



**MINUTES**  
**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**  
**Monday, February 25, 2002**  
**Solid Waste Management Center, 1201 Second Street**

Solid Waste Management Division

Chairperson Rod Becker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Roll call: Commissioners Present: Rachel Balsley, Rod Becker, Kristine Johnson, Judith Maguire, Carrie Sprague  
Commissioners Arriving After Roll Call: Howard Chong  
Commissioners Absent: Garth Schultz  
Staff: Becky Dowdakin, Tom Farrell  
Members of the Public: Lisa Bauer, Sara MacKusick, Joe Smith, Dave Williamson
  
2. Comments from the Public: Joe Smith, representing SEIU 790, commented that some businesses that have no refuse or rubbish service are using City of Berkeley litter containers to dispose of their trash. The Field Representative has confronted some of these business owners but has been unable to stop them. Smith further commented that many businesses have recycling services provided by City of Berkeley, but have their rubbish picked up by a private company. This is unfair because if a business does not pay a City refuse bill it is not paying for the cost of recycling services. Balsley responded that the franchise fees are intended to offset the City's cost of providing recycling services to businesses that contract with private haulers for rubbish collection. Becker stated that both these items should be handled within the Solid Waste Management Division (SWMD) and not by the Commission. Smith said he brought it to the Commission so that something could happen at a higher level, as the Division did not seem to be able to change things. Becker asked staff to report on these items at the next Commission meeting, as they deemed appropriate.
  
3. Approval of the January 28, 2002 minutes: Balsley suggested that the minutes be amended to reflect that in discussing poaching, Aldinger had said it would be helpful to "have a list of the current prices." Commission approved the minutes as amended.

Becker handed out copies of a column by Ken Garcia on curbside poaching, published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on February 22, 2002, and requested it be filed.

4. Old Business

**a. Staff Report on Status of Refuse Fund**

Tom Farrell, Manager of Solid Waste and Recycling, made his second presentation to the Commission on the Refuse Fund. He briefly reviewed the topics he covered in the January 2002 meeting. In addition, Farrell discussed Sources and Uses of funds, and funding Capital Improvements. He suggested that the Commission could play an important role in advising the Council on sources and uses. Farrell summarized some of the challenges and options the City faces in the future, including the 75% diversion goal in 2010, the potential for rail haul of refuse and recyclables, the trend toward increased segmentation of the waste stream into regulated special streams, use of on-board computers for route analysis, and improvement of customer service.

In response to a series of questions from Chong, Farrell stated that the General Fund is the backup if the Refuse Fund runs in the red, and that there is no contingency fund. A good contingency would be 10 percent or maybe 5 percent with backup from the General Fund. Responding to questions from Maguire and Johnson, Farrell stated that the SWMD would still need to contribute to the General Fund, even if the Refuse Fund was entirely separate from the General Fund, and that such separation does not necessarily protect the Refuse Fund from being used for purposes not directly related to solid waste management.

Balsley asked if a Facility Renewal Fund could be established, and how the Commission could influence the City to take that direction. Farrell suggested that the Commission weigh that idea in the context of the City's other waste management priorities, including the 75 percent diversion goal. The Commission discussed forming a sub-committee on this topic, but did not take action.

Next time, Farrell's final presentation on the Refuse Fund will include a discussion of fund sources, and details on expenditures. Farrell will provide paper or electronic copies of his slides to the Commission after his next presentation.

5. New Business

Dave Williamson suggested that the Commission reorder the agenda to allow Lisa Bauer from UC Berkeley to proceed first. The Commission reordered the agenda accordingly.

**c. Report on Waste Diversion Activities at UC Berkeley**

Lisa Bauer, Campus Recycling and Refuse Coordinator for UC Berkeley, stated that UCB is diverting 35-38 percent of their solid waste. Plant debris diversion is not well tapped, and public recycling receptacles are not well distributed. Bauer participated in the second Chancellor's Recycling Summit where five goals were set: 1) increase public recycling containers, 2) establish a materials exchange, 3) distribute reusable mugs to students, 4) improve outreach in student living, 5) improve environmental purchasing policy.

Bauer's program has succeeded in providing reusable mugs by coupon, and the Associated Students will continue to provide mugs to freshmen in subsequent years. UCB has hired two student interns to act as recycling coordinators in the dorms, and to work on the campus Recycling Week event. The material exchange, supported by a grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board, collects and makes available reusable goods in the basement of the Martin Luther King Jr. building. This program distributes goods remaining at the end of the school year to non-profits. Bauer's program has been less successful in improving public venue recycling, and in developing an environmental procurement program.

In response to questions from the Commission, Bauer further explained that the main obstacle to acquiring outdoor recycling containers was cost. Containers that are designed with ergonomic and aesthetic considerations, and that can stand up to harsh treatment on campus or at campus events cost at least \$1,000 each.

Bauer continued with a description of campus efforts to reduce the spread of Sudden Oak Death (SOD). A hearing on proposed federal regulations regarding SOD is scheduled for Wednesday February 27, 2002. The federal regulations will trump any state regulations, classifies green waste as duff, and does not regulate duff at all. However, chipped wood is regulated, so it is not clear how Berkeley's plant debris program will be affected. Bauer explained that SOD is airborne, so it is essential that loads be tarped during transportation. UCB is treating infected groves on campus with copper sulfite.

#### **a. Recycling Contractor Reports for 1st Quarter of FY 2002**

##### Community Conservation Centers (CCC)

Sara MacKusick, CCC Executive Director, summarized the CCC quarterly report that was included in the Commission packet. Attachment A (page 4) includes four charts showing monthly tonnages by program. The horizontal lines on these charts represent the City's recycling goals from the Source Reduction and Recycling Element. None of these goals has been met. Attachment C indicates that average revenue for recyclables continues to decline, but is not horribly low.

MacKusick reported that the proposing buyer of the Dwight-King site is planning a "green" building with 14-16 residential units. The owners have promised CCC that the recycling center can stay at the site for at least eighteen months. CCC has been conducting user surveys at the recycling center, but has not finished compiling and analyzing the data. In response to questions from the Commission, Dowdakin stated that the City has no surplus property that CCC can use, nor is space available at the Eco Park. MacKusick reported that the Dwight-King site sold for \$465,000.

Last, MacKusick reported that CCC was contracting with a consultant to do air quality testing inside the pole barn at the Berkeley Recycling Center at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Gilman. She will report the results of the air quality study when she presents her next quarterly report to the Commission.

##### Ecology Center

Dave Williamson, Ecology Center Recycling Manager, summarized the Ecology Center quarterly report that was included in the Commission packet. He reported that the annual tonnage for calendar year 2001 had increased by 1,300 tons, and attributed this gain to the Cash-for-Trash program. Annual tonnage is now at the same level it was in 1998, but poaching continues to be a problem. The two curbside trucks on order are late, and this is straining the maintenance budget. New trucks will be equipped with video cameras for safe backing, and will have some compaction capability. Tim Krupnik has returned as the Ecology Center Plastics Education Coordinator. CBS will be taping Ecology Center operations for a *Marketwatch* report on biodiesel. Ecology Center is making biodiesel a special project, and is looking for ways to reduce cost by buying in larger quantities.

In response to questions from the Commission, Williamson stated that most bio-diesel is now made from soybeans rather than recycled fry oil, and that the USDA is subsidizing soy oil production. Ecology Center is currently improving their biodiesel storage by

adding secondary containment, in order to prevent storm water pollution and environmental damage from accidental spills.

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

Dowdakin summarized the transfer station quarterly report that was included in the Commission packet. She noted that food waste tonnage was up considerably compared to last year, and that this was due primarily to improved diversion by existing customers. Plant debris tonnages remained flat. CRT recycling continued to exceed staff expectations, though data for December 2001 was missing. Concrete is diverted on a labor available basis. Dowdakin noted that the transfer station was closed two weeks in November 2001, which depressed tonnages for self-haul refuse, plant debris and recyclables.

**d. Election of Commission Officers**

Sprague was nominated as Chairperson and elected 6/0/0. Judith Maguire was nominated as Vice Chairperson, and elected 4/2/0 with Balsley and Chong voting no. Becker announced the election results immediately following the vote.

6. Staff updates: Dowdakin reported that SWMD provided **Holiday Tree Collection** as part of the regular plant debris collection, through the month of January. Residents were directed to leave their trees next at the curb on the collection days, and cut in half trees taller than five feet. Businesses were provided collection service on request. SWMD staff met with the new owners of the **Dwight-King Site** and discussed their concerns regarding displacing the CCC recycling operation.

SWMD staff is developing plans for the **Annual Neighborhood Cleanup 2002**. No changes significant changes in service are being contemplated. East Bay Depot has bid approximately \$10,000 for reusables collection, and staff will negotiate the price with them. Staff is also soliciting bids for mattress collection to help relieve the burden on in-house labor and perhaps free up sources for other activities. Last, staff is working to coordinate with the Streets Division and UCB regarding the placement of debris boxes in the campus area. The Commission discussed the debris box service at length, with mostly negative opinions regarding SWMD giving away service without payment, and encouraging wasteful behavior. Chong made a motion that staff prepare a letter to the Inter-Fraternity Council outlining the rules of the Annual Neighborhood Cleanup, and listing fees for additional services. The motion passed 4/2/0, with Becker and Johnson voting no.

7. Future agenda items and meeting days: The next meeting will be March 25, 2002. The agenda will include a staff report on waste diversion activities and programs in Berkeley's schools, and the last presentation on the refuse fund.
8. Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.