

Minutes – Regular Meeting  
Solid Waste Advisory Board  
June 7, 2007  
**Approved August 2, 2007**

Attendance: Bonnie Norwood, Jan Sassaman, BJ Tipton and Remus Smith

Staff: Gayle Wilson, Blair Pollock, Wanda McCain, and Paul Spire

1. **Adoption of Minutes from May 3 SWAB meeting** Norwood moves to accept. Smith 2<sup>nd</sup> . Passes unanimously.

2. **Board Member Comments** Norwood states that she appreciates the mention of [Phelps] Van [Eubanks site attendant] and his wife's condition in the minutes.

Smith states that he has received calls congratulating the staff on the advertising being done. A lot of people don't know what's done with recycling but the ads fill in a lot of holes.

Sassaman states that the next meeting will be in August. At this point he is unsure if he will still be a member. He hasn't heard from the mayor of Chapel Hill. His term expires at the end of the month.

3. **Overview of Proposed Solid Waste Management FY 2007-08** Wilson states that this is the summary part of what goes to the Board of Commissioners; they get more detail. The budget department prepares it and I do the narrative. The manager is proposing an \$11.2 million budget. The proposed highlights are an increase in the 3-R fee, without the increase there is a 24% [shortfall] in covering the full cost of basic [with the fee], multifamily would need to be increased by 120% to fully fund that, rural would have to be raised 119% and urban is 17% less than full funding. The recommended increase would cover about half of the shortfall and the landfill is still subsidizing recycling by over \$400,000 with the proposal. Without the proposed fee increase it [the subsidy from the landfill] would be closer to a million dollars. That would be OK [if it weren't for the upcoming] big expenses of transfer station at \$5 million, a \$1.5 million operations center, and landfill closure for which we need that revenue. There is also a proposal for an increase in the tipping fee of MSW of one dollar per ton. Another highlight is the manager's proposal that the Sanitation Division, currently a part of the Public Works Department, be moved to the Solid Waste Management Department. The Sanitation Division manages the drop-off sites and the collection of garbage from those. They also service garbage at county government buildings and county schools. There is a budget work session on June 14.

Sassaman states that the estimated budget for this fiscal year is significantly over the original budget. What is the reason for that?

Wilson states that there are a couple of reasons. Some expenses are being incurred that are associated with taking over Sanitation such as maintenance that is offset by

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some revenue that doesn't show up in the expenditure column. Also there are assumptions for cost associated with permitting the transfer station. The biggest single thing may be the installation of the leachate sewer system.

Pollock asks are you comparing the original budget for this year to the year end estimate?

Sassaman replies yes.

Wilson states that in this one the contributions to reserves have been taken out which is in equipment reserves.

Sassaman states that the concern is in the landfill operations budget for FY06-07, the original budget was \$3,083,612 and the 12-month estimate is \$4,305,322.

Wilson states that a lot of that had to do with the Walnut Grove site. There is about \$400,000 associated with that.

Norwood asks with increasing the tipping fee, will that stop anyone from coming in and going somewhere else?

Wilson states that anyone, except the local governments who are members of the interlocal agreement, is free to go anywhere. The percentage [tip fee increase] is negligible. I don't see that having an impact on the incoming waste most won't notice that small an increase.

Norwood asks when it gets closer to transfer station time, would it be important to divert the non interlocal agreement customers to go elsewhere? Can you have different tipping fees for private haulers?

Wilson replies not for government [operated landfill]. They have to maintain equal tipping fees. When the transfer station opens there shouldn't be any major changes in tipping fees. An argument could be made that we should try to run more tons through the transfer station rather than less because you can never fill it up. The more that goes through makes the [per ton] cost less for everybody. That's why we want to look at franchising or flow control as ways to direct waste flow. We are not going to stop working on waste reduction goals, but more coming through the transfer station is better.

Pollock asks if there are any "what if" scenarios if the commissioners only approve a partial 3R fee increase.

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Wilson replies that the difference will come out of the [undesigned] reserve balance which would reduce that from half a million dollars to \$100,000.

Norwood asks if there are figures for the new site of the convenience center at Eubanks Road.

Wilson states that it will be integrated into the cost of the transfer station project. There has been a slight impediment, where the convenience center was to be relocated, when the sewer was in place for the leachate pond, it [the pond] was going to be filled in and then the area all the way down through the HHW was going to be used for the convenience center. The rules for stream set backs have increased drastically from a 50 ft centerline to 150 ft which wipes that out. If the Town of Chapel Hill doesn't give some type of waiver on that initial 150 ft, a new location will be needed.

Pollock asks if there are no assumptions for revenue from the Greene Tract.

Wilson replies the manager is going to try to have that nailed down by the next budget and to have an agreement with the three parties regarding reimbursement on at least the part of the Greene Tract that is jointly owned.

4. **Discussion of Drop-off Site and Convenience Center Planning (follow-up to Work Group Planning Process)** Pollock states that you all have had a chance to look at the report that RRSI did on evaluation of services at the convenience centers and drop-off sites. That was the first phase of a two-part study that is being done. In the study they list a series of options for the new configurations of the convenience centers and drop-off sites. There are four sub-options as follows: (a) no changes to the current system, (b) reduce the number of drop-off sites to four, (c) reduce number of convenience centers to four, and (d) reduce drop-off sites and convenience centers to four each. Included in that is making Eubanks Rd. a super-center with compactors for more ease and efficiency of moving waste where you can recycle rigid plastics and all the other materials you can't recycle now. There could be HHW, mulch sales and other enhancements. They are two-level sites where you drop your garbage down instead of trying to heave it into a dumpster.

The map shows the sites of the current convenience centers. The obvious hole is where Hwy 57 used to be. There are significant costs to replace that. The other issue is the future and expansion of the Bradshaw site. It's small and inefficient and if any one could go that could be it. This would still leave the northeast quadrant underserved and the southwest quadrant arguably underserved. We can then talk about drop off sites. We have property at Southern Village. This is the chance for you all to air your concerns.

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Smith states that most people don't know why there is no Hwy 57 site. The one on Walnut Grove Church is a long ways from the middle of Hillsborough, close to five miles. Most of the people I talk to are hoping something will open up in that area in the next couple of years.

Wilson states that there are discussions regarding a piece of property to replace the Hwy 57 site. There are some concerns about getting it too close to the Durham County line and drawing Durham County people there. Regarding the Bradshaw Quarry site there has been no discussion to expanding it or getting rid of it. There has been informal talk but nothing from the Board or the Manager, I think they're waiting to see what the work group comes up with.

Sassaman asks if there is information about the per capita usage of the convenience centers. Are they higher in the northern part of the county than the southern? Do they differ in the rural parts of the county v. the urban?

Pollock states that there is good data on usage. Eubanks and Hwy 57, the two closest to the urban area see the most use and when people were polled, about ½ of the Hwy 57 users were coming from the Town even though they have many curbside services.

Norwood asks that when the Eubanks Rd. site is improved and paved, will you get more traffic at the site which will give different criteria to look at for the other sites.

Pollock states that the issue of having a two-tier system for the convenience centers has been discussed. Do improved sites with more options become more attractive than they should be or do all sites become super centers?

Wilson states that there is the issue of the county possibly implementing curbside garbage collection in the unincorporated area, whether it's voluntary or mandatory - it would probably be voluntary but I don't know that. Would there simultaneously be a fee system instituted at the convenience centers to encourage those that have curbside service to use it to keep from cluttering the sites when they've got garbage collection at their house every week and try to make these centers more for those who have tires, lumber, waste oil and stuff you have to use the convenience centers for. If you have PAYT for garbage at the convenience centers, then people will use it for only those materials they need to.

Pollock states that most cities that have instituted PAYT have it for waste only and recycling remains free.

Sassaman states that the compromise way to go would be to have a number of the first class sites and the people that don't have a lot of stuff to get rid of and don't want to travel far go close by to get rid of stuff and use a site that isn't as expensive. I get

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rid of corrugated cardboard easily at a nearby drop off site but I wouldn't drive to Hillsborough but once or twice a year when I have a car load of stuff to get rid of and I wouldn't mind traveling further to get rid of.

Pollock states that that moves us to the drop-off sites and those pros and cons. One scenario is status quo, six centers exactly where they are. The Animal Shelter will leave once we move. One scenario says 'that's a big hole. Another scenario is to eliminate Meadowmont as it's a poor performer and other sites that are poor performers. Allow the Eubanks site to take up the volume from Cedar Falls Park. That leaves you with a pretty good distribution. We would save some money from cutting drop-off sites way back, but would the citizens accept that as a reasonable trade off for adding additional materials available for curbside recycling collection?

Wilson states that the sites will not be able to expand much more than from what they take now. We won't be able to take electronics or garbage at unstaffed sites, maybe textiles but no significant expansion of the sites.

Sassaman asks what is the vision of the sites once cardboard is collected [at the curb].

Wilson states that residential use may drop a little. People still use the sites. There is also the commercial sector. Some small businesses don't generate enough cardboard for a dumpster or don't have the space. Long-term some of the sites could be used by the small cardboard-generating business. We could promote this use but we don't encourage or discourage it now.

Pollock states that here are some pivotal things to look at -- Southern Village doesn't exist now, so in terms of distribution, is that a good thing should it be a substitution for the Carrboro site? The University Mall site will be there as long as it can be there. It's our most popular site. The Carrboro site is a poor site but is likely to stay. The Cedar Falls pro and con argument is if the Eubanks Rd site is turned into a super center and with expanded hours, is there a need for the Cedar Falls site? From an operational standpoint we now have a lot of cleanup particularly at that site.

Wilson states that it is also in a situation where it can not be expanded or improved. The Meadowmont site is easy from a non-political point to argue to close as it's a poor performer. Southern Village is a little tricky because it is in a great location but there may be some Chatham stuff but it doesn't matter that much if it's only recycling. The key issue is there another \$250,000 to put into a site there given all the other demands for money.

Norwood states that on the Meadowmont site getting the population figure for how many people live there and have an idea of how many use the Eubanks Rd. site then

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use that number as criteria to close the Meadowmont site because of a per capita usage. It seems that a huge percentage uses Eubanks.

Wilson states that in that area single family has curbside, multifamily and townhomes have their own collection, and the businesses for the most part have cardboard collection. We are also in the process to see what type of additional commercial services they might be interested in. So we might be more full service in the commercial sector to meet our goals. There is really no right or wrong answer, just the politics.

Sassaman states that one of the key siting criteria is "What else could a person do" when they bring their recycling. That is why University Mall is so popular. You can do a lot while you're there. There is not a lot to do at Meadowmont besides a grocery store and a gym.

Wilson states that from staff perspective the drop off sites that we would strongly suggest be off limits would be Hampton Pointe, University Mall, and Carrboro Plaza. The rest we would consider to be in play.

Tipton states that to go through the expense of adding the gravity aspect and compactors would be a lot of improvement on leased space. To own the land that the improvements would be made on would be important.

Wilson states that that has been the goal expressed by at least some of the county commissioners. That is why the Walnut Grove property was purchased and the [replacement] Hwy 57 will be purchased. Of course we own the Eubanks Rd property. At the Bradshaw Quarry site there is no way to do that. High Rock is not owned but it is big and open for a long-term lease. If we could get a twenty year lease it could be worth a \$200,000 investment. The County owns the Ferguson site and it's 100% flat.

Norwood states that some of the commissioners may have concerns such as the cost and the need to up grade or if Eubanks Rd becomes the super center what about the neighborhood and traffic. Should you seek another site?

Wilson states that having a minimal charge for garbage will cut down the usage. There are a number of reasons to go to the modernized sites. It would allow a more efficient collection and reduce operation cost over a period of time. The site would be more ADA compliant. What does someone in a wheelchair do now at a convenience center? It would also be easier to keep clean and maintain with pavement. You wouldn't have to haul gravel all the time. Less noise with a compactor, safer from traffic and much less water filled garbage going to the landfill.

**5. Program/Services Update**

*Transfer Station Development* Wilson states that next week at the Town Council meeting I will be requesting expedited planning review for the transfer station. If granted that gives six months on the planning process. A RCD (Resource Conservation District) determination has been requested, a determination by the Engineering Department, a final determination of which streams have regulatory set backs because they are perennial streams not just wet weather streams. That dictates some of the development parameters. The scope of work has almost been finalized for the consultant for taking the transfer station all the way through design, construction, permitting and startup. Olver is our consultant. They are working on landfill gas as well.

*Landfill Capacity Status* Wilson states that the results of the aerial survey indicate that there are four and a half years left. This means instead of late summer of 2010 it will be eight to ten months beyond that [for closure]. One reason for that is as garbage and rocks settle the cover dirt has been removed and more garbage added before recovering. There also has been a lot of attention made on the compaction. The waste tonnage has not increased.

Smith asks if there is a height limitation.

Wilson replies yes. There is a permitted capacity in which height is part of that geometry.

Tipton asks if the banked capacity is for emergency use.

Wilson states that it would be for a couple of things - it would provide some negotiation leverage when the transfer station goes out for bid as you have a little more time and you're not desperate. It also could serve as a backup for emergencies in case there were a transfer station difficulty or if our destination were closed. There are materials tough to handle in a transfer station we can use a landfill for. It would have to be used every now and then, it can't just sit there. If you don't use it every thirty days it has to be covered with intermediate cover.

Sassaman states that it makes sense to use it if there is only a tenth of a long haul truck load of garbage left. Or if there's really bad weather or a labor dispute.

Spire states that depending on the tonnage on Saturdays, that would be more of an ideal use for that. It would take more time and effort to put a half of a load of garbage in there.

*Walnut Grove Convenience Center Temporary Expansion* Wilson states that it is working well. It is a much improved area than before. It is getting busier as time goes on.

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*Rogers Road Community Enhancement and Monitoring Committee* Wilson states that it was created to talk specifically about historic Rogers Road neighborhood mitigation measures. We are in the process now of trying to define the boundaries of the historic Rogers Road community so that we can clearly target what the community wants and estimate what the various costs might be.

Sassaman ask if there is some way to establish criteria instead of just asking who wants to be part of historic Rogers Road. There seems to be some neutral criteria to use. The boundary should be what was there historically.

Wilson states that the larger the area [that is included in any kind of mitigation] the more expensive and probably the less that will happen. If it's a huge area, you're not going to sewer it. You have to balance what's fair with what it will cost.

Norwood adds that there is a bunch of land where Lake Hogan Farms begins that's part of the historic neighborhood, related to those three family names. But I would not include things without asking.

*Comprehensive Planning Process – Integration of Solid Waste Goals into Planning Process*  
Pollock states that after working on the objectives for the plan, the county came back with really broad language with a hierarchy of processes and elements. They have eight elements. One is for public service and community facilities and that's where solid waste goes. The goal for solid waste is less solid waste and more environmentally responsible cost effective disposal. Unless something else is said that is what will go forward to the June 21 meeting for the goal setting standard unless you have a major desire to add to it. In August it will become more focused and specific.

Sassaman states there is no need to add anything else now.

*Other* None

6. **Other Business** Norwood asks if it is possible to send the dirty water truck to the Eubanks Rd site when it dusty.

Spire states that it could be done but when it is 95° it has to put done every hour. There is some dust control that will be tried in that area.

Smith moves to adjourn. Norwood 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Adjourn: 9:00 pm

Next meeting: August 2, 2007

Southern Human Services