

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**December 1, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.**  
**MEETING NOTES**

**SWAC MEMBERS**

Heidi Lovett, Chair Adam Diamond, Vice Chair Robin Barr (MML rep.) Sara Bixby	Paula Jenson Carol Jones Fred Kranz	Ellen Ryan Mark Symborski, (MD NCPPC rep, non-voting member)
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**SWAC MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:** Linda Andrews, Candy Schimming

**COUNTY STAFF**

Mike Clem, Section Chief, Recycling and Refuse Services, RRMD  
David Frank, Multi-Family Recycling Program Manager, RRMD  
Lisa Shine, Executive Assistant, RRMD

The regular meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) was called to order by the Chair at 5:34 PM on December 1, 2021.

**Approved June 2021 meeting minutes** – The Committee reviewed the minutes; Paula Jenson moved, Fred Kranz seconded to approve as presented. No opposed, no abstentions. Approved.

**1. Residential Curbside Solid Waste Collection Program - Michael Clem, Section Chief, Collections**

This program is responsible for collecting recyclables, yard trim, and trash from 212,000 County residents of single-family detached homes and townhomes. Discussion covered:

- Recent dramatic increase in collection costs.
- County effort to improve quality of recyclables with the Recycle Right Program.
- Proposed pilot program to test the feasibility of unit-based-pricing (PAYT).

**Presentation** - High-level overview of the entire operation

- Tension between “Zero Waste World View” and “Integrated Solid Waste Management World View,” (between conserving natural resources, reducing GHG emissions, and need to handle trash)
  - Some materials just not recoverable, or not worth social costs of recovery.
- County is a solid waste district with two areas, District A and District B.
  - County collects only recycling and yard waste in B; County collects all waste streams in A
- 13 collection zones – each area has different populations, different densities
  - 13 contracts/3 contractors, each with different pricing, due to different density-related costs.
- No County staff handle collections directly, county contracts collections out.
- Day to day – 90 truck routes/day (covers recycling, yard trim, and traditional trash)
- One week’s trash, recycling, yard trim = 2.2-miles-long chain of trucks.
  - 4-5 miles/gal diesel fuel. Moved away from natural gas, was burning up engines too quickly.
- Q: have you thought about electric trucks?
  - Yes, put out bid, but we were not able to purchase electric trucks now, supply going to very large purchasers: Waiting for supply to increase.
  - Contracts last 5 years with two one-year options.
  - Contractor provides the trucks, but the County provides detailed specs for them.

- Q: Has DEP considered automated trucks?
  - Hard to use where lots of parked cars. Contractors could propose this, but haven't asked for it.
  - County doesn't provide standardized trash containers, needed for automated trucks.
  - County keeps a close watch on safety issues – lot of injured backs by 35 or 40 yrs. old.
- Material/Process Challenges: growth in cardboard box recycling in particular has made current 22-gallon recycling containers inadequate. Dual stream recycling requires lots of labor to separate materials. Abundance of plastic bags is hard for sorting facilities to manage.
- Residential food scrap pilot – area 9 (Potomac) will have first collection pick up next week; Silver Spring started in November.
  - 30% of food scraps is water, which builds up in the trucks (collection challenge).
- Moving solid waste, collection, processing – expensive operation.
  - Budget: \$26M last year – now \$34M request for this year (>30% increase).
- Chart of contract price comparison by collection area – very variable.

## Q & A

- Are people doing recycling wrong?
  - Michael – now have 3 people tagging non-compliance full-time with large orange tags – rejecting a lot of material that is not in the correct containers.
  - Contamination rate is 17% - costs a lot to deal with. Individual jurisdictions need to run their own compliance efforts.
- Where does it all go?
  - 600,000 tons trash per year, all residences and businesses (not recycling, yard trim).
  - almost no trash is hauled outside the County; haulers are not charged tip fees to bring to the MoCo transfer station (but would be charged for out of county facilities).
- Why are prices going up for collection contracts?
  - Michael—Requirement for bidders to be unionized reduces competition. Nonunionized garbage companies don't want to unionize to get county contract. Unity, which is unionized controls 82% of county contracts.
- Are trash workers on disability or workers compensation a lot because of physical nature of the work?
  - Michael—this is a really hard line of work, most people don't want this work, it doesn't pay well. When they get hurt, they might try to get workers compensation, but may be discouraged from doing so. This is why county passed Labor Peace legislation. <sup>1</sup>
- Garbage workers often don't use the mechanical lift devices on trucks, but pick up containers by hand. This shortens their work career. 96-gallon containers are not designed to be lifted by our truck's equipment. Worker protection needs to be there. Way to get it and keep competition. DEP is requesting union requirement be removed from subsequent contracts, and instead award points for worker-friendly policies. Labor-peace agreement doesn't apply to food scraps pilot.
- Why don't we have consistent cart size in subdistrict B?
  - Michael—Usually more urban jurisdictions have standard carts, but it costs a lot of money to provide them. Would be better for workers if had standardized trash container. (Necessary with unit-based pricing.)

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Bill 6-18 [Contracts - Labor Peace Agreements - Displaced Service Workers – Amendments] allows county officials to require trash-hauling contracts to include “labor peace agreements” with labor organizations, including provisions to resolve labor disputes through arbitration, not strikes or lockouts that could disrupt service. County Procurement Office determines whether the labor peace provisions are applicable.

<https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/cclims/BillDetailsPage?RecordId=2555>

- Sometimes recycling is more expensive than trash collection—dual stream recycling trucks cost \$350K. Trash trucks cost \$250K.
- RFP going out for consultant on PAYT—consultant has to know about collection business and also need financial analyst. 80% of collection costs—buying/running trucks. Can't afford to have revenue go down with PAYT. Might not be worth having more complex collection system. \$12 million to buy containers for everybody. Also, have to deal with complexity of people getting small trash bins and then contaminating recycling bins with trash.
- Carol—PAYT would charge for refuse. What about recycling?
  - Michael—Consultant will bring us 3 options. Will share with SWAC and residents. Might be charge for yard waste. Save \$ by encouraging people to leave yard trim in place.

### **Elections**

Nominees that stepped forward were Adam Diamond to serve as chair and Robin Barr to serve as vice chair. Candy moved that slate for consideration, Fred seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Organics Subcommittee Update/Topics for Future Meetings**

1. Carol— topics from the Organics Subcommittee:
  - status of organics recycling facility development for county—what has been investigated, what is outstanding, how can SWAC contribute?
  - County's vision for waste reduction initiatives, which is included in the new state organics legislation. Emphasized in MD Food Waste Summit. Have opportunity to work with generators on waste reduction, including low-cost options with high returns.
  - Expert speakers on relative environmental benefits of different disposal/treatment methods.

### **UPDATES FROM RECYCLING AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION STAFF – David Frank/Lisa Shine**

1. Lisa: DEP is waiting for the pool of SWAC applicants to be passed on to the committee for review and recommendation to the County Executive; hope to receive the materials by January
2. David—Single family food scrap pilot
  - Phase 1: Started Nov 18 in area 4 (Silver Spring). Starting area 9 (Potomac) on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>. Goal of 850 households in each area.
    - Continuing to enroll more people: as people see neighbors do it, they want to join. As of last Friday, 406 households were signed up in area 4; 251 in area 9. In area 9, routes are more spread out, may not be able to collect from more than 500-600 houses in a day.
  - Phase 2: expand program—either within those two areas, or pick other areas.
    - May skip phase 2, and go straight to rolling it out throughout the county.
  - Processing of collections:
    - right now, going to Western Branch Compost Facility. Have secured enough capacity for commercial program and single-family pilot—enough for what will get in next two years.
    - Also talking to Jessup Bioenergy Devco regarding AD option.
3. David—RFI for entities to operate MRF and/or provide processing, transportation and disposal services. Solicitation has gone out- deadline has been extended. Proposals go to procurement first. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Procurement/RFI-DEP-RRM-101121.html>.

4. Will EPR remain as a SWAC topic?

- Have to wait and see if legislation will be introduced in 2022. Last year—a proposal for plastics packaging EPR was floated at state level that was pretty controversial; such an EPR has been implemented in Maine and Oregon.
- David: Current MD EPR Programs: 1. electronics 2. rechargeable batteries 3. mercury oxide batteries 4. scrap tires.
- In US, EPRs have been used for hard to recycle items. Has worked well for that. Paper and plastic packaging are the holy grail of EPR.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND ADJOURNMENT**

Next Meeting is January 5, 2022 and will be held virtually.

Motion to adjourn was made by Adam, and seconded by Candy. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

**ACRONYMS**

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