



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Solid Waste Management Division

MINUTES
ZERO WASTE COMMISSION
Monday, June 22, 2009
North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Street
Workshop Room B, 1st floor

Chairwoman Nashua Kalil called the meeting to order with a quorum at 7:10 p.m.

1. Roll Call:

Commissioners present: Blachman, Jensen, Kalil, Kirkpatrick, Oatfield, Tam (7:30)

Commissioners absent: Dodsworth, Schultze-Allen

Staff: Ken Etherington – Division Manager, Claudette Ford - Director of Public Works, Tania Levy - Analyst, Andy Schneider – Recycling Program Manager

Members of the Public: Daniel Maher of the Berkeley Ecology Center (EC); Jeff Belchamber of Community Conservation Centers (CCC); Mary Lou Van Deventer and Dan Knapp of Urban Ore, and Residents - Pamela Sihvola, Leila Khatapoush and Adam Heffler.

2. Approve Agenda: M/S Jensen/Kirkpatrick to approve the agenda 5/0/0

3. Comments from the Public: Pamela Sihvola introduced herself as Co-chair of the Committee to Minimize Toxic Waste. They believe the Climate Action Plan is deficient, because it doesn't include the University laboratory, which uses as much energy as 25000 homes. She distributed articles about truckloads of mixed radioactive and hazardous demolition waste moving through Berkeley from dismantling the University's Bevatron Accelerator, and asked the Commission to invite a laboratory official to a future meeting. Kalil thanked Ms. Sihvola for the information, commented on the Commission's close relationship with the university's waste manager, but that the Climate Action Plan was focused on Berkeley. Ms. Ford replied that the material is going to Nevada and not to the Transfer Station. The City is in discussion with the University about the route, and is also concerned about the transport of hazardous material. A demolition and waste management plan has been submitted to the City Manager and Council. Mary Lou Van Deventer noted that every metal dealer has sensitive alarms to detect even slight amounts of radioactivity. Etherington added that landfills are similarly equipped. The Department of Energy prohibits radioactive metal from being recycled into consumer products. Blachman stated that this topic is not within the Zero Waste Commission's jurisdiction, and suggested a better path may be with the Transportation Commission.

Ms. Van Deventer discussed NCRA's CEQA lawsuit against Solano County for the proposed Potrero Hills landfill expansion and their failure to enforce landfill limits (Measure E.) Staff confirmed that Berkeley refuse does not go to Potrero Hills.

Tam arrives 7:30

Dan Knapp distributed an article from Resource magazine from England, describing a "zero waste" transfer station Urban Ore had designed in Crescent City, CA. Urban Ore recently designed a 14-acre site in Lostov England. Jeff Belchamber referred commissioners to

Community Conservation Centers' new website, Berkeleyrecycles.org and invited them to an open house/barbecue on July 2.

4. Announcements and Commissioner Comments: Kalil pointed out that the Zero Waste Commission's mission is not well represented on the City webpage. The mission is to help craft a policy and plan to achieve zero waste by 2020, in cooperation with other commissions, with the highest and best use of materials.

5. Approve Meeting Minutes of 6/22/09: M/S Jensen/Blachman to approve the minutes correcting the name of Potrero Hills Landfill. 6/0/0

6. Solid Waste Division Manager Update: Ken Etherington mentioned several operational efficiencies that are being planned and implemented by the SWMD.

Construction and Demolition (C&D): Because our current C&D options are more expensive than landfilling, we need to be careful to only send divertible material to these facilities. We will be actively sorting on transfer station floor so out-bound loads are more recyclable. Jensen asked about Stockton and Martinez where costs were lower. Ken stated that we were sending more C&D loads to Waste Management's Davis Street facility in order to meet our contractual requirements.

Routing Efficiencies: Currently working to minimize weekend commercial service, and maximizing container size in order to reduce frequency of collection. Commingling commercial fiber recycling routes will free up a truck and crew. Balancing residential organics routes due to increased participation will reduce overtime.

Software: Selected "PC Scales" for new scalehouse software to improve tonnage tracking and efficiency. This software is proven at other landfills and transfer stations. Blachman asked if we could tell which neighborhoods are not recycling and if commissioners can do anything to support our efforts. Ken stated that route tracking and periodic loadchecks could be used to target outreach to a particular neighborhood. A wireless system is being proposed to prevent having to trench the transfer station property. New routing software will help balance routes and minimize overtime. City will release an RFP for routing software within the next 30 days.

Contracts: Council approved contract extensions for Ecology Center (6 month) and CCC (1 year) Longer-term contracts were not possible until we know status of rates. Rate increase hearing is at Council on July 7. Ken stated that we are looking forward to continuing these long-term relationships. The transfer station rebuild feasibility study RFP will have a focus on diversion, considering modernization and different equipment for the MRF. Jensen asked when the commission will have a chance to look at the RFP. Ms. Ford said that she would make sure that the commission gets a copy of it. Dan Knapp asked if it is still titled a feasibility study and not a design/build solicitation. Staff confirmed that it is a feasibility study.

7. Solid Waste Division Manager Update: Andy Schneider stated that we have a unique recycling opportunity in Berkeley. It will however be a challenge to build a better recycling system while still upholding our highest and best use priorities. Our current two-stream system is complicated to use and we are the only Alameda county city still doing it. Efficient collection is also difficult in a two-stream system. We are sending two recycling trucks to many businesses. We do have a willing population though, and our success in residential food waste shows that. We need to improve our outreach by improving our website and by creating a multi-family program. We look forward to the increased recycling from the proposed residential cart program. The outreach campaign that will accompany the cart program will certainly help with the public's confusion on our two-stream system. We should remain open-minded about how we plan for our

future recycling program. Single stream systems have certain benefits for users and for collectors, like more cart options and fewer carts required at businesses and in inventory. Dan Knapp commented that single stream does not always result in more recycling because of contamination. Mary Lou Van Deventer quoted a study that stated that source separated recycling is the most cost effective. Andy agreed that further discussion and research will be helpful to build a better system. Other cities, like Portland, have modified their system to keep glass separate, but still have the convenience of single stream. Jensen stated people can change their behavior, and that although two-stream recycling may be more difficult, Berkeley is a community that is willing to do more.

8. Division Update:

Status of Refuse Rates: Protest vote notices are on the street. There has been a huge increase in calls to reduce residential service to smaller cans. The new rates include an annual CPI adjustment of 3% maximum. New transfer station rates are being proposed as well. Tam mentioned an ad campaign against the rate increase from “Berkeley Can Do Better” that contains inaccuracies. Tam reported that the Sierra Club has prepared a letter that will support the refuse rate increase.

Climate Action Plan: New web-based tool called See-it will be publicly viewable and will display progress in each chapter in the plan. It will contain multiple layers of information, presented in useful and colorful ways. Blachman mentioned new neighborhood networking groups.

Budget: Quarterly budget reports will be necessary for Commission review. Kalil requested that Lisa Malek-Zadeh present on the current budget situation at the July meeting.

Plastic bag ordinance and EPR update: Jensen asked that the EPR be ready for presentation by the July meeting. City Attorney has concerns on the environmental review and education campaign for the plastic bag ordinance. EIR status is an initial study and a declaration of negative impact.

9. Legislative Update: Tam handed out a legislation summary sheet. He shared that AB 473 (Apartment Recycling) is a current bill that will likely be vetoed again.

10. Future Agenda Items and Meeting Dates: Normally the Commission takes August off. We will discuss at July meeting. Levy announced that StopWaste has completed their 2008 Waste Composition Study. Kalil asked her to share the main points in July.

11. Training Opportunities: Levy announced that registration for the ZERI training course closes in July.

12. Adjourn: Nashua/Steen adjourn (9:07) 6/0/0