

WHATCOM COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
July 24, 2014

Members Present:

Eric Johnston, Barbara Brenner, Calvin DenHartog, Pete Edwards, Marj Leone, Amber Jones, Casey Heinle, Mark Peterson

Members Absent:

Marty Kuljjs, Greg Young, Ed Nikula

Staff Present:

Debbie Bailey, Gary Stoyka

Others Present:

Jeff Hegedus, Whatcom County Health; Diana Wadley, Dept. of Ecology; Chris Benedict, WSU Extension; Justin Clary, Maul Foster & Alongi; Neil Alongi, Maul Foster & Alongi

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Whatcom County Solid Waste Committee was called to order on Thursday, July 24th, 2014 at 5:32 p.m. in the Public Works Meeting Room by Vice-Chair, Calvin DenHartog.

Introductions:

New member Mark Peterson, of Sustainable Connections, was introduced as well as Diana Wadley - Ecology, Jeff Hegedus – Health, and Justin Clary and Neil Alongi – Maul Foster and Alongi.

Minutes:

The minutes of the, April 24th SWAC meeting were read and approved as written.

Communications:

None

Agenda Items:

1. 2015-2016 Solid Waste Budget

The two-year draft budget spreadsheet was reviewed. Chris Benedict, WSU Extension, gave a summary of their program and all the outreach work the dedicated volunteers do. There have been 840 volunteer hours to date for 2014. WSU Extension is requesting an additional \$5,000 for a total of \$25,000 each year, to enhance their program. Jeff Hegedus asked if there was any tracking of the percentage of the county that does home composting? Chris stated that he has to report to the state, so could get those numbers. Eric Johnston moved, and Barbara Brenner seconded, that \$5,000 be added each year to the 2015-2016 budget for WSU Extension. Motion carried.

There was discussion on the lack of education and outreach budgeted for the two-year cycle. Mark Peterson said that Sustainable Connections and others do education. Eric does not want money in that budget item if it is not designated for something particular and that we should wait until the Comp Plan is completed. Gary Stoyka announced that Public Works and the Health Department have made a decision to transfer the Solid Waste division to Health. Jeff Hegedus said that Public Works has been hard pressed to take on a lot of new projects. Gary explained the supplemental budget process by which money can be allocated after the regular budget cycle. Calvin DenHartog doesn't have a problem with putting \$35,000 back into that budget item so that Health will have something available to start with. Jeff said that the budget reflects the approach to the whole program. We should try to change behavior and \$25,000 to \$35,000 is a small amount of money. We need to do more than websites, for example, brand the program. Eric moved, and Casey seconded, that \$35,000 be put in the budget each year for education and outreach. Motion carried.

Gary stated that Solid Waste now had a healthy fund balance. Calvin asked for assurance that the fund could not be raided. He was told that it is a dedicated fund. Eric moved, and Marj seconded, that the budget be passed as presented with the two amendments. Motion carried.

2. Update of Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan

It was announced that Council approved the contract with Maul Foster & Alongi (MFA) for the Comp Plan update. Justin Clary and Neil Alongi were present and explained their backgrounds as well as naming other staff that will be working on the Plan. Justin reviewed the scope of the project and that they would be complying with the new Ecology regulations and asking for SWAC's input. SWAC will be using a sub-committee to work with MFA and then bring the information back to the whole SWAC.

Debbie Bailey said that it was important to build flexibility into the Plan. Mark Peterson said there were great opportunities for construction waste and recycling, overall supply chain management, and food waste. Eric stated that from the perspective of reducing waste to the landfill, the low-hanging fruit is organics, particularly commercial. Mark Peterson said that Part B of organics is bio-digesters; technology should be part of the Plan. Barbara Brenner said that there are digesters in the county, but just used by farmers. Calvin proposed building a bigger one that others (besides farmers) could bring to. There was also discussion on bio-gas. Mark said we should be looking at regional bio-solid management. Jeff Hegedus replied that we can do that, but they must be solid waste handling facilities. Calvin said that Green Earth Technology does a great job, and that Nooksack Valley takes both food and yard waste there. Neil Alongi said that the bio-gas industry needs high BOD (food, grease, fish), no yard debris. Mark stated we need to be focusing on the commercial sector. Digesters cannot take post-consumer. Composters can take post-consumer. Eric Johnston said that Bellingham will be having a conversation on handling bio-solids at Post Point. Vactor waste is also increasing because of stormwater rules. Calvin also mentioned that we need to prosecute illegal dumping and burning in open fields. Barbara said that Envirostars is good for people that are already into it. We need a program that shows people what things cost. It's difficult to get the message across in dollars and cents.

Justin Clary said that Task 1 of the project is visionary, Task 2 data gathering, Task 3 Summarizing the existing system, and Task 4 is evaluating and creating an action plan. MFA has video-conferencing at their State St. office for the sub-committee. The sub-committee members are Amber Jones, Marty Kuljis, and Eric Johnston; Mark Peterson also said he would be available. Gary Stoyka relayed that the County Council wants more public outreach during this process. Public Works is working with Justin on ideas and will return to council with options. Some of the options were hosting an Open House, flyers in garbage bills, dedicated website, and a charrette. Both SSC and NVD said they could accommodate the flyers in their billings.

Other Business

Amber Jones asked about the Service level Ordinance that was sent to Council. Gary replied that the Ordinance passed, but Council put the deleted section on reporting requirements back in.

Next Meeting Agenda

1. Product Stewardship Council Presentation
2. SW Comprehensive Plan

Next Meeting Schedule

The next meeting will be held from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 23, 2014, in the Public Works Garden Level Meeting room.

Whatcom County Solid Waste Meeting Minutes – 7/24/2014

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Whatcom County Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting held

Attest: Jenica Reptuch for
Debbie Bailey, Coordinator
WCPW Solid Waste Debbie Bailey

Mark Peterson VICE CHAIR
Calvin DenHartog, Vice-Chair
Whatcom County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
MARK PETERSON, VICE CHAIR

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