

# Solid Waste Advisory Group Meeting Summary

DATE: February 17, 2020

LOCATION: Southern Human Services Center Board Room

---

MEMBERS PRESENT: County Commissioner Penny Rich, Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger, Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle, Chapel Hill Council Member Karen Stegman, Carrboro Town Council Member Randee Haven-O'Donnell, Hillsborough Commissioner Matt Hughes, Hillsborough Town Commissioner Robb English, UNC-Healthcare Representatives Mel Hurston and Dan Lehman

MEMBERS ABSENT: County Commissioner Mark Marcoplos

STAFF PRESENT: County Solid Waste Director Robert Williams, Hillsborough Public Works Director Ken Hines, Chapel Hill Public Works Director Lance Norris, County Solid Waste Staff: Bruce Woody, Blair Pollock, Cheryl Young, Wanda McCain, Nora Ketchie, Chapel Hill Public Works Staff Wendy Simmons, UNC-Chapel Hill Solid Waste BJ Tipton

---

## Call to Order

Dan Lehman will be taking over SWAG duties for Mel Hurston

## Approval of November 4, 2019 Meeting Summary

Approved

Rich requests to forward all future minutes to Board members of each jurisdiction.

## Action Items

### *Conducting a Feasibility Survey for Textiles – Commissioner Mark Marcoplos*

Williams states that Marcoplos requested that he would like a feasibility study done. WasteZero will present. We have invited local non-profits that might be affected. The question is whether this is something that the community would be interested in. The presentations that follow will benefit the discussion.

### *WasteZero Presentation – Alice Koehler, Senior VP*

Stegman asks what the relationship between WasteZero and Simple Recycling is.

Koehler responds that they are separate companies. Simple Recycling would do collections and processing.

Rich asks if WasteZero has done any surveys on the impact of local non-profits.

Koehler responds no, but they are operational in several hundred communities and have not heard of any issues. Simple Recycling has already paid the fixed costs of opening the hub, so even if the participation rate is relatively low it's still profitable. They would only collect residences where a bag is noted.

Hemminger asks if the multi-unit housing and the universities will be serviced.

Koehler responds that they usually only service people's houses on the normal recycling route, but could work with the apartment complexes and universities to set up special events.

Pollock asks if any of the unincorporated areas will be serviced.

Koehler states that it would be on a case-by-case basis, depending on the square mileage. Would need to see the routes to confirm.

Williams asks if textile sales are tied to any markets, overseas or here, that would affect the services or prices of textile buying to a point where we would end up paying for the service instead of being paid.

Koehler responds that in the multi-year contract all pricing would be fixed, but has never seen the prices go down.

### *WasteZero Impact on Area Non-Profits*

Barbara Jessie-Black (CommunityWorx) states that they already have a similar program (GRICE) and around 50-60k of their annual revenue comes from the sale of unwearable textiles. We serve between 186,000-200,000 residents and divert between 312,000-350,000 lbs. of waste from the landfill each year. We tell customers to bring everything that they don't want and we'll figure out how to dispose of it appropriately.

Koehler states that there is a 90 day opt out clause in their contract; if there is an immediate impact to non-profit donations we could terminate the contract early.

Rich asks what would need to be done before implementation.

Williams responds that a Scope Of Work (SOW), including all of the publicity and advertising, then a contract would need to be put together, be reviewed by legal, and then come back to SWAG for a vote. To implement this it would also have to go to all of the boards and councils for approval per the interlocal agreement. This is a 3 year contract, so we don't want to rush. Staff will work quickly and get some timelines in place. Identifying tracking systems for non-profit impacts and public usage will be a part of the process.

Hemminger asks if the launch could be announced on Earth Day even if it's not ready to be implemented yet, and advertise both local programs and curbside from WasteZero.

Jessie-Black adds that she would be happy to work with us and do some intentional tracking, especially once the program starts.

#### *Operating Costs Needed to Accommodate WasteZero*

Williams states that the County has the technology in its vehicles to work with WasteZero. The cost to upgrade and add the extra button would be an initial cost of \$17,000 and an additional annual cost of \$9,500.

Koehler states that tablets could be provided at no cost and run the County's current program.

### **Orange County Solid Waste Master Plan Discussion:**

#### *Definition of Zero Waste*

Hemminger asks if there are other ways to get to true zero waste.

Williams states that that is the goal of the Solid Waste Management Plan which will include comprehensive engagement of the public as part of its objectives.

#### *Objectives*

Rich asks what the timeline is for working with a consultant.

Williams explain that if the objectives are finalized at today's meeting that we would then develop the SOW and be able to present that at the next SWAG meeting. Once that is approved we would go to the RFP process and pick the firm that best suits Orange County's needs. It would be around 18 months after that before we have a plan in place.

Lavelle asks if we could have benchmarks for 5 yrs, 10 yrs, etc.

Williams responds that there will absolutely be benchmarks built in, especially when it comes to building infrastructure and industry in the area it will take some time to get there.

English asks how 80% became the target diversion goal.

Williams explains we're currently around 60% diversion from the landfill. Staff did research on other programs in the country, and factored in the costs with current technologies that would be needed to get from 80% to 90%. The attainable percentage could change in the future with new technologies.

Rich states that as you move forward, it should be taken to all of the boards at the next information sessions.

Hemminger asks if by next meeting we can have a percentage breakdown of our waste stream, as it is helpful when trying to assess why we can't achieve 100% diversion.

Haven-O'Donnell adds that it would be helpful to have information on "potential tech" and projections on where things could be going in the next few decades when we are presenting this to our boards.

### **Next Meeting**

A Doodle Poll will be sent out to schedule the next meeting.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at: 8:03 pm

Name of Minute Taker: Nora Ketchie