

**FINAL MINUTES**  
**PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY**  
**SOLID WASTE ADVISORY GROUP (SWAG) MEETING**  
**February 18, 2021**

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**OPENING:**

Mr. Scott MacDonald called the meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Group to order at 4:00pm via Cisco Webex.

**ATTENDANCE:**

**SWCAG Members:**

**Present:** Mr. Mark Bonner, Mr. James Gestrich, Mr. David Watjen, Mr. Joseph Chisholm, Ms. Jane Wyman, Mr. Richard Arvin, Mr. Will Lintner, Ms. Tiziana Bottino, and Ms. Keisha Strand.

**Absent:** Mr. Harry Glasgow, Mr. James Huisenga, Ms. Joan Moon, Mr. Albert E. Brooks, Mr. Ned Greene, and Ms. Virginia Douglas.

**Guests:** Ms. Stacey Demers from SCS Engineers

**Solid Waste Staff:** Mr. Tom Smith, Ms. Amy Zitzmann, Mr. Scott MacDonald, Mr. Trent Magill, Mr. Sadhu Sandhu, and Ms. Christine Hobbs.

**AGENDA TOPICS**

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. MacDonald welcomed everyone to the meeting via Cisco Webex and proceeded to confirm which members were in attendance.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A quorum was valid, so the draft minutes of the December 17, 2020 and January 21, 2021 SWAG meetings were approved.

**GENERAL PROJECTS UPDATES**

**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN POLICY DISCUSSION**

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Mr. Scott MacDonald introduced Ms. Stacey Demers from SCS Engineers. Ms. Demers greeted the committee and jumped right into her continued presentation about the Solid Waste Management Plan. This afternoon's topics include diverting food waste, and construction and demolition debris management.

Ms. Demers started her presentation discussing the diversion of food scraps.

Ms. Demers gave a brief overview of the Balls Ford Road facility. Currently, the yard waste and composting is done by Freestate Farms. This process involves composting yard waste in large bays, with piping that aerate the material and keep odors down. This odor minimization is thanks in part to a bio filter. The Balls Ford Road Composting facility is located on the western end of the county and is currently able to take 80,000 tons of organics per year. Freestate is currently processing yard debris, green waste, leaves, grass and brush. The facility already has the capability to accept and handle food scraps, and if incorporated into the Solid Waste Management Plan, more material can be diverted from the landfill and made into a useful product such as compost.

Ms. Demers believes it is very difficult when people or communities say they want to recycle or divert large quantities away from landfill disposal. Diverting 50% or more is considered a large amount. Currently, the county is diverting about 33% of material away from landfill disposal. This 33% includes recycling paper, plastics, and metal cans. To get the county to 50% diversion, Ms. Demers believes along with food waste, compostable paper (such as paper towels, napkins and pizza boxes) would increase our recycling, as well as increase our production of compost.

Freestate Farms is already taking commercial food scraps, and some homeowners have also signed up for privately offered curbside compost collection service. The County also received a grant to work with six Prince William County public schools to divert food waste. This grant will help with cost of collection and training. In addition to the residential yard waste collection planned for the fall, there is also the potential to include food scraps with yard waste collection. So, Ms. Demers question to the committee is if the County should pursue the collection and composting of food scraps; and if food scraps should be collected with yard waste.

Mr. MacDonald reiterated that the food waste would go directly to the Balls Ford Road facility to be made into compost. Mr. Arvin asked if the food waste would require a separate truck for collection. Mr. MacDonald answered that yes, each collection (refuse, recycling, yard waste and/or food scraps) would require a separate truck, most commonly a rear loader. Mr. Arvin

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asked if the haulers have been informed; to which Mr. Smith answered that yes, they were on the ad hoc advisory committee. This is somewhat of a mixed blessing as they will make money off the increased pick-ups, but this will also require them to buy more equipment and increase staffing. Mr. Arvin continued by stating that having trucks run so often in neighborhoods would be a problem. Mr. Smith replied that if yard waste and food scraps are collected in the same bin and collection route, it will be one less pass through the neighborhood. Although we cannot limit the number of passes through a neighborhood, the County can establish minimum standards but, ultimately, that is determined by the hauler and HOA. Mr. Chisholm asked about the relationship between the school board and the board of supervisors, as it relates to the collection of food waste. Mr. Smith answered that the two boards work together at a staff level. The County hopes to have every school cafeteria involved in a program, with the schools being responsible for getting the food waste to Balls Ford Road. We will see how it works with these first six schools and go from there. Mr. Jamie Gestrich asked if information regarding the compostable materials could be presented on a handout and given to people as they enter the landfill and Balls Ford Road facilities. Mr. MacDonald replied that there is currently a drop off box for food waste at Balls Ford Road and they are experimenting with signage. He will make sure that compostable paper products are included in the signage.

Mr. Gestrich also asked if enough compostable materials were collected, could they be burned, and the gas collected be used to generate our own energy. Mr. Smith answered that we are focusing on non-burnable technologies. As burning is extremely expensive and requires very stringent air permits. Ms. Tiziana Bottino asked if composting food waste is voluntary. Mr. MacDonald answered that the first priority is to divert the yard waste from the landfill, see how it goes and then work on diverting food waste. Some large chains such as Wal-Mart, Target, Giant and Wegmans are all currently composting food waste. Other large generators such as the schools, are interested too, which is why we are starting this program with PWCPS. Mr. Smith concluded by stating that we may want to consider a transfer station at the landfill for food and yard waste, as the Balls Ford Road facility is located more in the western part of Prince William County.

Next, Ms. Demers moved on to the topic of construction and demolition debris (CDD). As many know, the landfill is for municipal solid waste. This is not construction and demolition debris. As a courtesy, the landfill will accept small amounts of CDD (up to 2.5 cu yds) from county residents free of charge, and up to 2.5 cu yards from small contractors for a fee of \$25. In 2020, 20,000 tons of CDD was deposited at the landfill. Since the landfill will only accept small loads,

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there are some private facilities in the county that will take larger amounts. Currently, this arrangement works very well, but we must prepare for a time when more of these CDD places close. It is also very hard for staff who work at the scale house to tell if the person is a contractor or a homeowner. Many small contractors know this and take advantage of the situation.

An idea moving forward would be to charge everyone for CDD. Mr. Lintner is concerned that if everyone is charged, you will get some people who will start illegally dumping along the highways. Ms. Bottino suggested charging everyone, but at a lower rate than the current \$25. Mr. Chisholm stated that homeowners were told that by paying \$75 a year in their taxes for their solid waste fee, they would be able to dispose of material free of charge. So, on top of the \$75, you would be asking for an additional fee to dispose of CDD. Both Mr. Chisholm and Mr. Lintner are in favor of raising the solid waste fee. This will be easier on the homeowner to understand. Ms. Demers agreed, as the solid waste fee has not been updated in over 20 years. It is time to get up to speed, at least in terms of inflation. Mr. Lintner stated that this would be more convenient. You must make it convenient for people to use the landfill. Mr. Mark Bonner also brought up the increased fuel charges. Haulers will be charging more to balance out the increase in fuel. By upping the fees, you make it convenient and you do not upset the residents. Mr. Smith suggested upping the solid waste fee or start charging everyone at the gate. Mr. Chisholm suggested that we take a closer look at the contractors and commercial CDD haulers and if they are found having not paid their fee to dump, they should be charged a very hefty fine. Mr. Smith replied that it is very hard to argue when they are sitting on the scales and traffic is backing up. The disposal of CDD and dirt is a large problem that continues to grow, as Potomac Landfill will be closing soon. The need for more CDD recycling facilities is ever growing.

**LANDFILL UPDATES**

Mr. Smith is still negotiating with the Bocke's family. If this property is purchased, it will increase the landfill buffer zone. Hopefully by next month they will have a recommendation and then a sales contract.

A notice to proceed was issued today (2/18/2021) on the landfill cell construction. Construction will start in full about early March.

Four or five new gas wells will be dug soon. The final cost proposal has not been given yet, but after we have the funds, these new wells will start to go in in April.

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As for landfill operations, solid waste staff is currently working on updating the facility rules for both the landfill and Balls Ford Road locations. This may impact the hours of operation. Balls Ford Road is currently working on developing a master plan for the convenience area. Mr. Smith clarified that this is mainly for the entrance scale house and to increase the flow of trucks entering and exiting the facility. He is also looking at how the Balls Ford Road project will move the road slightly.

**BALLS FORD ROAD UPDATES**

Freestate Farms is currently on Phase II of their anerobic digester project. They are working on plans and how to fit everything on the site. They are also working on increasing the capacity for food waste and an in-vessel aerobic digester. This will enable them to take wetter materials. This is currently in the design stage and financing is being sought.

**RECYCLING PROGRAM UPDATE**

Mr. MacDonald informed the committee that two more glass recycling trailers were added at James S. Long Park and the Ferlazzo building. These trailers are similar to the blue recycling trailers. They have only received one complaint, which is easily remedied. Glass recycling is increasing dramatically in Prince William County, and Mr. MacDonald is looking to contract out the transportation and recycling of the glass soon. Ms. Wyman drove by James S. Long Park and noted that you can clearly see the glass recycling trailers even from Route 15. Mr. MacDonald is hoping that with these two extra sites, we can bump up our numbers and get even more trailers to put out at additional sites.

**SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr. Smith is still waiting to have a discussion with Fortistar about the interconnect. He plans to pursue the interconnect issue and then talk to NOVEC.

**WASTE CONVERSION PROJECT**

The waste conversion project is still stagnant. Mr. Smith stated that the company the County was working with has not reached back out to the County regarding touring the Maine plan which was shut down in 2020 due to financing issues. Mr. Smith is waiting to see what happens with the Maine facility.

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**COMMITTEE ISSUES/CONCERNS**

Ms. Tiziana Bottino would like to make SWAG meetings open to the public. Mr. MacDonald will reach out to the planning department and see if we can do that going forward. Mr. Smith stated that we will need to look at where the county posts public meetings to let the public know they can join if they wish.

Mr. Chisholm asked if solid waste was doing anything regarding advanced plastics/chemical recycling. Mr. MacDonald answered that the bill is currently in the General Assembly. Advanced recycling is a concept being pushed by the plastics industry. In advanced recycling, the polymers are broken down (process known as repolymerization) and these polymers can then be used to make new items. This is different from mechanical recycling in which items are separated by type, shredded, and washed to make pellets. These pellets are then used to make new items. Repolymerization is done with using a chemical process. This process is more expensive, and plastics are made into a fuel and burned which is the concern with this process.

Ms. Tiziana Bottino would like to formally oppose this process of recycling. Mr. MacDonald stated that anyone can make comments regarding this bill. If you wish to write to your legislator, it is bill SD1164 Advanced Recycling.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Scott MacDonald adjourned the meeting at 5:36 pm. The next SWAG meeting will be on Thursday March 18, 2021 at 4:00 pm via Cisco Webex.