SWAAC Meeting Minutes

Albemarle County Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee

July 9, 2020 Online Meeting

**Attendance**

* SWAAC: Anne Johnson, Christine Hirsh-Putnam, Peggy Gilges, Jesse Warren, Teddy Hamilton, Margaret Eldridge, Tom Baker, Navarre Bartz, Teri Kent
* Liaisons: Liz Palmer, Donna Price, Lance Stewart, Elizabeth Jones, Phil McKalips
* Others attending: Betsey Soulsby, Jeffrey Justice, GBB consultant Kate Vasquez and River District consultant Rachel Gatewood
* Absent: Liaisons Serena Gruia and Shirese Franklin

**Action Items**

* Lance/EJ to talk to counterparts in Arlington about best practices on handling and enforcement of hauler permit requirements suggested for Chapter 13 of the County Code.
* Peggy to send summary of 2020 state legislation on waste, recycling and composting to SWAAC.

**Old Business**

* June meeting minutes approved.
* Anne is speaking to Braskem about sponsoring a roll-off for the collection of #5 polypropylene election signs.
* Food grade PP has a higher value than the grade used for signage.
* We need to track the amount of PP signage collected.
* Anne has invited Scott DeFife, the new president of the Glass Packaging Institute, to join our August meeting to discuss his initiative to recycle more source-separated glass in Virginia.
* Proposed Chapter 13 revisions still delayed due to pandemic. FES will do more research to determine best practices used by other communities with requirements for hauler permits. FES has been holding back Greg Kamptner’s review until this has been done. Expect progress this month.

**Outreach and Communication Sub-Committee**

* Use opportunity during pandemic to do remote recycling education. JMRL is open to hosting a composting and recycling webinar of approximately 45 minutes followed by a Q&A period, based on a simplified version of the presentation made to the Master Gardeners.
* This presentation may also be used as a training tool for recycling ambassadors.

**Operations Sub-Committee**

* We reviewed the infographic prepared by Jeffrey Justice in Jesse’s office to communicate the amount of recyclables collected and the value of the recycling programs provided by RSWA.
* This is a quarterly snapshot of tonnage and the amount of GHGs reduced.
* Navarre asked that the organics part of the infographic be more specific. Liz and others asked for footnotes on calculating the carbon dioxide equivalent, where our other facts come from.
* Although it would be great to provide per capita data, we don’t have the metrics for private haulers, only what RSWA handles.

**Planning & Vision Sub-Committee**

* Peggy reported on the new legislation, SB11, which will allow cities and counties to levy a tax on disposable plastic bags of $.05 per bag. Revenue would be shared between the vendor and the County.
* The County and City can get together on implementing the tax, as source reduction is the most effective way to reduce waste, pollution and litter, and revenue generated could be used to support waste and recycling programs.
* Peggy will email SWAAC a summary of other new Virginia legislation, since we were short on time.
* Navarre is on the board of the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District. Regarding compost, there is interest in using locally-generated compost on local farmland. Compost is not only a fertilizer but improves the soil’s ability to act as a carbon sink, mitigating GHG emissions. He will keep SWAAC of informed of any TJPDC discussion on this topic.

**Governance**

* Lance said the contract with GBB has been finalized and the initial meeting with the County is next week.
* It’s time to elect officers of SWAAC for the next year but due to time constraints we will address this at our August meeting.
* Anne will meet with Teri regarding a sub-committee placement. Operations?

**Guest presenters: Kate Vasquez of GBB and Rachel Gatewood of River District Consulting**

* Kate and Rachel are the consultants for the City’s waste diversion and services prioritization study. Kate will do related consulting work with the County.
* Kate said that 2/3rds of recycling program costs are in collection of material.
* Goal is to provide maximum access to landfill diversion for the City and County. GBB wants to enhance collaboration between the City, County, University and RSWA.
* Anne raised the fact that the private MRF services currently provided to our region are poor. For example, County Waste does not recycle some things that are accepted by their recycling program. Kate said that feasibility must be considered.
* Kate and Rachel asked SWAAC meeting attendees about compelling opportunities for collaboration, what do we think the consultants need to know, what do we see as the gains in working together?
* SWAAC believes that drop-off source-separation through convenience centers should be promoted more widely to lower our costs and to meet Climate Action Plan goals.
* Some of SWAAC’s ideas: Working closely with the City, trash collected by the City and by the public schools going to Ivy/RSWA, more space for storing and baling recyclables than is currently available at the Paper Sort facility, waste composition studies with haulers, huge opportunity to work with restaurants to divert food waste, commercial and multi-family dwelling recycling and composting services, tackling barriers in terms of space constraints such as building ordinances requiring adequate space for collection of recyclables and compost, education aligned across City, County, schools to eliminate confusion, local MRF, “pay as you throw,” regulating collection services as businesses as in Fairfax and Loudon Co.s, requiring haulers to provide all customers both waste disposal AND recycling (and/or composting).
* To be gained through collaboration: lower costs, more diversion, less confusion across our region about recycling, composting and waste.

Meeting adjourned 6:20 pm.

Next SWAAC meeting August 13.