



Solid Waste Management Division

MINUTES
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
Monday, August 27, 2001
Solid Waste Management Center, 1201 Second Street

Chairperson Rod Becker called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

1. Roll call: Present: Rachel Balsley, Rod Becker, Garth Schultz, Carrie Sprague;
Arriving after roll call: Kristine Johnson, Dick Lerner, Judith Maguire.
Staff: Becky Dowdakin.
Members of the Public: Martin Bourque, Theodore Johnson
2. Announcements: Dowdakin announced that the City of Berkeley received a third place award from Keep California Beautiful for the Trash for Cash Contest. Susan Davis, the First Lady of California, presented the award to Tania Levy and Rogelio Marquina. The award will be re-presented by the Mayor at the September 11, 2001 City Council meeting.
3. Comments from the Public: None.
4. Approval of the June 25, 2001 minutes: Sprague noted that in the second paragraph under Budget Update that "ton" should be changed to "tonnage." It was M/S/C Sprague/Balsley to approve the minutes as amended. The vote was 4/0/1 with Maguire abstaining.
5. New Business
 - a. **Quarterly Reports from Community Conservation Centers and Ecology Center**

Martin Bourque, Interim Executive Director of the Ecology Center, reviewed the quarterly report for the period of April through June 2001. Bourque described the Cash For Trash Contest as being successful in meeting the goal of improving participation especially in the West and South Berkeley, which were the areas of focus. Tonnage is up 9.6% compared to the same period last year, and the Recycling Hotline is receiving many more requests for curbside bins. The Contest was well covered by the news media, and Half Moon Bay and San Francisco are planning to implement similar contests.

Other Ecology Center highlights included that they expect to receive two new collection trucks in October or November 2001. They purchased three trucks last year, and are continuing to replace the older trucks in their fleet on a maintenance cost basis. The trucks all run on 100% biodiesel. Though miles per gallon of fuel have fallen, the drivers perceive that biodiesel provides more power. Bourque offered a reminder that the primary beneficiaries of using biodiesel are the truck drivers who will not have to breath as much particulate contaminated air while they are driving and working.

Two Ecology Center interns continued their work in the April through June quarter. One was working on plastics education. The other worked with Berkeley High School and reports that diversion there has increased from 40% to 55% diversion.

In answer to several questions from the Commissioners, Bourque reported that the Ecology Center policy is to use biodiesel made from recycled vegetable oil, but in reality most of the biodiesel now available is made from virgin soy oil. The USDA is promoting biodiesel made from virgin soy oil and may provide price support for it. The City is using diesel containing 20% soy oil derived fuel rather than 100% biodiesel just because they are proceeding cautiously. The Ecology Center anticipates no problems using biodiesel in their new trucks because the only risk to the engines comes from degradation of natural latex parts which are generally no longer used in the manufacture of new engines.

Maguire asked if the Ecology Center intended to repeat the contest, and Bourque responded that every other year might work.

Sprague asked what she should do when she sees poachers. Bourque responded that he was not concerned about the poachers who are pushing shopping carts but was highly concerned about organized poachers who meet a truck at a centralized location and systematically steal all the valuable recyclables in a neighborhood. He noted that the police do not respond. Becker thought that the police reserves had been helpful in the past, and noted that poaching discourages participation. Bourque added that anyone who sees a poacher should get a license plate number and call the Ecology Center Recycling Hotline, or the Police Department. The Ecology Center provides a report of license plates to the Police Department regularly.

Because no representatives of Community Conservation Centers were in attendance, review of their quarterly report was continued to the next meeting of the Commission.

b. Quarterly Report from Solid Waste Management Division

Dowdakin stated that the City's quarterly report on tonnages disposed and diverted for April through June 2001 had been mailed to the Commission. Tania Levy prepared this report, and Dowdakin asked the Commission if this was a typical report for them and if it met their needs. Sprague answered that the Commission had requested this information from staff and that they had received a similar report once before. Balsley suggested that it would be helpful to have something to compare the data to, such as data from the same quarter of the previous year.

c. Budget Update

Dowdakin reported that though Public Works Administration provided some fund balance information to her, the information was not clear nor necessarily correct. She said that Finance had just completed the second closing, and better information should be available for the next Commission meeting.

d. Year 2000 Diversion Rate

Dowdakin reported that the City of Berkeley was at a solid 49% diversion rate for calendar year 2000, falling approximately 1200 tons short of the 50% goal. While diversion tonnages are up significantly, disposal tonnages have also increased. Lerner suggested that the commercial sector probably contributed much more to disposal in 2000. Becker mentioned construction and demolition waste from earthquake retrofit projects. Balsley suggested that staff look into UC Berkeley tonnage being misreported and to include the foundry sand. Dowdakin responded that she had investigated the UC Berkeley issue without finding any problems, and that she had already deducted the foundry sand from the disposal figures.

Balsley confirmed that other cities in Alameda County were finding that their improvements in diversion were being negated by disposal increases in 2000.

e. Tour of Grover Landscape

Dowdakin reported that if a majority of Commission members wished to tour the Grover facility, then the trip would need to be noticed as a meeting. Travel time is approximately 1½ hours in each direction to the facility in Modesto. The tour would include seeing scales, screens, grinders, turning of the windrows, and finished materials. Lerner and Balsley both expressed interest in a visit. Dowdakin agreed to poll the Commission with tentative dates for the tour, and all interested members could go.

6. Staff updates

The **Customer Service** unit was scheduled to move into the Finance Department on July 6, 2001. That move has been delayed indefinitely. The **Bulky Pickup** is continuing a few more weeks with East Bay Depot doing the advance collection of reusable goods ahead of the refuse crews. No progress to report on expansion of the Transfer Station. The other **Capital Project** pending is a dust suppression system, which Tom Farrell is actively researching. The **Newsletter** was recently delivered to residential addresses in Berkeley. Dowdakin thanked the Commission for their helpful input. The **Reuse Directory** should be available in a couple weeks; orders for the directory are being received via e-mail in response to an item in the newsletter. **Commercial Food Waste** collection is continuing without significant change to the service since the billing was implemented on July 1, 2001. Staff visited every customer to explain how the billing worked and to see if the customer would like to change their service level. Rogelio Marquina reported positive responses overall, with many customers able to reduce their garbage service by doing a better job of diverting the food waste. The **20-gallon Cart Service** will be available as soon as the carts arrive, which will be no earlier than November. Transfer Station workers have been separating **Computer Monitor and TVs** for recycling and have made two shipments already.

A **Proposed Resolution on Purchase and Recycling of Batteries** is being brought forward to City Council by CEAC (City Environmental Advisory Commission). The intent of the resolution is to require City staff to purchase rechargeable batteries for use in allowable applications, and to establish a collection system to recycle batteries use in the City. Solid Waste staff was concerned that the proposed resolution, which was essentially a knock-off of a resolution adopted by the City and County of San Francisco, would unduly burden the staff of the Solid Waste Management Division and that some aspects of the resolution would simply be unworkable. Dowdakin noted that her intent is to allow staff to review and comment on the proposed ordinance and then bring it to the Solid Waste Management Commission at the September 2001 meeting. Balsley suggested that a member of the CEAC be invited to that meeting to present the CEAC intent and point of view.

7. Future agenda items and meeting days

Sprague will chair the next meeting, September 24, 2001 because Becker is unable to attend. Items for the next agenda will include: quarterly report from Community Conservation Centers, Solid Waste Management Division budget update, report on UC Berkeley student move-in waste issues, report on bulky waste pickup compared to last year (if available), report on “informal” recyclers (if available); presentation of draft battery resolution by member of CEAC.

8. Adjourn: It was M/S/C Johnson/Sprague to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.