

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 9, 2023 – 5:30 – 7:30pm

MEETING NOTES

SWAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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| Carol Jones, Chair Adam Diamond, Secretary Amy Maron, Secretary | Troy Cavell Paula Jenson Fred Kranz Heidi Lovett | Chaz Miller Ellen Ryan Mark Symborski (M-NCPPC rep, non-voting) |
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SWAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Robin Barr

RRMD STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Willie Wainer, Director, Resource Recycling and Waste Management Division
Lonnie Heflin, Chief, Material Management Section
Eileen Kao, Chief, Waste Reduction and Recycling Section
David Frank, Waste Reduction and Recycling Section
Lisa Shine, Executive Administrative Aide

OTHER COUNTY ATTENDEES BEGINNING AT 6:00 PM:

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Dale Tibbetts, Special Assistant to the County Executive
Jake Weissmann, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Vicky Wan, Acting Deputy Director, DEP
Anthony Skinner, DEP Business Office

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: None

The regular meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) was called to order by the Chair at 5:32pm.

SWAC approved the draft minutes from the January 11, 2023 SWAC meeting.

SWAC Updates: (Jones)

Committee updates:

Organics. Carol reported on behalf of subcommittee chair, Robin Barr, who could not attend. He is working with David Frank to survey the independent municipalities to collect longer-term data on residential organics program performance than the County will collect with its pilots. (Takoma Park’s program has been in place for 10 years.) He contacted all 21, which have about 200,000 residents in total. Results: Ten of them (which represent 70-80% of residents in municipalities) have some kind of food scraps collection opportunities and all ten have agreed to participate in a short survey. Five have

voluntary curbside collection. Three have discount programs with Compost Crew. Two have community drop-off locations and two are actively considering voluntary curbside collection.

Public Education & Communication.

- *RRMD/DEP website revision.* Following the process RRM suggested in our last meeting, early next week an ad hoc subcommittee led by Amy Maron expects to send a set of draft comments with a first round of suggestions on the RRM website to David Frank, SWAC's liaison to the website redesign team. If DEP provides feedback as to what type of further suggestions would be helpful at this stage in its revision process and a timeframe for when they would be useful, SWAC will expand and finalize the document.
- *Zero Waste in the Climate Action Plan (CAP) education campaign:* Willie invited Carol to make recommendations for additional public information to be included in the CAP portal regarding the importance of zero waste actions in reducing GHG emissions from households, businesses and government in the county.

Ad Hoc Subdistricts Consolidation. The subcommittee was formed in 2022, after RRM indicated they would value ideas from SWAC on how to mitigate potential impacts on small hauler competitiveness if the county were to include Subdistrict B in public contracting for trash collection. The committee is currently doing research, including interviews with people in other communities to glean lessons learned from their experiences. It is aiming for a preliminary briefing in March.

Strategic Planning and Budget. In January, SWAC sent to the County Executive a letter with its recommendations for RRM's FY2024 operating budget and will be discussing this with him at 6pm. An ad hoc group is looking at the data available for performance measures addressing the goal of reducing waste generated, but this initiative has been put on the back burner pending progress with other SWAC initiatives.

Other updates: Candy Schimming has resigned from SWAC. Carol expressed the committee's gratitude for Candy's service, which spanned September 2019 through January 2023.

Featured Presentation

Special Guest: County Executive Marc Elrich

Discussion: SWAC's FY 2024 Budget Recommendations Memo (CE Elrich, SWAC)

The SWAC Chair summarized the three major recommendations in the SWAC budget letter:

- Launch intensive public education campaigns to promote waste reduction across all waste streams - using evidence-based strategies and building on current county education programs.
- Expand the scope and expedite implementation of programs that reduce food scraps – applying the hierarchy of prevention, recovery of edible food, and recycling.
- Add five new positions in RRMD to speed up achieving all zero waste goals.

She also highlighted the many new activities, programs, and capital projects – beyond the two highlighted in SWAC recommendations - that have been added to RRMD's responsibilities to achieve the CE's priorities for (1) closing the incinerator and locating landfills that meet sustainability and EJ conditions, and (2) reducing the waste that we will be sending to landfills after the transition. SWAC is

recommending the five new positions (which would expand current staffing by 4%) so that RRMD has the staff carry out its many new zero waste responsibilities effectively and expeditiously.

Marc Elrich made the following points.

SWAC's recommendations overlap with those from the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Coalition.

His number one priority is closing the incinerator.

Next priority is to maximize reuse and monetize waste products such as glass, concrete, and plastic film/packaging.

- He would like us to send him models of effective materials reuse/recovery.
- Individuals in many places have started innovative programs to recycle bikes, textiles, and electronics, and we need to do more to find those people and build on their efforts. It cannot all come from government. Seed money from outside sources could play an important role in such efforts.
- Resource Recovery Park: He said that there's no space to expand Shady Grove Transfer Station but we are in negotiations to purchase land to build a fuller resource recovery park.

Policy changes: He absolutely supports Subdistrict B consolidation and PAYT (aka SAYT).

Public education on zero waste: He agrees that we need to do more to educate the public about promoting zero waste, building on current county education programs.

Organics:

- Food recovery: He wants to look at a California law that mandates donation of usable food.
- He wants to make food scrap diversion mandatory for everyone (households and commercial).
- The food scraps pilot needs to go to broad implementation.
- We need to make a decision about where we are going to put the food scraps, which will be informed by staff analysis of the problem. It can't go to Dickerson until we shut down incinerator, which is over a 2-3 year horizon. We also need to determine if we are sending it to a digester, the Prince George's County Compost Facility, or somewhere upcounty. He wants the food scraps in the county for methane and hydrogen production. There is more that can be done on private farms.

Staffing: He is happy to work with the DEP staff to figure out what additional staff they need.

In the discussion, SWAC mentioned that the composting facility at Dickerson could process more material on the current compost facility footprint if the technology were changed to an aerated bunker system (similar to what is used at the Prince George's County Western Branch facility), which would allow much faster composting of yard and food waste to occur.

RRMD Updates: (Wainer)

- A Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) has been published for **Municipal Solid Waste Acceptance, Processing, Transportation, and Disposal Services**, seeking companies to manage the trash when the county closes the incinerator. A pre-solicitation meeting is scheduled for Monday with an early March due date. (Note: it has subsequently been extended to May 8.) Willie will send

the RFEOI to Carol. For the SERA PAYT contract, a final report is due soon. Willie will share it with us after briefing the CE. Carol said it is very relevant to the consolidation study.

- Organics Management RFP. Maryland Environmental Services (MES) has received a proposal from an engineering firm for a comprehensive organics management plan for Montgomery County. MES has reviewed the technical report and financial part. Scoring is going on now.
- SWAC Vacancy announcement: Lisa Shine indicated that she has been told that a vacancy announcement for SWAC positions will be released in the near future. Lisa noted that a one-person office manages the appointment process for all 80 county Boards, Committees, and Commissions, which is the cause of the long delay between our request (last summer) and the notice.

SWAC Updates (continued): (Jones)

Recruitment: We need to brainstorm where we will do outreach to get new members. We have 9 positions that are open, with current members eligible to reapply for 3 of the positions. People suggested seeking out new members through school list-serves, community organizations, multi-family housing associations, and recycling volunteers. Ellen agreed to pass the notice on to multi-family contacts.

Other: A request was made that we put on next meeting agenda to discuss a public relations person to reduce waste. Carol assigned this topic to the public education committee.

A problem that a neighbor experienced with getting advice from 311 was highlighted: when trying to find out from DEP how to recycle holiday lights, they couldn't get a reliable response. Eileen Kao said that a "KBA" will be sent to 311 on how to answer questions about holiday light recycling.

Next SWAC meeting: On March 22, RRM will brief us on the County Executive's FY2024 operating budget, which will be released on March 15. The budget committee will then draft a letter to send to the County Council and Executive.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

ACRONYMS

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| C&D | Construction and Demolition | MRF | Materials Recovery Facility |
| CC | County Council | MML | Maryland Municipal League |
| CAP | Climate Action Plan | MCPS | Montgomery County Public Schools |
| CE | County Executive | OLO | Office of Legislative Oversight |
| CNG | Compressed Natural Gas | RRF | Resource Recovery Facility |
| CPI | Consumer Price Index | RRMD | Recycling & Resource Management Division |
| DAFIG | Dickerson Area Facilities Implementation Group | SA | Service Area for County collection |
| DEP | Department of Environmental Protection | SAYT | Save-As-You-Throw |
| EPA | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | SCA | Sugarloaf Citizens Association |
| FTE | Full Time Employee | SF | Single Family |
| FY | Fiscal Year | SWAC | Solid Waste Advisory Committee |
| MDE | Maryland Department of the Environment | SWMP | Solid Waste Management Plan |
| MC | Montgomery County | T&E | Transportation and Environment Committee |
| MES | Maryland Environmental Services | TPD | Tons per Day |
| | | ZWTF | Zero Waste Task Force |