

**SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING NOTES  
September 2, 2020**

**SWAC MEMBERS**

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Kelly Doordan, Chair  
Gina Angiola  
Sara Ducey  
Jelena Krstic  
David Winstead  
Mark Symborski (non voting member)

Heidi Lovett, Vice-Chair  
Sara Bixby  
Paula Jenson  
Ellen Ryan

Linda Andrews  
Adam Diamond  
Carol Jones  
Candy Schimming

Absent: Jamie Andrews, Mark Freedman

**COUNTY STAFF - DSWS**

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Lisa Shine – Recycling and Resource Management

**GUESTS**

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None

The regular meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) was called to order by the Chair at 5:35 PM on September 2, 2020 as a Microsoft TEAM on-line meeting. Introductions were made. Acronyms are posted at the bottom of this report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Approve June and August minutes**

- Group did not approve these minutes; not everyone had time to review them in advance.
- These minutes will be reviewed, discussed and considered for approval at the October meeting.
- Group discussed process for reviewing and approving minutes in the future.
  - Draft minutes will be shared with the Committee within 7 days of the meeting, so it is fresh in people’s mind. They will be shared via a Google Doc.
  - All will be requested to insert edits/comments into the Google Doc within 7 day before the next meeting. All will then have time to review the proposed amended minutes in advance.
- By consensus, SWAC agreed to request that staff provide note-taking assistance in the future.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Review and discussion of draft DEP legislation**

- Today, the Chair shared two pieces of relevant DEP legislation that are scheduled for a public hearing on the County Council calendar for September 15, 2020 at 1:30 pm. The two bills are:
  - Bill 32-20: Waste Reduction, Single-Use Straws Link: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SWS/Resources/Files/legislation/bill-32-20.pdf>
  - Bill 33-20: Food Service Packaging Materials Link (to ban #6 plastic): <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SWS/Resources/Files/legislation/bill-33-20.pdf>
- Discussion on Bill 32-20: Waste Reduction, Single-Use Straws
  - In principle, members supported the ban, since straws impact wildlife.
  - There were concerns whether Section 48-61 was too broad and allows for more sweeping changes by providing authority to regulate more than just plastic straws (e.g. use of “should” versus “may”).

- Others did not read the language that broadly, that it was only referencing existing authority to curb plastic debris.
  - Members noted that the confusion could be resolved if technical staff participated in today's meeting to answer questions.
  - Some members felt a straw ban is a lot of effort for little return, relatively, and could impact businesses widely, while others noted Takoma Park has a successful ban. There were some initial objections due to disability issues, but there is an exception for that in Takoma Park.
  - SWAC members asked if it had gone to members of the greater public, but no public hearing had occurred to our knowledge. It is publicly available on the DEP website.
  - Analysis is that it is \$160,000 and \$25,000 each year thereafter.
    - Some felt the cost presented is not that high, but how important is a straw ban?
    - Other members noted we do not know if DEP budgeted for this. And still others were surprised by the cost estimate.
    - One member interpreted the costs as education/outreach.
    - Unfortunately there were no staff at this meeting to answer these questions.
  - One member noted their strong desire to ban all single-use plastic. This may be just a straw ban, but we should take what we can get.
  - On the whole there could be a general/generic statement about supporting general waste reduction, ending single-use plastics, especially by restaurants that generate a lot of plastic waste – all these statements have been consistently supported by SWAC, are on the record.
  - But in the end, SWAC decided it could not take a position on either piece of legislation due to the lack of complete information.
  - **There was NO ACTION on the two pieces of legislation.**
- General Discussion on DEP/County policy regarding presenting legislation to SWAC
    - SWAC members asked if there was policy in place that proposed legislation should come to SWAC proactively; but nothing is mandated.
    - Can SWAC comment after the County Council met? Seems possible, depending on action Council takes.
    - SWAC's role is to advise the County Council and County Executive on Solid Waste. We represent the public. A letter expressing our views on both topics is valid. A letter could present the pros and cons.
    - All members were disgruntled:
      - Staff neither presented these bills nor were present to answer questions.
      - Staff had been working on the bills for at least six months (based on the literature notes) – there was time for SWAC to review and comment.
    - SWAC members recognize there has been huge turnovers of staff in the Division, new department head, etc.,
    - SWAC learned it has been difficult to find people willing to switch jobs/take new jobs during the pandemic—so staffing and filling positions has been a big obstacle for the division.
    - Yet, SWAC is established by statute, and should be supported properly. The Division gets funding to support SWAC as a formal advisory committee.
  - Further discussion on DEP and waste management policy
    - Members noted they would appreciate having staff present their big picture vision on solid waste to SWAC at the October meeting.
    - Members also request that DEP assign a staff member to brief us when we have questions.
    - How can we do anything without staff inclusion? We should be informed early in the process of this type of topic. Then we have time to talk to the public, if needed.
    - A long time ago, Section Chiefs served as our liaisons; that was more effective.
    - It was also noted that, when Bill Broglie was acting Division head, he directly participated in SWAC meetings; that was even a better improvement than Section Chiefs rotating in.
    - When the division director attends, that person can answer questions more broadly and speak more fully – they do not have to defer to someone else.

**Action item #1:** Kelly and Heidi (Chair and Vice Chair) will request a meeting with Willie Wainer and Director Adam Ortiz before next SWAC meeting to get their perspective for a better process moving forward.

***Goal: identify expectations on both sides.***

- It is in our role, as SWAC, to suggest/find ways to improve the public process, in addition to our “informing and advising” role.
- We support the work the Department is trying to do. We could be one tool to help the department achieve its mission.
- Our best practice was when the Division Director brought topics to us, attended all meetings, was respectful of our work, and could answer our questions.

**Action Item #2:** Formal request that the County articulate and identify the challenges they are facing and what opportunities they see, in relation to the pandemic.

- There are potential opportunities in front of us related to waste management, but SWAC is not sure anyone is talking about it.
- This could be a topic for October.

**Action Item #3:** Request to review the Division budget and learn about the Divisions priorities for the next budget cycle, as well as COVID-19 impacts and planning.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- October 7, 2020 – SWAC will invite Director Ortiz and Willie Wainer to attend that meeting.
- November 4, 2020 – elections for Chair and Vice-Chair.
- December – no scheduled meeting – hold for possible training for new members?

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

## **ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 7:35. The next meeting is set for October 7, 2020 at 5:30 PM, on-line.

## **ACRONYMS**

|       |  |      |  |
|-------|--|------|--|
| C&D   | Construction and Demolition                    | NTR  | Nothing to Report                        |
| CC    | County Council                                 | OCC  | Old Corrugated Cardboard                 |
| CE    | County Executive                               | OLO  | Office of Legislative Oversight          |
| CNG   | Compressed Natural Gas                         | PAYT | Pay As You Throw                         |
| CPI   | Consumer Price Index                           | RRF  | Resource Recovery Facility               |
| DAFIG | Dickerson Area Facilities Implementation Group | RRMD | Recycling & Resource Management Division |
| DSWS  | Division of Solid Waste Services               | SA   | Service Area for County collection       |
| DEP   | Department of Environmental Protection         | SAYT | Save As You Throw                        |
| EfW   | Energy from Waste                              | SCA  | Sugarloaf Community Association          |
| ERP   | Enterprise Resource Planning                   | SWAC | Solid Waste Advisory Committee           |
| FTE   | Full Time Employee                             | SWMP | Solid Waste Management Plan              |
| FY    | Fiscal Year                                    | T&E  | Transportation and Environment Committee |
| HHW   | Household Hazardous Waste                      | TPD  | Tons per Day                             |
| MDE   | Maryland Department of the Environment         | ZWTF | Zero Waste Task Force                    |
| MC    | Montgomery County                              |      |  |
| MES   | Maryland Environmental Services                |      |  |
| MRF   | Materials Recycling Facility                   |      |  |
| MML   | Maryland Municipal League                      |      |  |