

Draft Minutes

Albemarle County Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee

March 10, 2022

Attendance: Christine Hirsh-Putnam, Peggy Gilges, Jesse Warren, Anne Johnson, Teri Kent, Navarre Bartz, Monty Harris, Sage Bradburn, Margaret Eldridge, Betsey Soulsby, Victoria Walsh
Liaisons: Jim Andrews, Donna Price, Lance Stewart, Elizabeth Jones, Isabella O'Brien, Shirese Franklin, Phil McKalips

Guest: John Coles, Environmental Project Coordinator ACPS- Building Services

- Composting in the kitchens of all ACPS with Black Bear was just re-initiated. Working to make sure everyone knows what can go in the bin.
- Black Bear as a small local business is able to be on top of what's going on with the program. Stoney Point not composting—compost is going to a pig farmer for the pigs.
- ACPS no longer uses Styrofoam lunch trays. All lunches in ACPS are being served on compostable trays now. Can we collect the trays to go into the compost?
- Much of the school food, esp. in the elementary schools, is pre-packaged. John is seeing less compost generated in elementary schools compared with middle and upper schools.
- Some schools, like Meriwether-Lewis, had robust composting programs before the pandemic, and already demonstrate much higher amounts of composting now that the program has restarted.
- Monty asked about the ability to use reusable/washable trays. Reuse of trays would be best practice. John was not sure it was do-able right now, because a lot of kids are still eating lunch in their classrooms due to the pandemic, but in the near future we may be able to reintroduce the reusable trays.
- Our motivation is to divert organics from landfill, prevent ghgs and educate the kids about how to compost, provide a model so that it becomes regular practice.
- The kids also need more education about recycling. The vdL model – disposing trash and recyclables together—has meant that a lot of kids don't understand the need to separate recyclable materials from trash.
- SWAAC would like to help get more environmental education into the schools – message to consume less, reuse more, recycle and compost. Kids have potential to be force multipliers within their families and communities.
- Christine and Monty have applied to be on the School Board's Advisory Committee on Sustainability.
- John feels we need people in just about every one of the schools working with the students on these things. Video announcements/short videos might be a feasible way to educate.
- John is open to meeting with SWAAC members who are eager to help with this, esp. in schools where there is not an invested staff member helping to teach composting and recycling habits, train kids to be leaders of these programs, so that the programs can be self-sustaining.

- For ACPS John also currently works on well water care and monitoring for five schools, solar installations at Red Hill and Scottsville, grants for electric school buses, and monitoring all the utilities in the schools.
- Shirese asked about reporting of ACPS recycling metrics to the TJPDC. To John's knowledge no data is collected on that.

Action Items

- EJ will get the updated Recycling FAQs and updated "Quick Reference Guide" on Reuse, Recycling and HHW Disposal uploaded onto the County website.
- Small group of SWAAC members will plan to meet with John Coles to discuss ways that SWAAC can assist with increasing composting and recycling in ACPS.
- Peggy will draft a letter to the BOS from SWAAC on the subject of artificial turf.
- Jesse and Christine will talk to Jay Zook about messaging to GFL customers, especially regarding plastic bags and glass. GFL/County Waste does not want these materials in curbside recycling bins; RSWA accepts both for recycling.

Old Business

- The February Minutes were approved.
- Anne reported on the Virginia Plastic Waste Prevention Advisory Council's February meeting. The meeting focused on the circular economy for plastics, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation, and bottle deposit systems. Virginia has low plastics reclamation compared with other states in the region. Next meeting, probably in May, the group will look at grant programs, truth in labeling laws like those in CA and OR, recycled content mandates.
- Peggy and Navarre completed updates of the Reuse, Recycling and HHW Disposal Guide for Albemarle County (aka "Quick Reference Guide") and Recycling FAQs and provided those to EJ for uploading onto the County website.
- Christine worked on Albemarle Co. quarterly recycling tip focused on plastic bags and film, which has been sent to Emily Kilroy and Serena Gruia.
- Peggy reported that pharmacies are not taking back medications, but RegionTen has provided local pharmacies with a card they can hand out to customers, about where you can safely dispose of them. In Albemarle, it gives the drop-off sites for Sentara and UVA.
- Teri said that Top Notch pharmacy does offer the public a place to drop off unused/expired medications.
- The ACPD Drug take-back day is scheduled for April 30 at Sentara. We are waiting to receive a flyer about the program.

County Report

- No specific site for a Northern Albemarle Convenience Center yet. There is a potential site on proffered property but it has topographical challenges.

- Budget for the new site includes money for land and a planned layout like Keene's convenience center. Costs for cold rolled steel containers and compactors have gone up 150% because of tariffs imposed on foreign steel and there are supply chain issues.
- Yancey will hold another community litter pick up day on March 26. AHS/Jouett/Greer schools are planning a clean up day and complementary instruction but no date has been set yet.

Planning and Vision Group

- In the VA legislature, Styrofoam ban for food/beverage containers has been pushed back by five years, from 2023 to 2028.
- The Long Range Solid Waste Plan is 8 years old now. As with the Comprehensive Plan, SWAAC needs to start thinking about revising/updating our Sustainable Materials Management plan for 2025 and beyond.

Operations Group

- There are four SWAAC members in the Ops group now (Jesse, Teri, Monty, Victoria). Two is no longer a quorum, so they can converse two at time and remain in compliance with County public meeting laws now.
- Glass recycling- Christine and Jesse will talk to Jay Zook about messaging on glass, plastic film recycling and composting. Also find out if GFL would want to haul glass to Ivy for recycling.
- Working on Scott DeFife/Glass Packaging Institute to provide a grant for Nelson Co. roll off containers for glass. Ops is engaging with Steve Carter in Nelson. Would Friends of Nelson co-sign a grant application with Nelson Co? TJPDC/Isabella and Shirese could offer a letter of support for a grant application for Nelson. Teri will introduce Isabella and Shirese to her Friends of Nelson contacts.
- TJPDC Solid Waste Management Report submitted in October. Fluvanna needs to close a Dominion Bremono Bluff landfill site that is polluting the James River with coal waste, and construct a new industrial landfill site for the waste. Approval of the TJPDC's waste plan is held up until Fluvanna's new landfill is permitted.
- Next meeting Thursday, 3/24 at noon.

Outreach Group

- Met at Northridge Library, discussed County Environmental Stewardship Hub.
- Betsey and Christine continue to serve regularly as Recycling Ambassadors at McIntire.
- March 23 – Christine and Peggy will make a presentation to the Sierra Club.
- Thank you to Sage for setting up the HOA spreadsheet. Please look at it and add information about your own neighborhood, and help to add to it by getting HOA contact info from friends and family living in other neighborhoods.
- Next meeting Thursday, 3/31 5 pm at Northridge Library.

New Business

Artificial Turf

- SWAAC had concerns pre-pandemic about the County replacing four natural fields at Darden Towe with artificial turf.
- We propose writing a letter outlining our concerns to the BOS in our advisory capacity. Donna said we should get it to the BOS soon, as there is a 3/23 meeting to discuss the matter. Everyone is in favor of good recreational facilities, the question is how best to do it.
- MOTION To compose a draft letter to the BOS for committee input regarding the SWAAC's position on artificial fields. Passed with Monty abstaining.
- Share with committee SWAAC's previous discussions about synthetic turf in minutes from January, February and March of 2020.

Hauler requirements

- Hauler requirements for companies working in Albemarle have previously been discussed by SWAAC going back to discussions of County Code Chapter 13 in 2019 and 2020.
- More recently, the County requested information about hauler requirements as part of a consulting engagement with Gershman, Brickner and Bratton (GBB).
- As we discussed in last month's SWAAC meeting, the 2015 Long-Range Solid Waste Solutions Committee Report envisioned introducing requirements through the County Code. It was a near-term priority for implementation, and remains a top SWAAC priority.
- County Code Chapter 13 grants hauler permits and sets certain requirements but is outdated. In January, 2020, SWAAC's Planning and Vision work group recommended specific revisions to the County Code, and the SWAAC voted unanimously to ask for review by County attorney, Greg Kamptner, and to take the next steps to advance it.
- The State of Virginia grants permission to localities to acquire information from the haulers about what they are collecting. Many localities have had these requirements on the books for a long time. Loudon County, for example, introduced their requirements in 2002.
- The GBB report page 9 lists Loudon County's comprehensive requirements for data.
- SWAAC used Arlington County permitting and requirements as a model; GBB used Loudon County and the City of Portland, OR.
- We need to ensure that there is a requirement to provide and update contact information for all of the haulers operating within the County, we can require annual permitting to operate trucks throughout the county and reporting requirements – data we've never had—that is critical to making progress on SMM and our Climate Action Plan.
- Portland, OR model creates assigned service areas for haulers. Would that discourage development of new local companies and service models? Would residents be okay with not having a choice of hauler? There is a lengthy process to implement service districts.
- Both Arlington and Loudon divide haulers by major and minor based on tonnage. SWAAC proposed to do the same with 20 Tons/month being the dividing point. SWAAC proposed instituting quarterly reports of tonnages of waste and recyclables from major haulers. Minor haulers could report annually. In a recent meeting GFL told us they thought it would be unfair to make them report and not smaller haulers, too.
- EJ sent a list today to SWAAC as a guidance document on what kind of considerations we should take into account in establishing new hauler requirements.

- At a bare minimum we need registration of waste haulers operating in the county and reporting requirements on tonnages of materials similar to what Arlington and Loudon have. We could also ask for information such as miles traveled or put emissions requirements on trucks operating in the county.
- GBB states that the ordinance should be a living document that would evolve as needed.
- Haulers may have collection data by route, not by county. Arlington County asks haulers for explanation, if they collect outside the County, and an estimate of what is collected within Arlington.
- If weight cannot be measured on a scale, for example for a smaller hauler, tonnage can be estimated based on yardage, using conversion tables for various materials.
- Although we know that waste tonnages are measured at transfer stations and landfills to determine the tipping fee, we need to find out what the procedure is for measuring weight of recyclable materials.
- Lance suggests that SWAAC create a task force or work group to go through details noted in the GBB report that go beyond hauler registration and data reporting that we could adopt. For example, setting requirements to reduce the environmental impact of trucks, and improving customer service for our residents. Requiring covering loads to prevent litter. Requiring decals on the vehicles that will identify them. RSWA could monitor basic compliance--are they using best practices across their fleet?
- The BOS will want to walk through different alternatives and why we are recommending the ones we do.

Paper Sort Facility

- We expressed concern about the Paper Sort facility because it underpins our recycling programs. The baler is on its last legs, and we do not have a lease on the space we occupy, so the situation seems increasingly urgent. Arcadis prepared a report for the RSWA about possible Paper Sort solutions in 2019, but no action has been taken, in part because City collaboration is required. Lance sent the report around to the SWAAC again last month by email.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30.