



Solid Waste Management Division

**MINUTES**  
**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**  
**Monday, October 22, 2001**  
**Solid Waste Management Center, 1201 Second Street**

Chairperson Rod Becker called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

1. Roll call: Commissioners Present: Rachel Balsley, Rod Becker, Kristine Johnson, Judith Maguire, Garth Schultz, Carrie Sprague.  
Commissioner Absent: Dick Lerner  
Staff: Becky Dowdakin  
Members of the Public: Jeff Belchamber, Sara MacKusick, Dave Williamson
2. Comments from the Public: None.
3. Approval of the September 24, 2001 minutes: Becker proposed that "San Francisco" be inserted before "anti-poaching campaign" at the bottom of page 3 under the discussion of curbside poaching. The minutes were approved unanimously, as amended.
4. Old Business

**a. Budget Update**

Dowdakin distributed a two-sided handout on the FY2001 Budget and Refuse Fund prepared by Darryl Moore in Public Works Administration. The first table, Adjusted Budget vs. Expenditures by Department, showed the adjusted budget, actual expenditures, and balance for Refuse Fund expenditures citywide in FY2001. Dowdakin pointed out that overall expenditures were less than that budgeted. The use of Refuse Fund monies by other departments was not for in-kind services used by the Solid Waste Management Division (SWMD), but for solid waste related programs operated by those departments, with City Council authorization to use the Refuse Fund. The second table, Refuse Fund (820) Revenue from FY1997 to FY2001, shows that for each of the past five years, actual revenues have exceeded budgeted revenues. Dowdakin noted that this is budget information, and a report on the Refuse Fund itself would not be available until early 2002.

Balsley noted that Tom Farrell has long talked about capital needs, but that the funding is seldom approved. Dowdakin responded that the SWMD expense budget continuously feeds an equipment replacement reserve fund, so that when it is time to replace a truck, the money is already in place. However, with the facilities, this does not appear to be the case. Dowdakin said she did not know if the Refuse Fund had an official purpose or if parts of it were designated for specific uses, but that these things are typically at the Council's discretion. Becker said that the purpose of the Solid Waste reserve is to provide a 30-day emergency operating reserve. He added that the City should state officially the purpose of the fund, in writing, so that its use is to serve the interest of the Solid Waste Management Division and programs related to solid waste. Johnson supported Becker's statement and added that deferred maintenance always seems to be a problem and that the SWMD cannot access its own fund.

Maguire asked why only half the money for Facilities Maintenance was expended. Dowdakin replied that she did not know but clarified that the budget and expenditures listed were not SWMD expenditures but for the Facilities Maintenance Division use of the Refuse Fund for solid waste related activities. Johnson asked that Tom Farrell or Rene Cardinaux come make a presentation to the Commission when information on the Fund is available, maybe in January 2002. Becker emphasized that he thinks there should be an incentive and reward for good management, with one indicator being performance within budget.

5. New Business

**a. Sale of Property Occupied by the Recycling Center at corner of Dwight Way and M.L. King Jr. Way.**

Sara MacKusick, Executive Director of Community Conservation Centers (CCC), offered a short history of the Recycling Center at Dwight Way and M.L. King Jr. Way, and summarized the status of the property. The site opened as a recycling center in 1971, and CCC took over operating responsibilities in 1974. Since that time, curbside service has become a weekly citywide service that collects all the materials currently accepted at this recycling center. Neighboring communities have similar curbside services. While use of the site has declined, it still takes in between 80 to 100 tons per month of recyclables. It is an important service, and its closure would be a loss to the community. CCC probably does not have a place to move. The owners offered to sell the site to CCC for \$495,000, but they cannot afford it. CCC is still interested in tenancy if the new owners do not intend to build. The "For Sale" signs were posted last week. Loss of this site will probably not harm CCC financially.

Johnson asked for a gut feeling on what might happen to the materials currently recycled there. Jeff Belchamber, CCC General Manager, responded that some would go to the curbside programs in Berkeley and Oakland and some would go to the Second and Gilman site. MacKusick noted that City staff had suggested a site user survey. Balsley inquired about the potential soil problems. MacKusick responded that the site previously had been used as a gas station. She had not seen a soils report but expected that some remediation would be necessary. Becker asked if the City has offered any surplus property. Dowdakin responded no. Becker suggested that the City or U.C. Berkeley might have land to offer, either empty buildings or empty lots. MacKusick said that CCC's reaction has been that there is not an alternative site available.

Dave Williamson, Ecology Center Recycling Manager, said that people take materials to the Dwight/King site because they cannot easily recycle them at the curb. Odd-size cardboard is an example. He also noted that the Dwight/King recycling center collects about the same amount as a single curbside truck. Last, he noted that many community-based recycling centers have closed, and this one has been valuable to Berkeley because of its central location.

Johnson asked what the tonnage of this site represented in diversion percentage. Dowdakin replied less than one percent. Sprague noted that many people use the recycling center rather than the curbside program because of the poaching. Maguire asked if the EcoPark could be an alternative site. Becker thought it would be too far south and not close enough to residential areas. Maguire answered that more housing is there than we see because of loft conversions.

Dowdakin distributed a recycling center user survey drafted by Tania Levy. Balsley thought a survey would help identify the losses. Becker inquired about the CCC web site, and MacKusick answered that it was under construction. Schultz added that the survey should include a question asking where recyclers would take their materials if the center closed.

6. Staff updates:

Dowdakin reported that ACWMA had a preliminary report from Raven Nemerhoff on her **Poaching** research, but that ACWMA staff had not yet reviewed it. Becker asked about San Francisco, and Dowdakin responded that she had not looked into the recent San Francisco efforts. Williamson stated that the Ecology Center loses at least \$6,000 per month to poachers. They want to narrow their focus to key poachers who are making considerable money. He says they need the cooperation of the District Attorney to succeed, and he wants to get the vehicles impounded. Williamson thinks there are perhaps six individuals responsible for most of the theft. He wants to get the IRS after them or Social Services if they are collecting welfare. Some operators run trucks that buy poached materials from people in shopping carts. Becker said he would like to pull together the information including Ecology Center,

the Berkeley Police Department, ACWMA and San Francisco. Balsley asked if it would be helpful for the Commission to write a letter to the District Attorney, and suggested they do that.

Dowdakin reported that the **Reuse Directory** is at the printer yet, where they are printing the cover, so it should be ready this week.

The Community Environmental Advisory Commission (CEAC) did not discuss the **Battery Resolution** at their meeting on November 1, 2001, as they cancelled their meeting in order to attend the meeting of another commission discussing wood stoves and fireplaces. Dowdakin distributed copies of her memo to Nabil Al-Hadithy regarding the proposed battery resolution, and noted that the tone was harsh because she was afraid the CEAC might otherwise approve the resolution without recognizing the concerns of the Solid Waste Management Commission or the SWMD staff.

The **Temporary Closure of Transfer Station** is scheduled for two weeks beginning November 5, 2001. The Transfer Station will reopen on November 19, 2001 with a new floor. During the closure period some new **Signage** will be installed including on notifying the public regarding the State survey on load origin.

In response to Sprague's concerns regarding recycling at Vista College, Dowdakin looked into the City's programs for **Recycling Outreach to Other Public Agencies in Berkeley** and found that no special program exists. The SWMD treats other public agencies like commercial entities in that they may receive service on request, but they have not been targeted. Vista College had contacted staff a SWMD about recycling, and though staff attempted to get them set up, Vista has not been responsive. Balsley mentioned that ACWMA's business assistance program has approached Peralta College and that AB75 requires public agencies, including community college districts, to develop and implement recycling plans.

ACWMA and City staff met to discuss the **Schedule for Plant Debris Facility Expansion**. The plan is to put the project out for bid in March 2002, begin construction in June 2002, and finish in December 2002. At his meeting, ACWMA staff raised the idea that this would be a good time for the City to consider plans for MRFFing (recycling) more materials from the waste stream at the transfer station.

Staff can schedule a **Grover Landscape Tour** on almost any day that is convenient to the interested Commissioners. Balsley, Johnson, and Sprague agreed that the morning of Tuesday, November 6, 2001 would work best.

Last, ACWMA staff has requested the opportunity to make a presentation to the Commission, at the November 2001 meeting, on their plans for building compost facility in Alameda County.

7. Future agenda items and meeting days: The next meeting is scheduled for November 26, 2001. Items for next agenda include a report on the Commission visit to the Grover composting facility, a report on poaching from ACWMA (if available), a presentation on composting from ACWMA staff.

Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.