus some amount of money, we use a half million to a million a year, to run it and over ten years because we were told it was an interim solution, not a long-term solution that comes out to \$50 - \$70 per ton. The vendors told us between \$40 and \$50 per ton to operate it.

Sassaman asks did the vendors specify what type of waste transfer station they would build. Would it be indoors, out doors, etc? When we make these comparisons it must be apples-to-apples. You can build a tin roof over a hole in the ground for less than \$5 million.

Hauser concurs. I thought at a SWAB meeting Olver said they could build a transfer station at Eubanks for \$250,000. I understand what you are saying. The crux of the question was since it is going to cost us this much money to build and operate it ourselves what would it cost us to use a vendor. That is where we came with the vendors came back and this was with no contract if I were to bring my garbage today on a per ton rate that it would be \$40 to \$50 per ton at their facilities. We actually threw in an extra eight to ten miles per ton because we think that the waste transfer stations might be further from the centroid than the Howell site.

Sassaman asks what is the assumption of how the waste is collected and delivered to the waste transfer station.

Hauser replies collected as-is but we assumed at first it would cost \$.75 per ton per mile in a six ton truck and \$.75 per ton per mile to haul the waste from a further distance if the vendor were further than the Howell property. The message here is not should be go to vendors although it could be. The real question is, before we build a waste transfer station out in the country on the way to nowhere, should we take even a few years to see if a regional solution makes sense for waste to energy, figure out where we want to go with that, and where ever that gets sited RTP, Durham, Chatham, next to the OWASA plant, shouldn't we make that decision first then decide where the waste transfer station would be if we needed one at all.

Sassaman asks how long will it take Orange County to develop and site a waste to energy facility.

Hauser states that assuming we have a regional waste to energy solution it would take three to five years to come up with a regional mix who are our partners and where to do it, but once we know where it is going to go and who we are going to do it with then we can decide on the waste transfer station. If a waste transfer station in an industrial center where there is water and sewer the timetable to site, permit and build is probably a year shorter than the one that we are building.

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Walser states that even if it takes ten years to build a waste to energy station, if the waste transfer station is sited in a location that is convenient to that area rather than 12 to 13 miles away from the centroid that makes a lot more sense. We want to plan more for the future.

Sassaman asks where do you think it would be likely that we would be able to site a regional waste-to-energy facility.

Hauser replies it depends on who we partner with.

Sassaman asks would you be willing to see one in Bingham Township.

Hauser replies probably not. Here is why. There is no garbage there. There is no trash concentration in Bingham Township. We think right now everything the vendors are telling us and everything that the EPA says these facilities should be sited in an industrial area, not in the rural area where there is no one to complain. One of the newer concepts is the Eco Industrial Park where if you had a waste-to-energy facility and recycling were co-located to take the residual ash and turn it into concrete, or whatever you want and because we are so sustainable co-locate a solar manufacturer and have other sustainable energy resources in the same place.

One of our favorite sites is out on I-85. It is zoned commercial industrial, there is hundreds of acres of land for sale, there is a train line that runs through it, it is on the bridge, a really interesting site.

Walser adds it's on the existing truck routes.

Sassaman asks how many miles is that from the centroid.

Hauser states that we have a question about the centroid. We are siting on the centroid right now. If I go one and a half miles down to I40 and 86, why is this the centroid why wouldn't Hwy86-I40 intersection be the centroid?

Wilson states that the Orange County Planning Department looked at the current residential array of where houses and business are now and then predict twenty years from now, based on land use patterns and projected growth patterns where the housing would be and the distribution of commercial areas which was plotted and became the center of waste generation or the waste centroid. They looked at the development nodes and it's an abstract mathematical kind of place but it's a point of reference.

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Walser states that the way the population is growing the centroid will probably move north.

Sassaman states that the only data to go on is not what people think and hope but what the County Planning Department came up with on a mathematical analysis. That is a geographical demographic technique. The population center of the US is near Kansas [actually central Missouri in 2000], regardless of how many actually live in that place. That is the technique that was used.

Hauser notes that it's coincidental with the landfill.

Pollock notes that the siting in 1972 was not based on that criterion.

Vickers states that the centroid is accurate but not precise.

Hauser states that the reason I ask that is I drove from the landfill to the Howell site which is 11 ½ miles. If I drive 1 ½ miles from here to Hwy 86 and I40 and then 12 miles up to I85 the EPA says the waste transfer station should be 15 – 20 miles from the waste centroid. When I got in my car and drove 13 miles to the centroid or the 12 miles from the Hwy 86 and I40 to the I85 site it was faster. It may be an extra mile but it was faster and I was under the impression in terms of hauling cost driver time is as important as mileage. I would think that an additional highway mile might be cheaper than driving down a country road for a mile less. If we have that subtle a difference, and I'm not picking sites, but for us to be resting our future on a site that's based on so subtle a point.

Walser states that to answer your question about if Bingham Township would be OK for a waste-to-energy station, if there were an industrial park there I would say bring it on. The area out there is farming large land acreage. There are farmer owners there that have had land in their families for 250 years; a lot of them have had land taken because of Cane Creek. It just doesn't make sense to change the character of that area when there are other areas of the county that are better suited.

Sassaman states that any discussion of whether the waste transfer station should or should not be located in Bingham Township is probably moot because it is not our decision. We have gone on record with what we wanted to see. That is a decision that was made by the Board of Commissioners. The issue of waste-to-energy and priorities is another issue. What I'm trying to get to is how we deal with garbage. We have a situation where we will have to do something different in two years. We have to do something with the garbage responsibly, ethically, and environmentally in all phases of what we do with it, including recycling. We have a commitment to the municipalities. We have an interlocal agreement and my understanding of that is that the County is obligated to provide an in-county disposal site to the Towns.

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Wilson states that the County is responsible for providing a disposal opportunity, a facility for its partners. In turn, its partners have pledged the waste that they collect will be delivered to that facility.

Sassaman asks if it has to be in Orange County.

Wilson replies he doesn't recall if it has to be in Orange County or not but thinks it was the implication.

Spire states that it is part of the State law that the county is responsible for the disposal of the waste.

Howard notes that the intent of the law is that the County will provide disposal facilities.

Wilson notes it doesn't preclude building it and having a private company run it.

Hauser states that when the interlocal agreement was made we were operating a landfill and when we were making money operating a landfill. All the economics have changed. It's not like we have a facility and we just have to operate it we now have to spend another \$10 million to build a new facility plus we have to operate it. Since life has changed, somehow the nature of the agreement has to change.

Wilson states that the agreement speaks to a transfer station as well. It assumes a transfer station.

Hauser states that now we have on the table some numbers that on a ten year assumption it will cost \$50 - \$70 per ton to operate our waste transfer station. The vendors will do it cheaper. The question is do we go ahead build this interim thing or should we first look at the vendors and let the vendors handle it for us until we the County decides where we want to go long-term. My guess is make our decision about waste-to-energy we will realize that Bingham Township is not the place for a waste transfer station.

Sassaman says I agree that Bingham is not the place for a waste-to-energy facility.

Hauser clarifies she means it is not the place for a transfer station

Spire notes that Chatham and Orange looked at a jointly owned facility in Bingham in the past fifteen years.

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Spire asks Harv what it would cost one way to drive the truck the 23 miles to one of the [private] facilities. The private station on Globe Road by RTP doesn't even have a scalehouse, it's open front, three bay.

Howard states that the garbage trucks only get about three miles per gallon. I can't even buy fuel for the truck.

Spire states that the \$40 tip fee is just to dump it on the floor. You have to get it there. If you go to your spot, it's 23 or 25 miles.

Norwood states that with our putting a transfer station in means we control it. If you bring private vendors in we have no control. We can't dictate to them anything about operational hours, number of trucks. If we build it, we will have the control over what it looks like and to some degree the affects it has on who ever is close to it. With a private contractor we have no say; within certain guidelines they will do what they want.

Hauser states that we are not proposing that we hire a vendor to build a transfer station. We are proposing that until we decide where we are going with waste-to-energy that we use one of the existing vendor facilities in Durham or Raleigh for the time being, even if it is a couple of bucks more per ton, although I think it is going to be cheaper once we figure out what it will cost to build and operate our own.

Sassaman asks how long is the "time being".

Hauser asks how long will it take us to decide what we want to do with waste-to-energy. Not to do it but to decide what we are going to do.

Sassaman replies at the rate we are going?

Wilson states that to give you a point of reference. I was on a panel with a very high ranking legislator back in 1992 and presentations were being made and the question that came up for each of us was "What would we be doing with our waste 20 years from now?" I was the last one and many were saying there wouldn't be landfills, there will be technology and this and that. I stated that we would be relying on landfills easily 20 years from now and probably for another 30 or 40 years. We are almost 20 years down the road and there hasn't been one waste-to-energy or high technology processing facility built in North Carolina in all that time. The only incinerator in the State has had private companies trying to put them out of business since they opened in the mid eighties.

Hauser states that Mr. Gershman gave a fine presentation to the County saying something about 150 incinerators that operated 20 years ago 60 of them have been

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shut down the rest of them are clean. They classify as renewable energy resources. North Carolina does not classify waste-to-energy as a renewable resource but they do classify incinerated poultry manure as a renewable resource. North Carolina is still condemning land for landfills. Those days are over for sure in North Carolina.

Pollock asks Bonnie did one of the privates say they can accept another 240 tons a day no problem.

Hauser replies they all said that.

Pollock clarifies that that includes the City of Durham facility.

Hauser states that they said they might have to add a staff person.

Pollock states that but under their current operation, my understanding from talking to them a month ago there was at least an hour of queuing time with the current waste loads. It's hard to know the scenario that they envision.

Wilson states that to follow up with the statement about Durham, I met with the Assistant City Manager and the Solid Waste Staff of Durham about two years ago and indicated at the time they would be glad to take our waste but did not have the capacity to take the full amount that is generated in Orange County. Part of what we are seeing is the way it works is a private company is in the business to make money will say 'yes' to any request.

Hauser states that this is not a sole-source vendor bid. There are three vendors that want to keep their business. If we don't like it they all have agreed to service levels contracts with us. If we don't like them we fire them and bring the next one in. If they don't have the capacity today and if they have a three-year contract with us they will build the capacity we need. I don't see the problem with that. I've heard us say that we can control the routing for example and there are trucks up and down Rogers Rd. every day so we are not quite as successful controlling the routing as we claim.

Wilson replies that those are private trucks. We have no control of those as we have no control of anyone we would not contract with.

Spire states that everything in the City of Durham goes through one hole. When it rains everything is piled outside. If you want to see a temporary transfer station that turned into a permanent transfer station, go to Durham. All the waste is on the floor and compacted. If that one compactor breaks down, there is no other opportunity until that is fixed.

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Sassaman summarizes that working on waste-to-energy facilities I spent two years and billed \$500,000 just do the risk study. After eight to ten years of analysis it never got off the ground because it wasn't permitted and the community did not want it once they saw what it was. There is no guarantee that there ever will be a waste-to-energy facility within a reasonable distance of the centroid in Orange County. What we are looking at is a situation where, while we would like to see a waste-to-energy facility, there has been talk about it for seven years; we have been saying it to the Board of Commissioners for seven years and it hasn't gotten anywhere. We have a two-year window to do something and then we are going to have Mt. Trashmore. A reasonable window for a waste transfer station [to operate] is 20 years. It is very important that Orange County maintains its green and ethical approach to handling garbage from an environmental standpoint. We can do that because we've exercised a high degree of control. We are looking and trying to do something in the interim, be that 5, 10, or 20 years, without disrupting a very successful and very good ongoing operation. If say we want to continue doing what we are doing but for the next five years we will hire Waste Management to come in and take over things, five years when we are ready for Harv he will not be here. When we are ready for Gayle he will be not be here except he will be sitting on the landfill maintaining the cap. Meanwhile all the profits from the operation will go to somebody's pocket and not to maintaining the landfill which has to be maintained for about 30 years.

Hauser states that she doesn't understand that. As soon as the landfill closes and as soon as we build and operate a waste transfer station that is going to cost us money. Maybe we could raise our tipping fees way over what it is going to cost us but there is no more net revenue coming into us. Just talking about cost if it's cheaper to me to do a vendor than to do it myself don't I make more money?

Sassaman states that some of the stuff you [Orange County Voice] talk about, carbon footprint and the green stuff, it is my feeling that once we give up our control over the directional aspect of our waste disposal we give up our ability to do the environmentally right thing.

Norwood states that I mentioned the word control first. Let me try this from a different point. The new big ritzy houses use Waste Industries to pick up their waste and they also use Orange County recycling less and less because they don't have to. Waste Industries will pickup anything they put in the cart. Why do the work, they don't have to separate the recycling. If we bring in private contractors who will haul it off then they don't have to recycle.

Walser states that so many people are concerned about the environment these days I don't know that that is a valid argument. I have neighbors who put out three bins every other week. People are very conscious of recycling and they don't have to do it.

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Hauser states I trust my neighbors to do the right thing. I want to get back to the issue of infrastructure we are only talking right now about municipal solid waste. I am not talking about recycling, or yard debris or construction debris that all stays here. That infrastructure is completely operated by Orange County. The only thing we are talking about now and the only thing that is moving out to Bingham is the household waste stream. All the rest is staying here.

Norwood states that wherever the transfer station ends up the less crap that goes in there the easier it is on the people that live next to it.

Sassaman states that separating the garbage from the recycling is not that simple because we are talking about a system. In all the years that I have been on the board the one thing that is fascinating is the fact that all these things work together and that having control over the garbage you also have control and the ability to manipulate where the recyclables go. If you don't have control over the garbage you have significantly less control over recyclables. At the waste transfer station or the landfill we cannot accept cardboard, aluminum or whatever. We could say that to a vendor but if the vendor is hauling out of county we have no control over it. If we exercise control over the garbage at the point of transfer from us to a vendor we can then control what we give them. That is a very important thing if we want to increase our recycling. If we don't care about our recycling that is another issue. If we cared only about the cost and nothing else I would rethink this problem and come up with a really cheap solution.

Hauser states that no one is saying this is about cost. We are saying let the waste transfer station decision follow strategy not follow the reaction to the landfill being closed. Under your model, recycling operations are on Eubanks Rd. and the trash is out in Bingham. How does the recycling work under that model?

Sassaman states that we would be able at the waste transfer station to fix that. If a private waste hauler has a truckload of garbage that is full of cardboard then he is going to have to more careful.

Pollock states that in terms of what Orange Voice is interested in there are two clear cut things. One is a waste transfer station is not wise in Bingham Township and the other is maybe we need to rethink the paradigm of landfilling somewhere else. The locational issue is a different issue from the issue of public control and so on. There is some consensus around the notion that siting is important there is also at least on the SWAB some consensus about the degree of public control being important. You raise two different things – is this the right location and is public control the right thing.

Hauser states that we are saying that there is no justification. We don't know where we are going with the waste and so anything we do has no basis for any decision.

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Walser states that I know it's the Commissioners' decision but we talked about green and environmental concerns how green is it for them to take 142 acres and turn it into a brown field.

Sassaman states that my opinion is that it doesn't make any sense [to site it there] and the SWAB didn't recommend siting it there.

Hauser states that we've given you an option that says let's take a little more time and think this through. Unlike twenty years ago given the change in the Federal government administration, given the new focus on renewable energy resources and the tax credits that are likely to be put in place, the interest in the community in waste-to-energy and the overall green solution that maybe the time is now. Here is what I am pretty sure of -- that if we have all resources invested in building a waste transfer station we will not be working on waste-to-energy.

Spire states that all major groups including Orange County, Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough are interested in that venture. There is a lot of planning and analysis into a comprehensive study that has been going on for four to five years.

Walser asks if this decision has anything to do with that plan.

Wilson replies that the transfer station issue doesn't but the plan deals with everything else.

What you all propose is reasonable and the County should respond and do an open and honest analysis and let the chips fall where they may. We're going to try to do that. It does seem to be a little narrower than the real world situation here. As far as where a transfer station should go, the basic function of a transfer station is to receive the waste from the various collection routes consolidate them to larger vehicles and haul them to its ultimate designation whether it's a waste-to-energy facility or a landfill. The key component of where a transfer station is closest to where the waste is generated. The controlling factor is not where it is going to go *from* the transfer station.

Of all the private haulers you spoke with not one of them have an office or operation in Orange County? None have had a strong commitment or have shown a strong commitment to this community. Private haulers as part of their business model when they operate a transfer station the key is to push as much waste through that transfer station as they possible can. That is how they make money. Local governments have a different perspective. Our perspective of the landfill even though it is economically disadvantageous to us, is to bury only what is absolutely needed to be buried. It's a different mindset, I want to divert as much from the landfill as possible and will do so

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from a transfer station. A private company, unless it's a hazardous waste, is not going to divert anything from the transfer station. It's going on the scales, they're going to get paid for it and it will go wherever they send it.

Regarding the Bingham site, it was the BOCC criteria that they developed is what led us to those sites. I will bet that in ten years there will not be a waste-to-energy facility in Orange County. There is only a fifty fifty chance that we'll even know where it will be. I am a strong advocate of it now that the air pollution technology has been improved. From an environmental standpoint, Orange County needs a transfer station. The waste generated is going to continue to be generated. It is not going to wait for us to figure out where waste-to-energy will be. The waste will probably not be a direct haul to wherever the waste-to-energy facility is. Hopefully it's where the largest quantity of waste is and we're going to need a transfer station to haul it there anyway. None of the transfer stations in Raleigh or Durham could be considered state of the art.

Hauser states that our goal is not to own the Durham facility. Our goal is [to wait] until we get a sense about where we want to go. We want to go to RTP with a waste-to-energy facility then maybe a site over on Hwy 54 and I-40 might be great for a transfer station in an industrial area that doesn't impinge on a rural community that is much closer to where the waste is going.

Wilson states that in having discussions with the Assistant City manager and high level staff in Durham about siting a joint transfer station in southern Durham in the general area you are talking about they were not interested for two reasons. One is they didn't want to spend money on a second transfer station. They just wanted to use the one they had. Secondly they determined that there was no reasonably acquirable piece of property in that area. There are a lot of wetlands in that area.

Hauser states I was being somewhat random on that but that the question is if we know where the waste-to-energy facility will be doesn't it make it easier for us to pick a site that is defensible?

Wilson replies no. What it makes sense to do is build a transfer station in an area that is most easily accessible to the waste generated in Orange County.

Hauser says UNC is interested in plasma gasification technology and they're interested in waste to energy long term why wouldn't that be a site?

Sassaman states that we will have more opportunities to talk about this, but we have more items on our agenda to attend to.

Walser asks how about lobbying the legislature to require a better solution.

Wilson states that they have already passed legislature year before last making it impossible to site a new landfill so they are moving in that direction. If you are trying to site a landfill for more than a single jurisdiction you have significant hurdles and costs to incur. One private company I know has determined they'll never be able to site another landfill in North Carolina.

5. **Landfill Groundwater Monitoring Program -- SWAB Hosting of March 5 Public Meeting** Wilson states that the groundwater monitoring at the landfill has detected some chemicals that are over the groundwater standards. The SWAB will host a public meeting as part of their next regular meeting to have our hydrogeologist come in to explain that and what the corrective measures will be. We feel confident that the State will give us permission to proceed and we hope to reduce them down to acceptable levels. All but one are already below drinking water standards.

Bowerman asks what does this mean for people with wells. Where are the areas that should be worried or should anybody?

Sassaman states that OWASA can give you water that can contain more [of these chemicals than are in the water]. Some of the State's 2L standards are below the level of instruments' ability to detect them.

Vickers adds that North Carolina has notoriously low thresholds for groundwater standards, the lowest in the country.

Norwood requests that before March 5<sup>th</sup> to test Ms. Nunn's well.

Wilson replies that there is a well that was required to be placed adjacent to her property. The part of the landfill that is on the north side of Eubanks Rd. on the very eastern border, the direction of groundwater flow has no opportunity to flow in the direction of Rogers Rd. In fact it is going in the opposite direction.

The hydrogeologist will explain the situation, how we're going to solve it and when and respond to questions. Then we'll take a summary of the meeting to the state, they will approve our corrective action plan and we're going to implement it.

6. **Programs/Services Update**

*Landfill Gas Recovery Project* Wilson states that the BOCC is going to approve the contract at their February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. We are working with the University on the design and permitting of a gas recovery facility at the landfill where the gas will initially be flared which will destroy the methane. The second stage that will follow soon after is to take the methane and create energy and turn it to power.

*Solid Waste Budget Issues - Deferred*

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*Follow-up with local thrift stores on out of compliance toys* Pollock states that regarding the Consumer Products Safety Commission ruling on toys with excessive amounts of lead and other hazardous materials, on January 31<sup>st</sup> there was vote by the Commission to delay action on enforcing this. But the concern was that we would see an influx of toys in the landfill. In talking to the director of the PTA thrift shop whose stance at this point other than contacting their lawyer is to go at risk in accepting and selling of toys. They are hoping that even if there is a lawsuit it result in criminal penalties and liability to them.

*Other - None*

**7. Other Business - None**

Wilson states that as we bring pieces of our various analyses back to the SWAB as a filter that you come and have these informed discussions. Hear what we find out, challenge it, and contribute to it. We'd like you to participate.

Tony Blake, Orange County Voice asks will you contact the outside vendors to have you get a set off metrics used to measure them and hold them to. Do you have issues you're concerned about to evaluate them?

Wilson states that on next Tuesday we will get with the consultants and develop a set of comprehensive set of metrics so that both our own and various private options can be looked at similarly.

Blake asks will those metrics be shared.

Wilson replies yes as soon as they are available.

Hauser states that philosophically, I'm not sure we are in the same place. What I've heard tonight is Orange County wants to do it themselves and going out to vendors is perceived in and of itself is a risky proposition even if it's short term or until we can develop a better option. Did I hear that right?

Sassaman replies I don't think so. In terms of solid waste operations there are some things that we do better than the privates and vice-versa. Those things that we do better than the privates for reasons that maybe cost or other things, those things we do better I'd like to see us keep on doing.

Pollock states that historically when things were started in recycling they were all under contract. The only thing that remains under private contract is urban curbside. The reason is not because we desired to do that; it was a performance-driven issue meeting the performance we wanted at a cost we wanted with the flexibility we needed. This followed five to ten years of private sector performance.

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Hauser states that the decision on the table is not should we in-source or out-source our waste management. The decision on the table is we have not a very appealing site for a transfer station so before we go ahead with it and our long term vision seems to be to go to waste-to-energy before we go down this path with this undesirable site should we rely on vendors on an interim basis only for our municipal waste, not recycling or any other services, until we have a better option.

Sassaman asks for collection, disposal or both.

Hauser replies just disposal. Instead of doing the waste transfer station, in the middle of the country where there is no water and sewer, it's 23 miles from the centroid, should we rely on vendors to handle that on an interim basis until we figure out where we are going long term. That is the only question we are asking.

Vickers states that the SWAB has not taken a position on in-sourcing or out-sourcing while there are opinions, there is no position. The issue is does it make sense for the County in that position. There are different opinions on that.

Blake asks why does UNC out-source so much of theirs and why is there so much out-sourcing in the county already.

Vickers states that UNC is 11% of the waste in the county. They are a much smaller operation. Their business is not solid waste; it is to run the university.

Spire states that it all comes down to the time frame. Is it 5 years, 10 years, Harv will tell you the Town of Chapel Hill cannot operate longer than four or five months without major changes to staff, trucks etc.?

Harv concurs.

Spire notes that the distance one way to Durham is 23 miles so there are a lot more miles traveled. Is this for two months or ten years?

Blake states that the question is not whether there has to be a waste transfer station there is a question about where it will be, but there has to be a waste transfer station in any scenario.

Sassaman asks how many years have we been working to site a waste transfer station.

Hauser replies a year.

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Wilson states that the issue of a waste transfer station has been here since 1997 when they decided they weren't going to have a landfill. I have been advising the County and before them the Town of Chapel Hill to develop a site location since that time.

Walser states that up until last year it was always assumed that it would be here.

Hauser states that we want to shift the county from random land usage to a more comprehensive plan that we'll see more strategic land use and we'll see some things that emerge as more industrial areas, which make more sense for sites. These are assets we didn't have ten years ago that now we have.

Wilson points out that the last plan didn't end up with any industrial areas so that's why we don't have them now.

Sassaman asks do you think it is reasonable to expect that we could site a waste energy facility within 12 miles of the waste centroid within ten years.

Hauser replies the waste-to-energy is within 14 miles yes we can either site one here or we can site one someplace and that we will build a waste transfer station some place closer than 12 miles of the centroid.

Norwood states that to play devils' advocate because I lived here I have fought this fight basically you don't want it in your area. We can't do anything about that. The Commissioners will decide this and they're saying they have to do something right now. You have to convince them.

Blake states that Commissioners decided not to site it at Rogers Road and basically you said that "this was the mission you gave us, you didn't say anything about all the other variables". You were absolutely right. I went back through all the minutes. I know you considered private hauling from Rogers Road and Eubanks Road before that and it didn't compare favorably. This is a new ball game. You are talking about hauling it 11 miles in the wrong direction. Plus the centroid is moving away from that so it will get more expensive over time. The right thing to do is the excess capacity that is nearby in Durham and transfer the trash out-of-town until we come up with a real solution that dovetails with the comprehensive plan and with economic development involve the power companies, involve the big waste hauling companies and build a solution that is regional rather than in Orange County.

Sassman states that as it has been pointed out we come up with a stumbling block of how to collect the garbage in the Town of Chapel Hill economically, environmentally, and move it that distance [to a landfill] without building a waste transfer station.

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Blake replies that the solution to the problem is logistics. There is still redundant capacity under what you can do it for and you don't have the additional cost of building a facility, buying land. You can use that money better in another way. As a taxpayer that is what I am concerned with. It's not a NIMBY issue but as a taxpayer I object to spending the money this way.

Smith motions to adjourn. Vickers 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Adjourn : 9:30pm

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