



**MINUTES**  
**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**  
**Monday, November 26, 2001**  
**Solid Waste Management Center, 1201 Second Street**

Solid Waste Management Division

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

1. Roll call: Commissioners Present: Rachel Balsley, Rod Becker, Howard Chong, Kristine Johnson, Judith Maguire  
Commissioners Absent: Garth Schultz, Carrie Sprague  
Staff: Becky Dowdakin (Joe Smith arrived at the end of his shift)  
Members of the Public: Bruce Goddard, Dick Lerner (~8 pm), Brian Mathews, Sara MacKusick, Dave Williamson
2. Comments from the Public: None.
3. Approval of the October 22, 2001 minutes: Rod Becker clarified that “reserve” is what he had in mind where the minutes refer to the “fund.” The Commission approved the minutes unanimously as amended.
4. New Business

Becker introduced new Commissioner Howard Chong who was appointed by Councilmember Kriss Worthington. Chong reported that he had been a UC Berkeley student and Berkeley resident since 1997 and that previously he had been employed by the campus recycling program. Becker noted that the Commission has two remaining vacancies because Councilmembers Hawley and Shirek have not made appointments.

**a. Presentation from Alameda County Waste Management Authority (ACWMA) Staff on Plans for New Organics Diversion in Alameda County**

Becker introduced ACWMA Project Manager Brian Mathews, who introduced ACWMA Public Affairs Director Bruce Goddard. Goddard explained that the roll of ACWMA is to assist its member jurisdictions with waste diversion, but that ACWMA does not have control over the waste stream itself. The issue they are now addressing is that too much organic material is going into the landfill either to be buried or used as Alternative Daily Cover (ADC). They are interested in making the public aware of this problem and the importance of diverting waste to achieve ACWMA’s 75% diversion goal. The push now is to locate large-scale composting facilities in Alameda County.

Mathews noted that compost has a market, and nothing new or revolutionary is required to establish large-scale compost facilities. ACWMA has solicited letters of intent from this industry, and has received five responses in August 2001 that met the minimum criteria. Staff is now researching the soundness of the proposals including financing, siting issues, appropriateness of technology, and staff expertise. Staff will bring all viable proposals to the ACWMA Board, who may select two facilities. Mathews handed out a Top Ten List.

Becker inquired about the timeline. Mathews responded that staff would make a presentation to the Board in February 2002. Johnson asked what portion of the organics waste stream could be handled by these proposed facilities, and asked if the proposals included the same range of materials. Mathews answered that the proposed facilities should all be able to handle the potential

mix of organics in the waste stream. Goddard emphasized that home composting is still important. While residential plant debris programs are very strong, curbside food waste also has potential. Castro Valley just started residential food waste collection and is showing success.

Chong asked what other facilities of this scale are operating successfully, and what the transportation issues are. Mathews answered that there are several facilities operating at about 400 tons per day, and just a few operating at greater than 1000 tons per day. Usually the largest operations are well funded and managed, but sometimes the smaller facilities are not. Transportation impacts should not be great, because most of this material is already being hauled long distances as refuse. Johnson asked about local collection traffic impacts. Mathews answered that commercial collections should have little impact, but residential collection could have an initial increase that might subside as efficiencies emerge.

Goddard mentioned that ACWMA has funded Berkeley's expansion of the transfer station to better handle plant debris. Mathews added that the point was to address the bottleneck created by having just one pit. Becker asked how ACWMA planned to locate two facilities when the county population seems more heavy in the West, how they planned to address NIMBY issues, and if they had access to GIS to analyze generation data. Goddard responded that though they do not have GIS-type data, they have completed a scientifically accurate waste characterization for their member agencies. Siting is still a big issue.

Becker asked about who the largest consumers of the compost product might be, and where are they located. Mathews replied that the proposers were required to submit marketing plans, and those are being analyzed by staff. He felt strongly that the product should be returned to the communities that generate the source materials. Every plan foresees multiple outlets. Becker asked whether the primary market is rural or urban, and how seasonality is addressed. Mathews agreed that generation and use are seasonal, but the market is only 40% saturated, so there is plenty of unmet demand. Johnson noted that the County initiative is exciting, and that Berkeley could benefit.

Bourque asked about the public comment process, if affected communities were aware of the proposals, and if there was an environmental justice component to the process. Goddard responded that they were spreading the work through informal and formal meetings. Once staff determines which proposals are acceptable, the Board will have a full public hearing, then the selected proposals will have to go through the legal CEQA and public hearing requirements.

## 5. Old Business

### **a. Quarterly Reports from Community Conservation Centers and Ecology Center**

Dowdakin distributed copies of the quarterly reports from CCC, the Ecology Center, and the Solid Waste Management Division.

#### **Community Conservation Centers (CCC)**

Sara MacKusick, CCC Executive Director, reported that in the July through September 2001 quarter, the City's commercial recycling tonnage continued to rise, though the Ecology Center tonnage was down a little. She noted that CCC is pleased with the tonnage coming through buyback and drop off activities, but that 80-85% of that growth is from UC Berkeley. The remainder of the improvement might be 30-40 tons per month. Sales revenues are a little better than budget, but about 26% lower than last year. The average price per ton is not terrible from a historical perspective, but she is not expecting to see any improvements before Spring. The revenues from processing and disposal fees are about 7% below budget. Plastic is up significantly, especially curbside PET. CCC is experiencing big increases in labor costs due to wage and benefit increases, and the added cost of handling more plastic.

Becker noted that CCC had provided a lot of information, but the Commission did not have much time to review it. He asked if a consultant had been selected for the operations audit of CCC. MacKusick responded that they had not selected a consultant, but will soon, and the project could take 3-6 months. Becker asked if there was not a previous audit they could use for comparison. MacKusick replied that the last audit was not comparable. She added that they would try to use local Bay Area facilities for comparison to CCC's operations.

### **Ecology Center**

Dave Williamson, Ecology Center Recycling Manager, reported that curbside tonnage was up in July and September 2001, compared to last year, but August was down. Glass tonnage was up about 25%, or 20 tons per month, and other container tonnages were up about 34%. Paper was only up by 1.4%. Williamson explained that the Cash-for-Trash contest increased their volume the equivalent of an additional route. However, they are losing about 100 tons per month to poaching of fibers. Ecology Center is expecting new in December 2001, and Williamson is hopeful that the compacting ability of the truck will add some efficiency. The Ecology Center fleet is still running on 100% biodiesel with not problems. Ecology Center is working with their biodiesel vendor, Cytoculture in experimenting with a new blend of coconut and soil oils with a patented additive that will decrease NOx emissions. Other highlights included that the Ecology Center has experienced a 55% turnover in collection staff, some turnover was expected and some not. The curbside service now starts at 7:00 a.m. The hope is that an earlier start time will deter poaching, and that the trucks will be off the road in time to avoid traffic associated with the end of the school day. Monthly revenues from sales have been decreasing, and monthly invoices to the City have been increasing. Williamson believes the Ecology Center will end the year within the cost performance limit of the contract.

Dick Lerner suggested that the biodiesel did not achieve much in terms of air quality. Williamson clarified that the only problem is with NOx and that the reduction of SOx and aromatics is significant. Kristine Johnson asked what the plans were for public education on plastics, and suggested that the Commission be briefed on plastics education efforts some time in Spring. Judith Maguire asked if the biodiesel was no longer being made from recycled oils. Williamson responded that their fuel is from recycled oil, and they are looking into ways using waste oil as fuel that do not require conversion.

### **b. Staff Report on Transfer Station Tonnages in 1st Quarter of FY 2002**

Dowdakin noted that she had distributed a new handout on diversion and disposal that replaces the one mailed in the Commission packet. The new handout includes a column for comparison of tonnages for the same quarter of the last fiscal year. However, for FY2001, the Dwight-King tonnages represent all CCC drop off, rather than the facility tonnage as reported for FY2002. Similarly, in FY 2001 the Gilman Street tonnage represents buyback tonnage only. Dowdakin echoed the remarks of MacKusick in explaining the FY2002 figures for the CCC facilities. She noted that curbside recycling appears relatively flat, and that the commercial recycling and food waste programs continue to grow. While diversion of plant debris at the transfer station has improved, the residential plant debris tonnages are flat. Tonnages for mattresses, CRTs, and concrete do not have FY2001 comparable figures because these are new diversion programs. Appliance/metals tonnages are also up significantly, probably due to better promotion and incentive programs for replacing old appliances. Johnson noted that residential plant debris should have improved this year, since bi-weekly collection was relatively new last year. Dowdakin replied that she had the same expectation and suggested that the data has been problematic, and that actual tonnage might be up.

Rachel Balsley asked if the food waste program was being expanded. Dowdakin replied that the new employees are finally available to devote to service expansion, but some internal struggles over resources have recently erupted. Joe Smith clarified that until new trucks were available, the service could not expand. Dowdakin reported that Rogelio Marquina (Senior Refuse Supervisor) was working

on targeting food waste generators on commercial refuse routes that are particularly large, in order to relieve their burden.

6. Staff updates: Dowdakin reported that the **Transfer Station Floor Repair** proceeded on and without notable difficulty, and that the facility reopened as scheduled on November 19, 2001. Joe Smith testified that the closure was the most well planned and executed event that Solid Waste had done in many years.

Staff is still compiling and analyzing data from the **2001 Annual Clean Up** and will present a full report to the Commission in December 2001. Dowdakin reported that overall, tonnage is down about 25% from previous years and only mattress collection has increased. Johnson noted that the tonnage decrease was probably good news, and that the Commission was very interested in discussing the cost and value of the program.

The Alameda County Waste Management Authority (ACWMA) has a preliminary draft of a report on poaching. Debra Kaufman of ACWMA, characterized the draft report as a compilation of opinions on the topic, and not yet available for public consumption. Dowdakin stated that she did not believe much useful information would come from this report. She has spoken to the Berkeley Police Department, and they were very eager to attend a Commission meeting to address **Poaching**. The consensus of the Commission was to schedule a discussion of poaching for the January or February 2002 meeting.

The **Reuse Directory** is finally available, though Dowdakin did not remember to bring any to the meeting. The **Grover Tour** was scheduled and cancelled twice. Staff will rescheduled the tour at the direction of the Commission.

7. Future agenda items and meeting days: Because the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of December is Christmas Eve, the Commission rescheduled the December 2001 meeting to December 17, 2001. The agenda will include a staff report on the **2001 Annual Cleanup**, a review of revisions to Solid Waste Management Division **job descriptions**, and tentatively a presentation from Kate Squire of the City's Economic Development Department on the City's **Green Building** program and a request for funds from Solid waste for FY 2003. The Commission will discuss **poaching** in January or February 2002. Becker requested that in February, the Commission discuss participation of **Berkeley's schools**, public and private, in the City's waste diversion programs, with school representatives invited.
8. Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.