

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

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. Joseph Chisholm, Ms. Jane Wyman, Mr. Richard Arvin, Mr. Will Lintner, Ms. Tiziana Bottino, and Ms. Keisha Strand.

Absent: Mr. Mark Bonner, Mr. Harry Glasgow, Mr. James Huisenga, Mr. James Gestrich, Ms. Joan Moon, Mr. David Watjen, Mr. Albert E. Brooks, Mr. Ned Greene, and Ms. Virginia Douglas.

Guests: Ms. Stacey Demers from SCS Engineers and Mr. Ek Lou (Triangle resident).

Solid Waste Staff: Mr. Tom Smith, Mr. Scott Kleinfeld, Mr. Scott MacDonald, Mr. Jason Pauley, Ms. Amy Zitzmann, 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

The draft minutes of the February 18, 2021 SWAG meeting was not approved as the group did not have a quorum.

GENERAL PROJECTS UPDATES

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN POLICY DISCUSSION

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Ms. Stacey Demers from SCS Engineers continued with her presentation of the Solid Waste Management Plan. Her topic this afternoon was focused on waste conversion technologies. Simply, waste conversion technology takes waste and converts that waste into energy. These technologies are important to help extend the life of the landfill. Currently, the landfill can accommodate waste until 2063. Once the landfill reaches capacity, it becomes very expensive to transport waste outside of the county. With a waste conversion facility, landfill life can be extended, and waste can be transformed into a useable (profitable) energy. This technology is already planned for use at Balls Ford Road with an anerobic digester.

Ms. Demers explained that there are two types of traditional conversion technology. Mass burn and refuse derived fuel. Both technologies convert waste into energy (mainly by burning), but still end up with quite a lot of material that needs to be landfilled. This type of waste conversion technology has been in use for quite some time and have proven reliable. There are also three types of emerging conversion technology (gasification, pyrolysis, and plasma arc gasification). These three types of conversion technology are still new and are very expensive for municipal solid waste facilities to operate. What Ms. Demers encourages is that the committee and staff look at the risks, and economics of these waste conversion technologies and plan for the future. All this technology requires a large capital investment, and you must also be confident in the product or energy you will be producing. Ms. Demers brought up the Fiberight waste to energy facility in Maine. Mr. Tom Smith and staff were very interested in this facility and their technology for many years. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, and the coronavirus pandemic, the operation is at a standstill. Mr. Smith intends to contact Fiberight and possibly do another request for proposal as the technology is changing daily. He understands committee members are frustrated that the project has come to a halt, but he does not want to rush into anything. This is a very expensive and tedious process, put if done correctly, can extend the life of the landfill and increase revenue for Prince William County. Ms. Bottino inquired about concerns about air quality of any ash generated by these types of facilities. Mr. Buck Arvin stated that if we were to have a waste conversion facility here at the landfill, the tipping fee would have to be increased. Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Smith agreed, that yes, the solid waste fee and gate fee would have to be increased to help make the waste conversion economically viable. Mr. Arvin inquired about storage requirements for waste conversion facilities. Mr. Will Lintner asked if these waste conversion facilities could take construction debris. Ms. Demers answered that no they cannot. So, the residents and businesses would still be bringing that to the landfill or using private recycling facilities. Mr. Chisholm asked if Mr. Smith had been in contact with

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other waste conversion facilities, such as the company based out of Canada. Mr. Smith answered that no, he does not plan to contact the company in Canada. Mr. Chisholm asked if we should look at other companies and hoped that use of this type of technology could delay the need to cross the creek. Mr. Smith and staff plan to continue to investigate new waste conversion technology, with the hope to have it installed at the landfill before capacity is reached.

Ms. Demers continued with her presentation by discussing the landfill as a future resource. She mentioned Fresh Kills landfill in New York that is currently being converted into a park. However, even after a landfill is closed there will still need to be monitoring of gas wells and other maintenance for many years. Ms. Demers mentioned that since the Prince William County Landfill is so large (1,000 acres), once closed, it could also be a recycling center. There is also talk of having solar panels installed on the landfill slopes. This could create energy for buildings such as the planned Eco Park facility. Mr. Will Lintner mentioned that at the last Board of County Supervisors meeting they had discussed the need for another data center in the landfill vicinity. Ms. Demers encouraged the committee members to think about future uses for the landfill property; even ideas that could be implemented in the present.

LANDFILL UPDATES

Mr. Smith informed the committee that they are still negotiating on Mr. Bocke's property but are getting closer to sending him an offer. They plan to do this within the next few weeks. Mr. Sandhu and Mr. Pauley updated the committee on the new cell construction. The contractor has started working and is in the process of moving soil in preparation for the new cell. Mr. Sandhu also indicated that the Board approved a Task Order with Fortistar to install new gas wells. Mr. Smith stated that Fortistar is also seriously considering converting landfill gas into pipeline quality gas. The expansion of the nature trail to the wetlands area is also in the works. Currently, funds are being dedicated and staff is working on getting construction authorized. Mr. Pauley believes that the trail expansion will be completed before Memorial Day 2021.

BALLS FORD ROAD UPDATES

Phase I of the organics project at Balls Ford Road has been completed. Solid Waste staff and Freestate Farms are working with Arlington County to increase the amount of material coming to the facility. Mr. Lintner mentioned that this collection could be an economic opportunity for someone. Mr. MacDonald agreed and stated that he has seen several new collectors for both compost and glass in the county recently. The opportunity is there.

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RECYCLING PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. MacDonald mentioned that new glass trailers were placed at James S. Long park and the Ferlazzo building. The trailer at James S. Long park has already been pulled twice and is getting good use. Each trailer holds about two tons. The drivers are also reporting that the glass is clean. There was an issue with the feed ports, but that has been fixed as well, and larger bottles will now fit with ease.

SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Trent Magill informed the committee that there is no new news regarding the solar project. He has provided plans to consultant ARM. All of this is still in the investigation stage of feasibility. He hopes to have them speak to the committee in the next couple of months regarding the proposed project.

COMMITTEE ISSUES/CONCERNS

Mr. MacDonald and the Department of Public Works were notified by the county's Clerk's Office that they are working with a consultant, to do an internal audit of county boards, committee's, and commissions. They plan to reach out to Mr. MacDonald to discuss the meeting activity, mission, purpose, etc.

Mr. MacDonald then shared the letter below with the group. Mr. Ek Lou joined the meeting shortly thereafter.

Mr Macdonald,

The reason for our interest in the meeting is the issue of fall leaves disposal. We always have to use plastic bags to collect the leaves. In Richmond and I believe Fairfax they have shredders and collectors coming to the neighborhood to collect the leaves pay for by the county's tax dollars.

We suggest that we in PWC should do the same thing because it's more efficient and cost effective as well as environmentally friendly.

We as citizens don't mind the addition to the budget.

Please pass this on through the proper channels and thank you,

Sui and Ek Lou

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Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Tom Smith explained to Mr. Lou that in Arlington and Fairfax, there are special service districts and people pay for leaf vacuuming through taxes or special fees. This is not pursued in the county because Prince William does not have service districts. Mr. Smith stated that if an HOA wants to consider vacuuming leaves, Public Works will investigate it, but it will not be county wide.

Mr. Smith explained that there is not enough staff, or vehicles to economically pursue vacuuming leaves, and it also makes parking on the street an issue. Mr. Lou states that he usually has about 20-30 large plastic bags full of leaves each year. He still plans to come to the landfill and empty out the bags by hand; at least for the time being. Mr. MacDonald informed Mr. Lou that the paper bags required for yard waste collection are quite large at about 30 gallons. He also mentioned that there are several landscaping companies and private contractors available to come and vacuum leaves if he does not want to come to the landfill. Mr. Smith stated that they are still doing research on how to best help county residents regarding this new regulation.

Ms. Tiziana Bottino asked if the committee could endorse the proposed tax on plastic bags from the Board of County Supervisors and other sustainable initiatives. Mr. MacDonald stated that staff have been discussing that issue in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. Mr. MacDonald explained that the way the legislation is not statewide and requires counties and cities to adopt locally. Because there are so many localities in Northern Virginia, the region is trying to come up with a model ordinance so that it is uniform throughout the region. Mr. MacDonald is under the impression that each locality must notify their tax administration three months prior to their intent to issue an ordinance or the effective date of the ordinance and provide guidance. Ms. Tiziana encouraged members of the SWAG committee to attend the meeting on April 6th in support of the creation of an office of sustainability and climate action plan and inquired about a letter of support by the committee for these initiatives.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Scott MacDonald adjourned the meeting at 5:45 pm. The next SWAG meeting will be on Thursday April 15, 2021 at 4:00 pm via Cisco Webex.