



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Solid Waste Management Division

**MINUTES**  
**ZERO WASTE COMMISSION**  
**Monday, January 26, 2009**  
**North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Street**  
**Workshop Room B, 1<sup>st</sup> floor**

Chairwoman Nashua Kalil called the meeting to order with a quorum at 7: 05 p.m.

**1. Roll Call:**

**Commissioners present:** Dodsworth, Jensen, Kalil, Kirkpatrick, Schultze-Allen

**Commissioners absent:** Tam, Nava, Blachman

**Staff:** Andy Schneider, Recycling Program Manager, Tania Levy, Analyst

**Members of the Public:** Martin Bourque and Daniel Maher of the Berkeley Ecology Center (EC); Sara MacKusick and Jeff Belchamber of Community Conservation Centers (CCC); Dan Knapp of Urban Ore, and Resident Adam Heffler

**2. Welcome Back and Introductions:** Chair Kalil welcomed the Commission back with a renewed focus on the Strategic Plan to meet our diversion goals and a special need to balance the budget. Beyond raising rates, it is critical the City advance a new rate structure in order to adequately support existing diversion activities and bring new programs for multi-family recycling, advanced commercial services, and others advanced in the Plan.

Kalil introduced Andy Schneider as the new Recycling Program Manager. Schneider gave a brief work history with experience in San Francisco, Arcata and Portland Oregon as the Commercial Compost Specialist.

Kalil also announced that new commission appointments would be forthcoming. Nava (appointed by Kriss Worthington) is out of the country for six months and Sadigh (appointed by Dona Spring) will no longer serve due to important, but time intensive work on County sustainability efforts.

**3. Approve Agenda:** M/S Schultze-Allen/Jensen to approve the agenda, 5/0/0.

**4. Comments from the Public:** Dan Knapp reported that officials from the Australian Capitol Territory had recently rejected their zero waste plans and were instead actively landfilling most wastes. He referred to an upcoming article on this issue in the NCRA newsletter.

Martin Bourque reported that for the first time, Ecology Center had a net payment to CCC instead of revenue, because processing costs exceeded market prices. Bourque pointed to down markets as responsible. EC had also been in challenging wage and benefit negotiations with their union (IWW). A new labor agreement has been signed, but an impasse came close to a potential stop in service, but with preparation to deal with public needs. He reported work in preparation of what they hope will be a long-term service contract with the City of Berkeley. Martin also publicly thanked Tania Levy for her service as acting Recycling Program Manager.

Sara MacKusick reported that CCC met with the City to discuss their contract, review the drop in market prices and recent steps towards market recovery, although paper prices are still less than half of their peak. She stated that CCC should end the fiscal year without a deficit and its budget reserve provides a buffer. Chair Kalil asked for quarterly updates with an understanding of long-term budget effects.

**5. Announcements and Commissioner Comments:** Kalil asked that commissioners meet with their Councilmembers to update them on critical budget and rate issues in advance of Budget Workshops. She reported that she plans to meet with the new City Council member Jessie Arreguin to discuss his appointee opportunities, current state of the department, and his perceived needs and priorities for the downtown area.

Levy announced that the City completed re-accreditation from the American Public Works Association, meeting 300 national standards.

Dodsworth requested the City have a website or link where the public can analyze their carbon footprints.

**6. Approve Meeting Minutes of 11/24/08:** Kalil asked that EC & CCC review the 11/24/08 minutes for accuracy. M/S Kalil/Dodsworth to approve minutes with additions in budget section and a name correction 5/0/0.

**7. Officer Nominations for February Elections:** Kalil reported upcoming officer elections at the next regular meeting. She spoke with Tam and he has expressed interest in continuing as Vice Chair. She stated that she was open to continue as chair as well if that was the wish of the commission. She asked if there were other nominations commissioners wished to make at that time, none were made.

**8. Division Budget Status:** A new five-year budget forecast spreadsheet was distributed to the Commission with certain findings and questions highlighted. Increased landfill charges and the two-year delay in raising refuse rates was already integrated into the former projection. New information included unbudgeted overtime and unforeseen capital improvements. The spreadsheet did not break out street sweeping and its overtime. Kalil asked Staff to clarify existing diversion rates (estimated at approximately 60%) and that Berkeley cannot meet our 75% diversion goal in 2010 in light of the City's current budget shortfall.

Schultze-Allen reported that CIWMB has now changed how cities will report their diversion, to be based solely on landfilled tons.

Kalil asked new Recycling Program Manager Schneider for his opinion of the factors involved in the refuse fund's deficit shown on the new spreadsheet. Schneider stated that he had not been briefed on the budget in order to provide the commission with an explanation at this time, but that he will request Lisa Malek-Zadeh, Sr. Budget Analyst for Public Works, to present the revised budget projections at the February 2009 ZWC meeting. Schneider deferred to Levy for her perspective on the spreadsheets and the budget situation in general. Levy reported that two major future expenses, residential split carts and the transfer station RFP, had been postponed to 2010.

Staff distributed a list of refuse rates of nearby cities with comparable services. Berkeley's rate for a 32-gallon cart of \$22.58/month is \$4.00 below the average. Kalil asked why the rate study is not yet completed after two years. Levy reported that the completion of the rate study is now a top priority of City Administration. Prop 218 was mentioned, with the issue

of the City owning its own fleet as a factor complicating the progress. Kalil stated that we cannot move forward with new rate structure discussions until the current budget situation is fully understood. The City will need both an immediate rate increase to cover current cost of service, as well as a future new rate structure to accommodate our plans of split carts and the transfer station rebuild. It was announced that there will be a council information workshop on the refuse fund on Feb. 17. Kalil asked for more information for her and the commissioners before that date in preparation for council questions although there was insufficient time for a special commission meeting before February 17.

**9. Diversion Rate Update:** Levy has not yet completed the full CY 2008 diversion report. A report for 2007 is due to the State in March 2009, and the 2008 report by August. She distributed a table showing increased residential and commercial diversion of food/green waste, with a continuing 15% reduction in residential refuse associated with implementing residential biweekly organics. StopWaste sponsored a waste composition study during 2008. According to preliminary results, less than 1% of residential refuse is garden trimmings, but 50% of residential refuse is still food waste and compostable paper.

The transfer station began shipping construction/demolition waste to sorting facilities in July 2008. Of 11,800 tons shipped, from July through December, 6,852 tons were diverted. This is somewhat less than the 10,000 tons of diversion originally anticipated for this period, but is still a big boost in diversion. The wood is being used for energy, particle board and mulch, while concrete, metal, plastics and other materials are recycled. Urban Ore signed a new contract with the City in November to receive more money per ton, and provide more salvage workers for the transfer station. Bourque suggested that the Division maintain internal diversion benchmarks, as well as the annual reports.

**10. Staff Updates:**

Plastic Bag Ordinance: Staff is conducting an initial environmental study of the City's proposed plastic bag ordinance. There is no data yet on the effectiveness of the San Francisco bag ban, or the State bag recycling law on reducing bag use. State legislation has again been introduced (AB87, Davis) proposing a fee on paper and plastic carry-out bags.

**11. Legislative Update:** Postponed due to Tam's absence.

**12. Topics for future meetings:** This item was postponed. The February 23 meeting will focus on budget and new program needs to meet diversion goals.

**13. Training Opportunities:** This item was postponed.

**14. Adjourn:** M/S Schultze-Allen/Kalil to adjourn at 9:04 pm. 5/0/0.