

Minutes – Regular Meeting  
Solid Waste Advisory Board  
January 15, 2009  
**Approved February 5, 2009**

Attendance: Jan Sassaman, Linda Bowerman, Doug Guild, Al Vickers, Remus Smith, and Michelle Grunwald

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

1. **Opening and Welcome** Sassaman states that there is a new member to the board, Doug Guild. We will go around the room and introduce ourselves and have Doug give a little information about him self.

Guild states that I've been environmental consulting for 25 years. I've dealt with solid waste issues with industrial clients primarily.

2. **Adoption of Minutes from October 2 SWAB meeting** Vickers moves to accept. Bowerman 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passes unanimously.

3. **Board Member Comments** Smith says I have been asked by people in the southern part of the county, other than a transfer station, what could be done with the garbage.

Wilson states that every community in the state has waste collection. It is a necessity for public health and the environment. For those communities that do not have a local landfill or a local alternative waste management facility such as an incinerator, then there has to be a transfer station to efficiently and effectively deliver the waste that is generated to a distant waste management facility. In Orange County there was a six-year landfill search in the 1990s that was unsuccessful. Since 1997 it was clear that the county would have to have a transfer station. The reason for a transfer station is because the collection vehicles for the waste are not geared or designed to both collect and haul long distance to discharge it. What else could be done? In the short term, nothing. The landfill will close in two years and there is nothing else that could be conceived and developed that could handle the waste.

Smith asks are there any new processes in the near future.

Wilson states that there are a number of technologies that are being researched. Waste-to-energy and mass burn technologies have been proven effective and efficient and safe for a number of years. Many of the other alternative technologies have not proven on a large scale that they can handle a mixed waste stream.

Sassaman states that also if the alternative waste processing facility is put in a remote distance from the area where garbage is generated a waste transfer station is still needed.

Smith states that another question that was asked of him is why are we dumping on them and why is 110 acres needed for a site.

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Sassaman states that that is a question for the BOCC. They are the ones that selected the sites and went through the process.

Wilson states that the Board developed a set of criteria and a set of weighting and ranking factors that resulted in the final group of sites. Why both the sites are larger than 25 acres? There is talk about future alternative technologies and it will need to go somewhere too. The size is also to minimize the impacts on surrounding community with larger buffers.

Grunwald states that there is a new children's product safety law which goes into effect February 10<sup>th</sup> which states that any product that is not certified safe cannot be sold, which was the original law. Last week there was clarification that exempted thrift stores and second resellers. There is a concern that all children's used products will be thrown into the landfill. This may be something that whoever does the communication may want to get out as information.

Wilson asks where the information is being disseminated from.

Grunwald states that working with kids I'm always looking at stuff from various groups but it's on the Federal Government's web site.

Wilson states that it may be that this is something the schools system should be providing some information on. Blair will check into it.

Sassaman states that the recycling collection has been doing well in my area. Also since Harv is here the garbage collectors are doing a good job and are very pleasant.

Vickers asks how has the cardboard collection been.

Wilson states that there have been a few problems in the first couple of weeks. People were putting out too much or not cutting it down. Most of that has been resolved and they [recycling collectors] are leaving tags of what they [the public] need to do.

Pollock states that there is still some confusion about pizza boxes. It is OK to put them in the trash and it is OK to put them in the recycling if they are clean of food. Also today at the landfill they have started to do the mock ticketing on residential loads that contain more than the threshold amount of cardboard. The mock ticketing will continue through March 1 when the real ticketing will begin. Notification was sent out to all the haulers that this was happening.

Speaking with Carrboro assistant to the Public Works director, they will be putting out stickers on all the [single family garbage] carts in Carrboro that say "no cardboard

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in the garbage”. Once those have been applied we will put out signs all over Carrboro that also say ‘no cardboard in the garbage, recycle it.’ They plan to make that their main approach rather than enforcement.

In Chapel Hill they have gone door to door telling them not to put it in the garbage. We don't know what Hillsborough is doing.

- 4. Solid Waste Planning Update and Discussion** Pollock states that the work group met in November and made some decision about the direction it wants to proceed as far as recommendations to the Board regarding the convenience centers and rural waste collection. The essential recommendations are to stay status quo on the number of convenience centers and look at franchising more closely as a way to get everyone on board and look at charging for bulky waste but not solid waste in the near term. A specific recommendation will be made on that. We did not get to the commercial.

For the up coming meeting, they are already planning their financial plan analysis. They will distribute staff and equipment allocations worksheets to help us get our overall budget picture in a long-term plan. There will be similar worksheets for escalation variables. [There are] Transfer station and waste transfer capital and operating models which they will work with Gayle and the consultant on and then the overall enterprise fund workbook that will consolidate all the assumptions about landfill and transfer station tipping fees, 3R fees, recycling revenues and all the other revenues that comprise the enterprise fund. The objective is to still have a completed plan to the Commissioners this calendar year.

Sassaman asks when is the next meeting.

Pollock states that it hasn't been set yet but possibly late February.

Sassaman asks what else needs to be done to get it to the Commissioners. What other decision points are there?

Pollock states that some kind of more detail on the commercial options. There is a vagary in the process. The work group is mostly public – the SWAB, elected officials and staff. There aren't any businesses that are going to be the primary client of the commercial part of the plan on the work group. Once the options are shaped clearly it will be a question of how to drag that in front of the commercial people again. They've seen quite a bit already. The financials will be in a model. There will be a lot of "if-then"s. If the transfer station looks like it will cost \$65 per ton to operate, what is the impact of that, if that shifts waste to the recycling side, then what happens to the transfer station side? Should you assume no revenue from recyclables for the next five years and fund everything with 3-R fees? What about funding SWCC's with a pay as you throw fee? Once that set of decisions is finalized, you can recommend a financial

model based on a combination of revenue sources. Then send that to the Commissioners and Town Boards for their comments and then bring it to the public and then back to the Board for their final recommendation.

Sassaman asks has it been established who is responsible for bringing it to the public from each jurisdiction.

Pollock states that it has been looked at as a unified process that would go once. You as the SWAB can decide if it's more effective to bring it forward four times to each of the boards and public rather than once to the public, you should let us know that.

Sassaman raises the concern of what if one of the Towns decides to do it differently? That is something that should come up in one of the planning meetings, assuming we get all the Towns' representatives there.

Wilson notes that unless the plan is finalized by June 30, we will not be eligible for the expanded grant money.

- 5. Transfer Station Site Search Update and Discussion** Wilson states that on December 11<sup>th</sup> the Board was presented with a recommendation from the manager and consultant. The Board had a lengthy discussion of where to go from there. They decided to eliminate one of the final three sites and proceed with two sites. One is the 43-acre OWASA property and the other is the adjacent 142-acre property owned by Dennis Howell. [Howell LLC] Staff was instructed to conduct assessments, appraisals, surveys, etc. on each property and come back at the earliest opportunity and present the work. Presumably they would select one of the two sites. Staff was also directed to come back on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with a proposal to initiate a citizen advisory group consisting of residents who live in that part of the county to assist the County in development of the transfer station at one of those locations.

Sassaman asks where are you with the assessments.

Wilson states that they are in the final stages of concluding an agreement with a property appraiser. The survey is already under contract. A surface water assessment has been requested. Letters were sent to both property owners notifying them that their property had been selected for investigation and assessment by the BOCC and asked for permission to conduct the various assessments. One of the property owners did not provide that permission. Subsequently a letter of 30-day right of entry notice followed. The OWASA Board wanted to know in more detail the type of assessments that is going to be conducted because they have some sludge there. The OWASA Board meets on January 22<sup>nd</sup> to consider how to respond to the County's inquiry.

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Bowerman asks why the other property was ruled out.

Wilson states that, not speaking for the Board, but it may be some combination of it being in the family for several generations so there was some empathy with the owners.

There is a willing seller, but on his (seller's) terms only.

Vickers asks what is the schedule impact and the capacity of the current landfill, how bad is it?

Wilson states that there is less than a 10% chance of having a transfer station ready by the time the landfill reaches capacity. There will be another aerial survey done in the spring to have a better assessment of the rate of fill.

#### **6. Programs/Services Update**

*Landfill Leachate Sewer* Wilson states that the purpose was to replace our current leachate basin with a sewer line. It was decided that once the Town Operations Center was built and sewer was on Millhouse Rd., it might be advisable to bring the sewer over down Eubanks Rd. and eliminate the leachate basin and pump directly into the sewer for both economic and environmental reasons. There have been a number of delays, but it is now under construction. There is a manhole near the intersection of Millhouse and Eubanks Rd. The original cost of the project was \$284,000 and then an additional \$100,000 for design and permitting cost. Another \$209,000 is needed to complete the project due to hitting a substantial amount of rock. The project should be concluded by the end of February or early March.

*Landfill Gas Recovery Project* Wilson states that a final draft agreement between the University and the County was presented to BOCC on December 11<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting the Commissioners asked questions and directed us to bring it back for potential adoption which would initiate potential implementation. It's going to the Board on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The attorneys are still fine-tuning the agreement with hopes that it will be completed by the first of next week.

There are two phases to the project. Phase I is to build the gas recovery system and the accompanying flare system at the landfill. Flares will be located at the landfill and the gas recovered will be destroyed. Phase II is development of a gas line from landfill property, parallel to the railroad down to Weaver Dairy Rd. Ext. to Homestead Rd. and back to the old Duke Power offices where the University will have a power generation station that will take the gas and convert it to power to be used at Facilities Management offices. There will be a little revenue generated for the County depending on the carbon credit market. One problem is that the landfill is at its peak now and from here forward things will be diminishing. The line will go

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across Homestead Road to the southside where the governments own the property and can give the easement rather than negotiating with multiple private property owners.

*Solid Waste Budget Issues* Wilson states that the department has been instructed to reduce the operating budget by 10% relative to current year's budget. That may be hard to do with major expenses related to designing and permitting a transfer station and landfill closure plans to develop along with a long list of other problems. It is possible that there may be some [recycling] service reductions because there is very little in the landfill that can be cut such as ground water monitoring, waste compaction, or not weigh trucks coming in. The part of the budget that is more discretionary is recycling. In addition to that the recycling market is down so the recycling revenue this year is to be about \$200,000 lower than expected. A garbage truck cost \$250,000, a hook lift truck \$217,000. If they take the reserves, then how do we pay closure, the transfer station and sustaining our operation? We will have to cut for equity reasons. We received our first payment for the Green tract from the two Towns and the County of \$214,000.

*Switch to Commingled Recycling* Pollock states that last spring the consultants did an analysis with staff of the impact of switching the drop-off sites and the commercial program to commingled can and bottle collection. It looked like the tradeoff of less revenue for commingled than we'd gotten from the source separated materials was worth the option for the efficiency gained on the labor side. We no longer spend time baling and separating. In December the switch happened. The switch has been successful. They save dumping time at the processing pad too. A dangerous aspect of the operation has been eliminated. People like it. It is more convenient. The payload and tonnages are up.

Grunwald states that the feedback she's getting is very positive too that it's easier now.

*Recycling Markets Collapse* Pollock states that the recycling markets have collapsed. We are still getting paid for corrugated cardboard, newspaper is border line and mixed paper we are paying to get rid of. Some counties are stopping their recycling programs; they don't have the surplus we do. Coca-Cola opened a billion- bottle-a-year conversion plant yesterday that should improve the plastic [PET] bottle market. To help the paper markets, you should try to buy the recycled content products.

*Other* Pollock states that some good news is Orange County has crossed the threshold to 50.4% waste reduction rate compared to 1991. We are the highest in the State for waste reduction [per capita] in FY07-08 going from 1.36 tons per person to 0.68 tons per person landfilled

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Wilson states that we are scheduled to move to the new Solid Waste Administration building on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and all the future SWAB meetings will be held there.

There is a final draft of the Rogers Rd. Small Area Task Force report. This is a group that has been meeting for the last couple of years to look at the Rogers Rd. area, Green Tract and the area south of the landfill and how it might be developed in the future. It is in the Town of Chapel Hill planning area. It impacts solid waste a couple of ways in laying out a development scenario for the Green Tract. As a part of that development the one concern is the development of a roadway connection north from Purefoy Dr./Green Tract area to Eubanks Rd. There are three options which aren't feasible.

**7. Other Business - None**

Smith moves to adjourn. Grunwald 2<sup>nd</sup>,

Adjourn: 8:55 pm

Next meeting February 5, 2009  
Solid Waste Administration Bldg., Chapel Hill