



**WHATCOM COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (SWAC) MEETING**

Thursday, January 26, 2023 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Civic Center, Downstairs Garden Room
322 North Commercial Street, Bellingham WA

You may also join our meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85015418799>

Meeting ID: 850 1541 8799

You can also dial in using your phone. United States (Toll Free): (833) 548 0282 US

- A G E N D A -

Meeting Topics		Outcomes	
1.	Call to Order	5:30	Action
2.	Roll Call, Determination of Quorum, Approval of Minutes, Approval of Agenda, Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson	5:30 - 5:45	Action
3.	Public Comment Period	5:45 – 5:55	Action
4.	Recycling Changes in the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County	5:55 – 6:40	Discussion
5.	General Solid Waste Program Updates	6:40 – 6:50	Information
6.	Open Session, Announcements	6:50 – 7:00	Information
7.	Adjournment	7:00	Action

SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Discussion Form
January 26, 2023

AGENDA ITEM 2: *Roll Call, Determination of Quorum, Approval of Minutes, Approval of Agenda, Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson*

PRESENTER: *Rodd Pemble, Chair*

BOARD ACTION: Action Item Discussion Information

COMMITTEE ROLE / ACTION REQUESTED

Review and approve draft meeting minutes.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- Draft November 2, 2022 SWAC Meeting Minutes

WHATCOM COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY (SWAC) COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 2, 2022

Members Present:

Rodd Pemble, Carol Frazey, Brandon Brubaker, Kevin Renz, Lisa Friend, Brandi Hutton, Larry McCarter, Kevin Moore, Mike McQuarrie

Members Absent:

Ken Domorod

Staff Present:

Jennifer Hayden, Sue Sullivan and Jacque Hindman

Others Present: Ted Carlson – SSC, Priscilla Brotherton – RE Sources, Jenna Deane – Sustainable Connections, Amber Corfman, Olivia Carros & Emily Kijowski – Dept. of Ecology, Elodie Cerauskis - AmeriCorps Vista - Sustainable Connections

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Whatcom County SWAC was called to order on Wednesday November 2, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call, Determination of Quorum, Approval of Minutes, Approval of Agenda

Roll call was taken. There was a determination of quorum, and minutes and agenda were approved.

Public Comment Period

Meeting Topics:

Solid Waste and Homelessness

With Homelessness increasing, so are environmental impacts including solid waste and improper human waste, leading to soil and surface water contaminations and increased vector activity. The City of Bellingham (COB) has created a Solid Waste Division, which works to clean up encampment waste and implement other programs that help lessen these environmental impacts. So far, COB picked up 104 tons of garbage from city parks and rights-of-way. The waste picked up was about 50/50 between parks and rights-of-way since June 17, 2022. The majority of this waste is from illegal encampments. The Solid Waste division collects and disposes of as much waste from illegal encampments, litter and illegal dumping per month as SSC does for 240 customers per month. The disposal cost is higher, however, because the encampments in parks take longer to clean out and are sometimes hard to access.

The solid waste division is a new division for the COB, and a primary focus is on illegal encampments and trash and also future sustainability programs. From July 1, 2022 to current day, COB has received 171 requests for litter pickup and 128 encampment activity reports. Brandon has approval for three full-time employees who will be Sanitation Technicians and will be the boots on the ground. They will be CDL drivers and equipment operators working with the ground workers and will eventually have a citation ability so they can write a civil infraction similar to a code compliance officer.

The city parks with encampments have cardboard, tents and pallets on the ground, and the ground is desolated from vegetation. COB is using an erosion control technique using hay and grass to get growth back to dry out contaminants. Natural Resources will eventually take this work over to plant native growth plants to restore the areas.

The Purple Bag program was implemented. The purple bags are handed out with education at the encampments so the residents know that only trash goes into the purple bags. This program has worked well. When staff go to the encampments, they can easily see what is considered personal property and what is trash. Staff periodically pick up the purple bags that are set a safe distance from the camp and or RV. The volunteers that help with clean-up of litter etc. can also easily identify the purple bag as trash to pick up.

Sue Sullivan and Brandon are working together on a contract where the WCHD will help fund, with state dollars, the frequency of trash pick-up. The state funding will be a recurring funding source. This activity will start in the spring of 2023. If Brandon were to report an uptick in garbage this fund would help with more frequent pickups.

Biosolids

Biosolids are an organic, semisolid product rich in organic matter that preserve nutrients from wastewater treatment process. They are treated to remove pathogens, reduce odor, and are screened for metal pollutants prior to land application.

State law directs the Department of Ecology to maximize the beneficial use of biosolids. They are applied to the land to improve soil health and promote crop growth by restoring essential soil nutrients often stripped by agricultural practices and not replaced by commercial fertilizers. Biosolids are effective at sequestering carbon into the soil, which has a positive impact on atmospheric CO2 concentrations.

Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) refers to a group of over 9,000 chemicals. PFAS have been used since the 1940's in common consumer products to make them water and oil-resistant. These are often used as coatings for grease and water resistance. They could also be in clothing, carpet, packaging (example: pizza box and popcorn bags) non-stick cooking surfaces and firefighting foam.

PFAS Glossary

PFAS = Acronym for the entire group of fluoroalkyl substances.

PFOS and PFOA, etc. are individual types of fluoroalkyl substances belonging to this group.

PFOS = Perfluorooctane sulfonate

PFOA = Perfluorooctanoic acid. These were ban in 2015 because the EPA determined they were a significant risk. They continue to be allowed for use in some firefighting foams that are used to extinguish highly flammable or combustible liquids especially in the military chemical and the aviation settings.

Washington State is different because there are no known producers of PFAS in Washington, there are robust Ecology/EPA Water/EPA Quality Pretreatment programs, and there is a and Hazardous Waste Unit at Ecology.

Potential Solid Waste Service Disruptions

There were two potential concerns about solid waste disruptions, in particular with incineration of hazardous waste such as pesticides. They are experiencing issues with labor shortages, unplanned outages, and large volumes increase of waste contributing to incinerator interruptions. The County contracts with Clean Earth to run the Disposal of Toxics program, and contacted them to ensure that there would be no service disruptions. So far, they are not expecting any service disruptions at this time.

Lisa suggested that we as a committee should be aware that there are greater issues than the ones that we always pay attention to and maybe we should expand our vision to the industrial hazards that are present in our county. Rodd suggested that maybe we reach out to the Department of Agriculture for advising for our local generators. Then Jennifer could take it to council etc. Be aware of hazards when responding.

One of the nation’s largest railroad unions has rejected a contract with freight carriers, once again raising the possibility of a strike. Rail service issues have been a challenge for some of our neighboring counties and some local transfer stations have had to temporarily close to the public due to a pile up of solid waste. In Whatcom County, solid waste coming out of the Republic transfer station leaves via rail, and solid waste coming from RDS leaves via truck.

Other Business, Open Session, Announcements:

Lisa would like these topics to be addressed in future meetings: 1) Recycling changes in the City of Bellingham, 2) What a 25% reduction rate in our recycling rate county wide might mean? 3) Metal recycling going out in the harbor and complaints in Bellingham about the noise. 4) Where are we with construction for county climate plan, which is looking for more construction diversion. 5) She had a WWU student ask how they can get composting at their multifamily home on Lincoln street and owner does not want to get it.

Brandi Hutton suggested having Green Earth Technology here to talk about how the increase in compost has affected them and also biosolids and the PFA testing of the composting of their finished product. Rodd asked to have an update on the commercial marijuana industry all that material is currently going to the landfill even though a vast majority of it is compostable. It is not currently going through Green Earth. They are currently following the federal guidelines. Lisa and Rodd suggested maybe having someone from that industry be our agriculturally representative.

Thank you to Larry McCarter for his service on SWAC!

Adjournment

Rodd Pemble adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm. All agreed.

CERTIFICATION

Attest: _____
Jacque Hindman, Clerk III
Whatcom County Health Department

Rodd Pemble, Chair
Whatcom County Solid Waste
Advisory Committee

SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Discussion Form
January 26, 2023

AGENDA ITEM 4: *Recycling Changes in the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County*

PRESENTER: *Brandon Brubaker – Solid Waste Manager, City of Bellingham*
 Ted Carlson – General Manager, SSC

BOARD ACTION: Action Item Discussion Information

SIGNIFICANT POINTS OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Last year, SSC performed a pilot study providing comingled recycling to a neighborhood in south Bellingham, as a response to a requirement in their contract with the City of Bellingham to reevaluate its recycling system if the cost increases to a certain limit. Ted Carlson from SSC and Brandon Brubaker from the City of Bellingham will present on the findings of the pilot study, and their intended next steps.

COMMITTEE ROLE/ACTION REQUESTED

Discussion

ATTACHMENTS:

SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Discussion Form
January 26, 2023

AGENDA ITEM 4: *General Solid Waste Program Updates*

PRESENTER: *Jennifer Hayden, Whatcom County Health Department*

BOARD ACTION: **Action Item** **Discussion** **Information**

SIGNIFICANT POINTS OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

County Council will be voting to approve the new Public Health Educator position on February 7th. This position will be funded by both the Solid Waste fund as well as Foundational Public Health Services funding provided by WA DOH. This position will be focused on implementing many of the outreach and education goals and actions identified in the Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan, along with providing outreach and education around climate change-amplified environmental health effects, such as harmful algal blooms and wildfire smoke. If approved, we will plan to hire for this position this Spring.

The Port of Bellingham is leasing space for ABC Recycling to stage piles of metal at the waterfront in preparation for shipment. Routine operations, including transporting metal to the location, happen only during business hours. The first and only shipment so far occurred in November, and the loading operation was round-the-clock. The Port performed a noise study of the operations which came back within the parameters of the City’s noise ordinance, and in response to concerns from nearby residents, are planning to perform another noise study which will take place over a longer period of time. The Port has had conversations with ABC Recycling on how they may be able to deflect the noise from their operations. The facility is operating under a stormwater permit maintained by the Port.

Whatcom County Health Department and Public Works Department are working together on a social marketing campaign aimed at residents within the Lake Whatcom and Birch Bay watersheds to identify and dispose of their household hazardous waste. The campaign is being funded by the Public Works Stormwater division, and the goal of the campaign is to improve water quality in these two watersheds by encouraging proper management and disposal of household items that can negatively affect water quality, focusing on phosphorus containing items, like fertilizers and detergents.

COMMITTEE ROLE/ACTION REQUESTED

ATTACHMENTS: