

Minutes Regular Meeting
Solid Waste Advisory Board
September 14, 2011
Approved October 12, 2011

Attendance: Jan Sassaman, Remus Smith, Stan Cheren, Steve Yuhasz, Lind Bowerman, Jim Ward and BJ Tipton

Staff: Gayle Wilson, Michael Talbert, Blair Pollock, Paul Spire, Cody Marshall, Jane Cousins and Wanda McCain

1. Opening & Welcome

2. Adoption of Minutes from June 8, SWAB meeting Bowerman moves to adopt. Smith seconds. Passes unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period No comments

4. Presentation: Blair Pollock Receives Online Faculty of the Year Award from the Solid Waste Association of North America Sassaman states that we all know Blair as the planner bar none. Some may know him as the columnist in the Chapel Hill News. He is also on the online faculty at SWANA. Blair has been active in the solid waste field for more than 25 years and in SWANA for 15 years. He has been nominated and awarded the online faculty of the year for SWANA. I've been asked to present him with his award.



Pollock states that I started teaching for SWANA last February and they asked me to teach in the Spring on-line. I am honored to be recognized for my teaching. Thank you.

Ward asks who were your students.

Pollock replies the group that I taught live was a wide range from a guy who invested \$ 6 million in a MRF in NE to people that had been running public facilities for 20 years or more. And then there were some people that were brand new to the solid waste field. In the online course everyone was anonymous.

5. Walnut Grove Church Road Convenience Center Construction – Planning Update

Wilson states that we have recently authorized our engineering firm, HDR Engineering, to proceed with the design and permitting of the Walnut Grove modernization. They are working on some concept plans to bring back for us to review. Sometime next month we will have a public meeting at the Northern Human Services building. Following that we will bring concept plans to the Commissioners. Once the BOCC is comfortable with the concept plan we will proceed with detailed design and permitting. Once we get to the point of construction we hope to have a contingency to provide some ongoing but reduced services while we're constructing, and divert them [customers] to other convenience centers for other needs they have that we can't provide during construction. We hope to go out to bid before the Christmas holidays to obtain a contractor. In addition to the public meeting we will develop a more comprehensive PR plan so the people that use that site know what is happening. The objective is to have that center open by July 1, 2012. The site will offer every service that we now offer with some slightly different containers. We intend to go single-stream. The salvage shed area will be slightly expanded. We plan to incorporate cooking oil, residential food waste, and a northern HHW program to accept lights containing mercury. We are exploring and hope to incorporate film recycling. We will plan for and perhaps bid as an alternate a mulch/compost bunker to perhaps all residential size loads of mulch or compost. We are also going to try to start taking mattress again.

Cheren asks if there will be compactors.

Wilson states that there will be major compaction. We will be compacting as much as we can.

Pollock states that there will also be clothing and shoe recycling.

Cheren asks what happens with textiles.

Pollock states that it varies a lot. What happens locally, the PTA Thrift shop sells a lot of stuff and then there are some secondary and tertiary markets even for stuff not sold here. Then there are rag markets and other private charities that collect for overseas markets. The markets change quite a bit. Nike grinds up old athletic shoes, but most of the shoes and clothes are for reuse. There is a lot of nuance.

Yuhasz asks will single-stream be compacted on site.

Wilson replies based on the advice from our consultants we will go with a compactor for the comingled material.

Yuhasz asks does that make it more difficult to market.

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Wilson states that that was our concern but they assured us that that is common practice and would not devalue the material. The cardboard will be kept separate.
Ward asks is there an expected increase in recycling.

Pollock states that in doing some calculating based on a series of ranges against the materials Gayle talked about, and we didn't include any bump for the convenience of single-stream, when we went from six way sorting at the convenience centers we got a bump of about 10%. Single-stream programs seem to show curbside a similar 10%-20% bump in a relatively mature program like ours. It is less obvious how much bump we will get at the convenience center but we expect some just for the convenience factor, going from five containers down to two. New materials including clothing, food waste, vegetable oil, etc. may give us a half percent bump towards our waste reduction rate. The final five percent will be hard to get. How much more clothing or plastic film will we expect people to drop off? The food waste program may have a big response. We were conservative on the projections.

Ward asks if the value will go down due to commingling.

Pollock replies that it does, but we reduce hauling costs by reducing the number of trips with compacted materials. It's a different way to get some savings that compensates for the lost revenue. It's the same when we lost revenue from six way sorted material but we gained more opportunity to expand commercial recycling from 100 stops to 300. We gain labor time. We were able to start picking up the schools and gain revenue from the contract. It is hard to compare directly.

Ward asks has there been a conversation with the PTA Thrift Shop in not competing with the resource in the community that puts money back into the school systems.

Pollock states that a few years ago when we contemplated clothing we did and they expressed a little nervousness about it. I showed them some of the data from the waste sorts that showed textiles was still 5% of what we throw away. The thrift stores have been there fifty years.

Ward states that there should be some way to cooperate with them so that perhaps they could look at it before it goes down the conveyor belt and get the valuable material to support in-County programs.

Wilson states that if they express any interest we can work out something where they can have the materials at the convenience centers. Based on previous conversations they may not be able to handle the quantity. We would, as far as I'm concerned, negotiate with them and give them priority.

Bowerman states that the promotional materials should state the salable clothing should be directed to thrift stores before going to recycling.

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Wilson notes that we have cooperated with them steering usable electronics their way. But it overwhelmed them.

6. Programs and Services Update

a. *Landfill Gas Recovery Project* Presentation by Paul Spire. A copy of the power point presentation will be on the Solid Waste Web page under the SWAB button.

Pollock asks what is the timetable on getting the generator set.

Spire states that they have already bid the generator set and they held the pre-bid on the pipeline several weeks ago. I am not really sure of their time line on getting the project completed and having the generator up and running.

Bowerman asks what will be sent between here and Carolina North.

Spire replies gas.

Wilson states that it will be sort of like natural gas.

Sassaman asks what is the quality of the gas going in the pipeline. Will they have taken out any of the volatiles?

Spire state that there is a gas clean up component of the blower skid where the gas will be cleaned up before it goes into the pipeline. I am not sure of how clean the gas will be when it enters the pipe line but it will be of such that the engine will have no problem running on it.

Ward asks who determines where the generator is located. Why don't they make electricity right here and put it on the grid?

Spire replies there is no connection at the landfill that is appropriate to send power out.

Wilson states that if it were here they couldn't use the heat.

Sassaman states that it's my understanding that it was cheaper to run the pipe the short distance than to run the equivalent power lines to a point where they could tap in.

Wilson states that this project is conceptually in two phases. The first phase is all the plumbing and piping on the landfills that end at the flare station. The second phase is the pipeline to the University and the generator. When they get the first phase done we can start pulling gas and it will all be flared. It will be destroyed instead of being emitted into the air. In the final phase the gas will be used to generate energy. We hope to have the flare up and running before the Christmas holidays.

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Cheren asks what is this that is hooked and running all the way to the generator. Will the occasional flaring be intermittent.

Spire states that there are a couple of ways to do it. They can maximize the life of the field by turning down the draw on the field and saving the gas. You have to be careful once the lined landfill is capped to pull a vacuum on it. Most people don't realize that when you cap the landfill you can't have gas underneath or it will make a big balloon and the dirt will slide off. The wells have to pull consistently and gas has to come off at a minimum to keep the liner stable.

Wilson states that until the south side is capped we can play with that gas draw too.

Cheren states that to focus on the flaring, when it flares is there any opportunity to capture heat or anything at the landfill. Also when it does flare is there any kind of odor or environmental issues?

Spire states that there is no way to capture the heat here. It will be just like the flares at a petroleum plant; a pipe with a head on it, but it will be enclosed to shield it from the road. Eventually the gas will go through the engine and the County's share of revenue from carbon credits will increase along with a share of the revenue from the sale of electricity generated by the engine.

Cheren asks when it is hooked up to the generator; will we still use the flare?

Spire replies yes sometimes when there is no demand for the gas at the generator. The system knows when to shut down and that when it restarts pressure has to build back up. We anticipate for a year it may burn more frequently. As the landfill life extends, there will be less gas, so it will all be used.

Cheren asks when it's burned there is no residual odor or contamination.

Spire replies there should not be. It should burn all the impurities out. Methane is odorless. It is the other small percentage of gases that we're getting. As far as destroying the smell, that's what we want to get rid of along with the destruction of methane.

Pollock states that upstream of the combustion flare there is also other filtrations to take the condensation out. The odors that are coming out now are going to be mitigated at a couple of different spots along the way.

Talbert asks who pays us for flaring the gas.

Wilson states that the contract requires the University to pay us. There are two components. One in which we get paid a small amount for what goes through the flare but what goes through the engine we get paid more. This isn't a money making

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proposition for the County. It may take six to seven years to recover the attorney's fees and engineering expenses to get to this point. Best case we may be looking at \$135,000/year once it is fully functional.

Ward states that the notes said four years and now there is a bigger number this time. Did I read something that didn't include all the cost that you are now including?

Wilson states that there is a payback to the University and a payback to the County. As time goes on we have had more expenses during construction, overseeing and getting the O&M set up than we will have once the system is fully functional ongoing. We are spending more money than we originally envisioned because the construction process is being drawn out.

Ward states that regarding the \$135,000/year is that estimated at a ten year life expectancy.

Wilson replies that is the initial few years. On the out years once the quantity of gas is diminished the revenue will diminish. I think it will be around that amount for eight or ten years. There are also a lot of variables.

b. *New SWCC Hours of Operation* Wilson states that we have education and outreach planned that has several components to make people aware of the changes. We are still on target for October 3rd. We are in the process of interviewing the additional two employees required to operate the extended hours. We have the additional rolloff containers on order. Those are late due to flooding at the factory. There are also banners out at each of the five sites.

Ward asks to be reminded of the current hours and the changes.

Wilson states that originally there was no Sunday. Ferguson and High Rock are now open on Monday.

There may be some push back initially but hopefully by the first of the year they will be used to it.

Ward states that Walnut Grove will start out as dual stream and will change to single-stream when.

Wilson replies whenever the construction is finished Walnut Grove will go single-stream. The objective is by July 1, 2012.

Ward asks when will the towns go single-stream.

Wilson states that goal is also July 1, 2012.

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c. Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools Food Waste Pilot Program Marshall states that we don't have quite a month of data yet. In the three schools that are participating in the program – Estes Hills, Phillips Middle School, and East Chapel Hill High School, we are collecting only prep waste now, not waste from the students. We have found that there is not a lot of food waste from the three schools' cafeteria. The cafeteria staff is doing a good job of not preparing too much food. It will be interesting to see how much it's going to cost in the future if they don't meet the amount of the current 4,000 lbs./month to make it worth our contractor's time to collect the material. The cafeteria staff is all for it and are doing a great job. There is very little contamination.

Later in this term we will be doing a waste audit to find out what is in their waste stream. This means we will be in the cafeteria with different containers for the different products of waste – milk containers, silverware, cups, etc. The material will be weighed and we might be able to pick another thing to add to the collection.

Ward asks where does the food waste go now.

Marshall states the food waste that is collected goes to Brooks Contractor to get composted.

Pollock states that prior to this program it was going to the landfill.

Ward asks what is the lag time between going beyond the three schools.

Marshall states that we are going to figure out this term by doing the waste audit to determine what's in it and to see if it is going to be in Brook's best interest to continue to collect it.

Wilson states that there are very few locations that have implemented successful school food waste composting. The single most prevalent message is take it slow and systematic when you implement it. The most successful one that we've talked to is in Colorado and they have a five-year implementation.

Marshall states that Boulder, CO just started in the elementary schools and will not put it in their high schools until those students actually get to high school. As those students progress that is where the food waste collection will progress.

Our plan is to involve everyone in the school from the principals, school boards, to cafeteria staff, custodial staff, and parents. Everyone has to be onboard because it is a complicated process.

Ward asks if the School Board is aware of what is going on. They should be cheerleaders and putting some pressure on principals to make sure everybody [participates].

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Marshall states that I've pushed for that. It's been a long process. We've been in contact with the schools to discuss how to move forward since last year to implement in August, so finally in July they said they were ready for it. It was rushed. I wanted to make sure that everyone was on board. Everyone has to be the cheerleaders. What Boulder, CO did was have a meeting with all the schools every year with all the staff. It has to be a whole paradigm shift. During the waste sort, we will find things that are not compostable such as ketchup packets, saran/foil wrap around potatoes, and in order to make it work you will have to go bulk. Start buying ketchup bottles you have to squeeze so that there is no opportunity to throw that stuff in the garbage. The purchasing agents have to be on board. We can be the ones fighting for this.

Ward asks financially are the school system and the County winners in this. Do they save money?

Marshall states that yes the schools would save money in the end. They would need to negotiate their garbage hauling service. They have to show that the waste is lighter. One thing that Todd LoFrese, the assistant superintendent, wants is to find the savings by buying trays instead of the styrofoam trays.

Pollock states that we hope that just going to bulk instead of packets will save money on the supplies too. There is opportunity at the High School as they were dumping four dumpsters four times a week. Sometimes you have to dump more frequently because of the putrescibles.

Sassaman states that for kids that bring their lunch how do you deal with that.

Marshall states that again using Boulder, CO when they implemented their program they had parent volunteers at lunch telling the kids where each item went for about six months. They stood by the trash cans daily, then tapered off after that.

d. *Other* Ward states that next July when we go to single-stream, is what people can do there the same thing currently that UNC allows.

Tipton states that currently, not counting cardboard, we have three streams -- mixed paper, office paper and bottles and cans. We are phasing in this semester a combined paper grade. We will be adding #2 and #5 [non-bottle plastics like tubs] to the bottles and cans. We are rolling that out this semester in a phased approach. We are thinking about whether we will go single-stream or not.

Pollock asks if the few #4s can be included.

Tipton states that the contractor says they can take #1-7 but we restricted it to #2 and #5.

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Marshall states that in the past it has been difficult when students move in. There is a lot of stuff put out on the curb and it's been a struggle trying to let the students know who will pick up what. Long term residents get upset with the student move in. Last year we did door-to-door action in the off-campus student housing areas where we asked if they had bins, gave them brochures and explained how to start recycling. We have strict cardboard guidelines that you wouldn't know if you didn't live here.

This year we had a great partnership with UNC and Town of Chapel Hill because of some other issues Chapel Hill has been dealing with to do a welcome block party to welcome off-campus housing students to give information about Town services. This year it was really successful. There are still small areas that have a pile of stuff that they expect us to just cleanup which the property owners need to be responsible for.

7. **Election of SWAB Chair** Sassaman states that according to my understanding of the County's procedures for County boards, the County wishes to have the boards elect a chair every Fall. Our charter doesn't say anything about the terms of office of the chair or election of the chair. I announced at the last meeting that we would have an election of chair at this meeting. I've asked Commissioner Yuhasz to conduct an election.

Yuhasz states that the first thing we need to do is take nominations for chair.

Smith states that I'm very happy with the present chair. I nominate Jan Sassaman.

Bowerman seconds.

Ward asks whether you [Commissioner Yuhasz] have any better sense of what is going to transpire. I keep thinking there is going to be a conversation between the County and Towns that is going to bring up a host of issues that need to be brought up including this board and how does it look forward into the future. I ask that because if this is something that is going to happen soon it's one thing and if not then something else may happen first.

Yuhasz states that the Commissioners asked for and there was appointed from each of the governing boards involved in the solid waste a representative to investigate and make recommendations on a new interlocal agreement. Something we've talked about doing and we will do. That has been delayed as a result of the current discussions on the Rogers Road situation and what we are going to do about that. My feeling was rather than try to forge a new interlocal agreement at the same time that the jurisdictions were discussing Rogers Road it would be better to get the Rogers Road issue settled and then after that begin the discussions on a new interlocal agreement. That is the timeframe I see. We will get some recommendations on Rogers Road in October. The Commissioners then will decide on a course of action. Once that part of the whole landfill situation is nailed down then we will come back and begin to look at what form the interlocal agreement

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has to take on going forward. I would suggest that this board would continue in its current format for at least another year.

Ward asks what will happen on fourth of October BOCC meeting

Talbert states that keeping the landfill open until 2017 or closing 2013 will be part of the discussion. Hearing the community' concerns. The manager will present options for what remediation is going to happen. What remediation is possible, the funding issues, funding sources, and we have not set the parameters of what the Rogers Road neighborhood is.

Yuhasz states that in June the BOCC asked for staff to develop these proposals for this fall. What we can do, how we can fund it, how long can we continue to accrue revenue from the landfill. These are decisions that occur within the framework of the current interlocal agreement and will inform what we need to do about a new local interlocal agreement. The length of time the landfill continues to operate will directly impact funding available.

Smith moves to close the nominations and a second was offered but not audible.

Vote – 5 to 0 Passes

8. **Board Member Comments** Bowerman states that I am here unofficially because my term ended.

Sassaman states that the wording is that you continue.

Bowerman states that I'm here until someone else replaces me but I have other obligations on Wednesday nights.

Ward states that in the June minutes it was stated that there is funding to do all of the Rogers Road improvements. I am curious how that could be said not knowing the extent of what those are and the cost of them. I may have misread.

Wilson states that maybe the context of the conversation was based on the previously defined historic Rogers Road neighborhood. Then I think that statement is accurate; if they expand it, which is very possible, perhaps likely, then it's likely that statement would be less accurate, that's my interpretation.

Pollock asks if the provision or non-provision of sewers would affect the amount.

Wilson replies that the decision to provide or not provide sewer would of course have a large impact.

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Yuhasz states that there is no way we would know that there is enough money to pay for everything that we would like to do on Rogers Road.

9. **Other Business** Pollock states that we need volunteers to hand out cards on September 24th at Eubanks or Walnut Grove sites.

Smith moves to adjourn.

Bowerman seconds.

Adjourn: 9:04 pm