

FINAL MINUTES
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY
SOLID WASTE ADVISORY GROUP (SWAG) MEETING
April 15, 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. Mark Bonner, Mr. Harry Glasgow, Mr. James Gestrich, Mr. David Watjen, Mr. Joseph Chisholm, Ms. Jane Wyman, Mr. Will Lintner, Ms. Tiziana Bottino, and Ms. Keisha Strand.

Absent: Mr. Ned Greene, Mr. Richard Arvin, and Ms. Virginia Douglas.

Guests: Ms. Stacey Demers from SCS Engineers

Solid Waste Staff: Mr. Tom Smith, Mr. Jason Pauley, Ms. Amy Zitzmann, Mr. Scott MacDonald, Ms. Deborah Campbell, 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 February 18, 2021 and March 18, 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 to the committee. She continued with her final presentation, detailing the funding of the Solid Waste facilities and programs. Over half of the Public Works budget is due to Solid Waste. Currently, the proposed budget for FY22 is \$29.1 million dollars and includes Management and Administration, Composting, Facilities Operations, Recycling and Landfill Closure. The solid waste system is called an enterprise fund. The enterprise fund does not get revenue from the general fund. Ms. Demers informed the committee that with the solid waste system, revenue is very steady. Changes only occur with large projects such as opening or closing a cell. Any money that is not spent is saved for future projects and goes back into the general fund. Mr. Harry Glasgow asked what the source of this revenue is. Ms. Demers answered that the money comes from the solid waste fee. Every household pays a set fee based on the type of housing unit. Businesses pay based on actual refuse generation amounts per year with larger generators paying a larger fee.

Ms. Demers stated that the solid waste fee was established in 1998, based off a model from Palm Beach County in Florida. It was established to reduce having an open market where haulers could go anywhere. This guaranteed accurate funding for the community. As mentioned before, those who generate more waste, pay a higher solid waste fee. The tipping fee was eliminated, and only those cities and towns that do not pay a solid waste fee have to pay a gate or tipping fee when they come to the landfill. This distributes the cost, is very equitable and reliable.

However, there are also challenges. Residents of the cities and towns do not pay a solid waste fee. This means a charge is applied only when a person or business from those locations enter the facility. As this fee and charges have not been updated since 1998, the current incoming revenue is insufficient to cover the cost of the Phase IV infrastructure. Ms. Demers asked the group if raising the solid waste fee would be palatable. If a gradual increase every few years would be something to investigate.

If just raising the solid waste fee is not something we want to investigate, there is what is called the hybrid system. If we were to go with the hybrid system, the solid waste fee would still exist (although might be a bit less than what it currently is) and have a tipping fee for everyone when they enter the landfill. Mr. Gestrich asked how much higher the fee needs to go up to cover future costs. Mr. Smith did not have an exact figure. One of his thoughts was to have the solid waste fee increase every year or every other year and put aside the extra money for use with the Phase IV construction.

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Mr. Lintner asked how much the Phase IV expansion will cost? Mr. Smith answered that they will pay for it in sections, as they have done in the past. As for the roads, buildings, and actual infrastructure, that looks to be about \$15 million. He continued by stating that they are also looking at options to extend the life of the landfill. Such projects include the waste conversion project and the piping of Powell's Run. Mr. David Watjen asked what organizations would have to approve the piping of Powell's Run? Mr. Smith indicated it would be the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (solid waste and water sections) and the Army Corp of Engineers. The County would be responsible for mitigating the loss of any wetland areas.

Mr. Smith explained that the solid waste fee does not operate in a similar manner as taxes do. The rate does not rise in connection with the value of the property. It is a very reliable form of income. If there is an economic downturn, the solid waste fee may flatten, but it will not go down. Mr. Smith then went into further detail regarding the hybrid plan. This plan could be beneficial if we were to build a new facility, as it would pose a greater increase of revenue. With a hybrid system, there would be a tip fee for all haulers, as well as a possible fee for homeowners bringing in bulky waste, but homeowners would still not pay a fee for disposing of regular trash at our facilities.

Mr. Chisholm stated that in the end, the homeowner will be paying for it regardless. He feels that it is more palatable on the tax bill. He went on to say that the solid waste fee has not been raised in 23 years, and he does not think that county residents would have too much to say about the increase. Mr. Gestrich agrees with Mr. Smith and would like to look at the larger picture and run the numbers to see what would best benefit the landfill and spread the cost out. Ms. Stacey Demers will work on a rough draft and the committee will have opportunities in the future to discuss this again, once more numbers and figures are calculated.

LANDFILL UPDATES

Mr. Smith is very close to making an offer regarding the Bockes' property. This acquisition will increase the landfill buffer zone.

Mr. Pauley stated that the landfill cell construction is moving along smoothly.

Mr. MacDonald stated that new gas wells have gone in and appear to be helping reduce landfill odor in the northwest corner of the property.

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Mr. Pauley stated that contractors have been putting in new ground water monitoring wells. We have received a few noise complaints from the neighbors, but the work was scheduled for completion today (April 15, 2021).

BALLS FORD ROAD UPDATES

Mr. Smith stated that the Board of Supervisors approved the yard waste agreement with Arlington County. Freestate Farms at Balls Ford Road will be receiving about 1,000 tons of yard waste a month. This will also increase in October when the new yard waste regulations come into practice. Mr. Smith is also looking at the traffic patterns regarding the Balls Ford Road facility and the realignment of Balls Ford Road.

RECYCLING PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. MacDonald informed the committee that glass recycling continues to improve. The glass recycling trailer located in Haymarket is filling up about every ten days and each trailer is collecting about 4,500 pounds of glass. Mr. MacDonald mentioned that they may have to make some changes and put a roll-off container in Haymarket and possibly place the trailer at McCoart.

Mr. MacDonald also mentioned that there is new interest in the recycling building at the landfill. If a use and contractor for that building can be found, we can increase the landfill's revenue.

SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Smith stated that there is news regarding the solar project. He is currently holding discussions with Fortistar regarding the development of pipeline quality gas. More information should be available at the next meeting.

WASTE CONVERSION PROJECT

Mr. Smith stated that a new Request for Proposal (RFP) will need to be put out in the next few months. This will also staff to take a closer look at all the waste conversion technologies and see if anything fits with the landfills vision for the future.

COMMITTEE ISSUES/CONCERNS

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As for committee appointments and reappointments, Mr. Brooks has sadly passed away. Mr. Mark Bonner informed the group that Ms. Joan Moon and Mr. James Huisenga will no longer be on the committee.

Mr. MacDonald informed the committee that a section has been added to the county website, where residents can reach out and inform staff if they wish to join the WebEx meeting.

Ms. Tiziana Bottino informed the group that on April 20th at noon, there will be a meeting titled, “Rethinking, Reuse, Reduce and Recycle All Seasons of Waste.” She also mentioned that the Board of Supervisors will more than likely add funds to the budget to create an office of sustainability. This will also help with the creation and administration of a sustainability commission. This commission is interested in placing a tax on plastic bags to help reduce waste.

Ms. Keisha Strand informed the group that Keep Prince William Beautiful is working on the “Raising the Bar” initiative for Earth Day. They will also be cleaning up a portion of Route 1 on April 24th.

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ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Scott MacDonald adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm. The next SWAG meeting will be on Thursday May 20, 2021 at 4:00 pm via Cisco WebEx.