



Solid Waste Advisory Council – Meeting minutes, Thursday, April 2, 2015

Members Present: Don West, Bruce Holstein, Ellen Cutsail, Bob Ernst, Charles Hughes and Karen Leatherwood

Staff Present: Scott Moser, Dusty Hilbert and Maria Myers

Our meeting began at 6:03 p.m. and Don asked for a volunteer to take minutes. Karen volunteered for this month and Bruce volunteered to take minutes for our next meeting.

The previous meeting minutes had been reviewed and Bob made a motion that they be accepted. Ellen seconded and all approved.

Don introduced Chaz Miller from the National Waste and Recycling Association who then made a presentation titled, “Getting to Zero”. Maria forwarded the slides from his presentation, which is briefly summarized as follows.

“Zero Waste” has been defined (by the Zero Waste Alliance) as... a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.”

Despite this definition, there is no universal standard by which a municipality achieves this goal. Components of Zero Waste are source reduction, light weighting, reuse and “avoiding the curb” (composting at home). Overall the waste stream has not grown as much as the population growth would project.

Mr. Miller talked about the “three strands” of zero waste.

- Taking waste off-line (composting)
- Changes in the materials we use – the “evolving ton”. (Less paper, more plastic, more flexible packaging, lighter electronics and more organics as a percentage of the waste.)
- Waste source reduction (companies – profit motivated – controlling what comes in and out of their facilities...he had a long list of businesses using less packaging, less paper, etc. *note some of the businesses used incineration to achieve zero waste)

Local governments have passed resolutions, but most are “feel good”. Less consumption can be difficult to control. PAYT, increase taxes, promote grasscycling and composting can reduce consumption. Educational programs have been created to encourage food waste reduction, however,

smaller portions mean more packaging. MRFs were not designed for this new waste stream. They need 60%-80% paper and that is no longer the composition. Diversion is an area local governments can be successful. Seattle is a good example: Long term planning with an emphasis on flexibility, regular waste stream composition evaluations, steady, incremental improvements. Maryland is working on organics regulations now and may have something this summer.

Sustainable Materials Management is a systematic approach to using and reusing materials. For example, the flexible packaging now used for baby food is the fastest growing package. It is not recyclable, but overall less impact on the environment...lightweight, flexible, more product can be shipped using less energy. It becomes the paradox of zero waste vs. sustainable materials management. Food for thought...is 100% recycling and composting the goal or less overall waste in the ecosystem even if it means some things must be disposed? Diminishing waste generation will continue, but some form of disposal will be needed long into the future.

Once Mr. Miller was finished making his presentation, we began to talk about what we should present to the commissioners. The KCI report indicated we are doing what we should be doing, but based on the commissioner's questions, it was the consensus of the committee was that we need to make recommendations to begin to take action. Several documents had been sent out. Bruce's plan, Commissioner Rothschild's list of questions and Don's starting points. Some discussion ensued, however, not everyone had the benefit of reviewing the information prior to the meeting. Bruce is interested in having us withdraw from the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority and use that money to fund a temporary staff person to work specifically on the issue of creating a local (or regional) plan for our solid waste disposal. Ellen recommended doing a comprehensive study of our waste composition. We talked about working with a municipality to incentivize them to try PAYT. Bruce asked for the three proposals submitted to the county for the Council to review. Scott said they are not available to us and we realized it was a moot point since the Commissioners are likely not going to pursue privatization. After an extended period of time talking about our options and priorities, we agreed to meet again before making the presentation to the commissioners. Don wants to meet with the commissioners on 4/22 with three goals and a starting point. Everyone will review the KCI report, the additional emails and meet ready to hammer out what our top three recommendations will be for the county.

Before wrapping up the meeting, Don dealt with the house keeping issue of the expiration of terms for Bruce Holstein and Karen Leatherwood. Both were unanimously re-nominated and the commissioners will be asked to (re)appoint them for another term.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Karen Leatherwood