

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
March 8, 2007
Approved April 5, 2007

Attendance: Linda Bowerman, Al Vickers, Remus Smith, Jan Sassaman, and BJ Tipton

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

Citizens: Sharon Cook, Jeff Kingman, Tracy Kuhlman, Brian Voyce

1. **Adoption of Minutes from December 7 SWAB meeting** Smith moves to accept. Vickers 2nd. Passes unanimously.

2. **Review of Report on Update on Solid Waste Management Planning Process**
Pollock states that the focus of the group last spring was predominantly on the reduction part of the overall solid waste plan. We did finally get the request for proposals for looking at cost of different materials recovery facilities ready to go out. That will be issued next week. On the heels of that we will be ready to issue request for qualifications on the ability of different firms to design and provide equipment for the MRF. There are two follow-on pieces – what does it look like to have someone haul to a location (merchant MRF), and what would it look like to have some brokers help with the sale of materials we might generate.

We also hope to receive the first substantive work in some time, which is the study of the dropoff sites and convenience centers on the work that relates to whether to continue to use the current configuration or are there better ways to provide those services. The piece that is not in play with respect to waste reduction services is the commercial recycling in a broad scale. That is a fairly major piece of work we hope to get into in the next three months. Some of the other things that are pertinent to the waste reduction piece are should we expand the County's Regulated Recycling Materials Ordinance that is only for cardboard, wood, and metal, to address the question of are we better off revising that ordinance to include bans on landfilling, other recyclables, or picking it up ourselves through a commercial recycling program?

(Pollock explains SWM Plan for the audience)

Organics management is a little further down the road. The other study that is in play right now is waste collection in the unincorporated areas, due March 23. Solid Waste System Finance right now - eighty percent of the recycling cost is covered by the 3R fee. Pay-As-You-Throw came up in Carrboro. They put quite amount of time and effort into analyzing the utility [of this approach to reducing waste] for them. It has been put to bed for the time being. It would be hard to marry that [PAYT] with their automated system and they are doing very well with their recycling. Another area that needs to be addressed is litter prevention. The specifics of what happens next are not hammered out. We would be happy to hear from you all of how this process looks/works going forward.

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Wilson states that previously you all had asked us to prepare an update to keep things fresh. Originally it was to go out in mid-January, then mid-February so this memo is a little out of date. As a suggestion this should be brought back at the next meeting with the updates based on the RFPs going out and include a timeline of the technical study.

Vickers asks when the next work group meeting is.

Sassaman states that that should be decided at this meeting. We need to get that group back together. We've lost a lot of momentum. Part of the reason for the memo was to send to the other members of the work group so they would know we are still working on things and how they were going. It would be useful to add some kind of timeline of what's next. As soon as there is a reasonable draft of the plan we should get it out to the public, though the elected officials on the work group should decide whether it should go to the elected bodies first.

Wilson states that that could be a topic of discussion of the workgroup. Barry Jacobs would like elected officials to see it first, before it goes to the public.

Sassaman: I have no preconceived idea.

Vickers states that once the plan is together the elected officials can start working on what issues are going to be critical and not consensus issues.

Wilson states that the plan will have many significant elements to it. Do you wait until they are all complete or do it in chunks. One other item that is almost ready is a report on franchising from the Institute of Government.

Sassaman states that earlier this year there was mention in the news about interest at the state level in a bottle bill. Assuming that it doesn't die and goes through, how would that affect our recycling?

Pollock states that the main study that was done about the bottle bill and curbside recycling, recycling rates overall didn't go down. At ten cents a container, it's possible that we would lose some of the cream of revenue [aluminum cans and plastic bottles] but fortunately fiber markets are strong right now and we'd have a reason to have a program with people putting out other materials and many wealthier people may simply recycle their containers despite the deposit. There may be some scavenging. I expect it will have an impact on our weight or volume but statewide recycling will go up. We're only capturing about 1 in 4 aluminum cans and one in five plastic bottles.

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Wilson says he has heard nothing through the professional solid waste organization about it at the state level.

Pollock notes it's gone to the Senate Committee on small business.

3. Discussion of January 18 Landfill Neighborhood Community Meeting, March 1 Tour, March 1 BOCC Work Session and other related Transfer Station Matters

Wilson states that there was a neighborhood meeting on January 18. There were about twenty-five people in attendance. I reviewed what a transfer station is, what it could look like, and explained the operation of a transfer station. Moses Cary presented the general approach the commissioners were taking. There was a good deal of time spent responding to questions. The questions covered a gamut of issues such as traffic, speeding, and public bus service.

On March 1 there was a tour of a transfer station. The newest one in the state is in Greensboro and that is the one that was toured by some elected officials. They had a lot of questions of the manager of the transfer station. There will be a second tour on Saturday to include interested citizens.

There are a couple of pieces of property off of Hwy 70 East that the BOCC are also considering. Recently there have been ads in the paper, a direct mailing to those in the area and hand-delivered flyers to those in the economic district of the potential transfer station site. There is a meeting next week for the Board to choose to or not to make a decision. If they choose not to use Eubanks Rd. they may direct me to conduct a more detail assessment of one or both of the sites on Hwy 70.

The time line necessary to design and permit, and construct a facility is three-and-a-half to four years. We are in the three-and-a-half [years] or less amount of time left.

Bowerman asks if the Chapel Hill site would have [publicly supplied] water.

Wilson states that it is in the area where it would be serviced by water and sewer. The Hwy 70 sites have water but not sewer. In my opinion it is more important for the BOCC to pick a transfer station site that they can live with for the next twenty years instead of picking a site for expediency that they will regret for the next twenty years. There are implications if a transfer station isn't ready when the landfill reaches capacity. We would then have to spend money on an interim transfer station that would have to go somewhere. The best course of action is for them to pick a site they can live with.

Sassaman asks what are the implications for operations for siting it on Hwy 70.

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Wilson states that there are operational implications for the customers. For the large customers such as the municipalities there will be an additional cost not just for fuel but acquiring different resources because more time would be sent delivering waste than collecting. With regard to transfer station operations, if it were placed on Eubanks Rd. it would be incorporated into the system already there. If it is placed at any other location there would be a need for at least three more employees and develop some infrastructure.

Sassaman asks about the implications of transport from Chapel Hill to [Hwy] 70. There don't seem to be many choices.

Wilson states that the direct route would be 86 to 85 near Wal-Mart and go down [east/north] to the next exit. That's about 13.5 miles from our landfill. Some of the companies or municipalities may not want to take the interstate and may decide to take the rural roads like Mount Sinai and University Station Road.

Sassaman states that that seems like a significant safety hazard along Highway 86.

Vickers asked about Orange County Sanitation trucks.

Wilson replies that they will be parked at Eubanks Road location when they become part of the Solid Waste Department.

Bowerman states that (I was just wondering) why at this point a thorough site search hadn't happened. None of the sites are great and there is a lot of land out there that would be better than these. Is there a reason there isn't a search and a criteria for a search? We wrote up criteria for a search we didn't do. Someone called and we looked at that piece of land.

Wilson states that it's hard to say why the Board hasn't taken another approach. If they were going to do an exhaustive process based site search that would be a year's process.

Smith states that one reason may be zoning. Orange County has very little zoned industrial property.

Tipton asks if the transfer station were located somewhere else other than Eubanks Rd., would the other operations move – C&D landfill, recycling operations.

Wilson replies no, that has not been discussed. The C&D landfill was just opened last year. We will be there whether the transfer station is or not.

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Questions from citizens.

Kingman states that the \$3.8 million asking price for one of the properties on Hwy 70 comes out to \$200,000 an acre. What is the amount per acre for the \$2 million property?

Wilson states that the property is about sixteen acres. I was referred to these two sites by the Commissioners. I don't know how the initial contact came about.

Cook states that it is not clear on the map where the sites are located.

Wilson replies that they will be introduced next Tuesday night. The Commissioners are involved in confidential discussions with them. I am waiting on the Board's cue to give out all the details. They are both on the east side of where I-85 crosses 70; one is on each side of the road.

Cook states that one of the reasons against the Hwy 70 site that was stated is that it would take too long for the approval processing. I'm curious who would need to approve it.

Wilson states that there are two levels of permitting. One is local. It has to meet local land use regulations. The other is state, DENR, permits all solid waste management facilities.

Cook asks if it would be the same amount of time for the Eubanks Rd site.

Wilson states that as far as the State goes, that's probably true. The municipal land uses are typically more restrictive than the unincorporated county rules. One site needs a phase one screening type environmental investigation and the other likely needs a phase two investigation.

Wilson states that he believes that there is no way to use either Hwy 70 property and have it ready by the time the landfill reaches capacity.

Cook states that I've heard there have been no formal criteria for a site. Is that true? If there is, where are those formal criteria that are required to look for a facility?

Wilson states that there are no criteria; I just answer the Board's questions. Whether the Board has its own measures I can't say. Things that we've talked about are permissibility, cost, and how many houses are adjacent to the property. There is less knowledge of the geography of this area than the Rogers Road area.

Kingman asks where it would be on Eubanks Road.

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Wilson says we'd have to move the convenience center and transfer station would be located where the fenced equipment and trailer yard are now.

Kingman asks if we were to lose our position which is against locating on Eubanks Rd., is there any way you can plan for the eighteen wheelers and garbage trucks to come off I-40 from MKL Jr. Blvd. come back that way and not jeopardize the two new schools going up in the Rogers Rd. community.

Wilson states that we would, by contract, require the hauler to go east on Eubanks Rd. to New 86 to the interstate. They would not be allowed to go west back towards Rogers Rd. I would require them to go the way you want them to go.

Cook asks what about the garbage trucks.

Wilson states that there was a policy established by the Towns to not use Rogers Rd. for access to the landfill. Though now Carrboro services homes off Rogers Rd. they will have no choice. We have no control over private collectors. I don't know of any way to exercise control over them other than through a franchise.

Bowerman states that whichever site is chosen they would send all the trucks down NC 86 [NOTE: this would be true for either old 86 or new 86] [which] will be full of garbage trucks so that's not an argument one way or another.

Pollock states that you are seeing all the garbage trucks you are going to see now. A transfer station is not going to be a draw for more garbage trucks.

Bowerman states that people might want it to change once the school buses are there.

Wilson states that the school site was picked knowing that the landfill was there and that there was a chance that the transfer station would be there too. All trucks would be going north if the transfer station were on 70 and they would all be on 86.

Voyce states that I want to make sure I understand that there is no engineering report on where the garbage is coming from, tonnage, and/or routes.

Wilson replies no, there is no document with all that written out.

Voyce asks do any of you know what the estimated population of Orange County is in twenty-five years. Mr. Benedict [Orange County planner] says it will double. The doubling will not happen in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. I think that an engineering report will show the growth will be moving north. That is what is missing from this

whole thing. Hopefully the BOCC will take that into consideration and that they don't have enough information looking forward.

Cook states that Eubanks Rd. has no paved shoulder and having worked on another road improvement project, I know how slowly NCDOT works to make improvements. Here is a road that has residential, future residential with Chapel Hill Watch complex, the Habitat homes coming in, there is a sidewalk and bike lane along Millhouse Rd. How do you connect up those side walks, those bike lanes to Eubanks Rd. which is already dangerous for bikers and pedestrians even without putting additional garbage trucks and eighteen wheelers. When do we expect NCDOT to make those improvements?

Wilson replies I'm not sure. In fact I'm surprised the neighborhoods are so interested in the transfer station but there has been no outcry about the most significant impact in that area in years which is the new public works facility and bus garage.

Kingman states that I would like to make one observation; so far I have not seen the public works trucks drive over the speed limit and they are very careful. The garbage trucks are often speeding and that's a part of the fear.

Cook asks are you going to bring up the road issue because obviously these trucks are going to need a more substantial road.

Wilson states that we will go through the planning process with the Town of Chapel Hill. DOT will have a role in approving what we construct there.

Bowerman states that for the Eubanks site we are limited to two bays. For the 70 sites does it look like you would be able to enlarge that?

Wilson states that there has been no engineering study but they should have room for expansion.

- 4. Landfill Neighborhood Mitigation Issues** Wilson states that there is a Rogers Rd. area task force that will be talking about a lot of neighborhood issues such as traffic, utilities, sidewalks, etc. for many of the concerns of the citizens in the Rogers Rd. area. That will be an avenue to deal with those in a substantive way. There are some issues that relate to the landfill and/or transfer station. Many of those can be dealt with. The most significant issue that exists now is the odor from the landfill. When the landfill is capped that will be reduced by almost 100 percent. We are working on some of the mechanism to deal with the odors until then. If a transfer station goes there the odor will be virtually nonexistent.

Cook asks if the garbage trucks are open on the top.

Wilson replies that they are open on the top because that is how they will be loaded. They will be loaded and then pulled to a staging area where they will be tarped. The contract will be ruthless about how they will control litter and tarp their trucks.

5. **Programs/Services Update**

SW Operations Center Wilson states that we are almost finished with the design of the new administrative offices. There have been some difficulties with the septic system and water reuse system and getting the health department to sign off on it. We've had to relocate and redesign and should be ready to go out to bid in three to four weeks.

Highway 57 Convenience Center Site Identification Wilson states that the site will close at 7pm on April 24th. By the first the fence will be down, everything will be removed and it will be turned back over to the owner. Simultaneously we have purchased property adjacent to the Walnut Grove Convenience Center and are going to temporarily expand that site to handle the traffic that will be diverted from the Hwy 57 closure. The new temporary site will need to be up and ready by the time Hwy 57 closes. Once a new Hwy 57 site is identified we will get off the leased property and construct a smaller modern convenience center for the Walnut Grove area. It's not clear when a new site will be identified. The cost of the temporary expansion is \$190,000.

Walnut Grove Convenience Center Temporary Expansion See above.

Mixed Paper to Curbside Collection Programs Pollock states that the bin distribution is just about complete. The first couple months of data in the urban area show about a twenty percent increase in tonnage. We are dealing with people's increase in shredding paper and including the CD's and credit cards. They have ways of getting it out but it increases the cost.

Other Wilson states that legislation is being introduced now as an outflow of the landfill moratorium that was passed last year. The State was trying to respond to the two large landfills that are planning to take waste from the northeast. The proposals I've seen [for tipping fee surcharges and new double lined landfills] would make our tip fee go from \$46/ton to the \$70/ton. DENR has not been willing to discuss the details of these bills. If you're requiring double liners, that doesn't necessarily mean the single liners are failing, but it definitely makes waste disposal more expensive.

6. **Other** Sassaman states that we need to come back to the solid waste management plan process. How do we get this moving?

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Wilson suggests that the memo is updated, include a draft timeline, and come back at the next meeting for you all to make any adjustments and then get it to the work group.

Vickers states that the closer we get to May to have a meeting the more problems getting the elected officials for time.

Sassaman states that one of the issues we need to get a handle on is the sequence of review, public input and how to deal with that. I'd put something in as a straw man and let them respond to it.

Wilson states that one complicated issue is that there are so many parts that there are some risks that if you package it as a final report and try to discuss it there will be no way to discuss it as a whole. It may be more useful to segment it into sections.

Smith moves to adjourn. Vickers 2nd

Adjourn 9:00 pm

Next meeting April 5, 2007

Link Government Services, Hillsborough