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Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Members Present

Britt Pfaff-Dunton
Margo Gillaspay
Scott Thomas
Tamara Thomas

Representing

Skagit County Health Department, ex-officio
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division, ex-officio
Town of La Conner
District 2 Citizens

Members Absent

Andy Hanson
Brian Dempsey
Leo Jacobs
Matt Koegel
Todd Reynolds
Torrey Lautenbach
Not Represented
Not Represented
Not Represented

Representing

City of Mount Vernon
City of Burlington
City of Sedro-Woolley, SWAC Vice-Chair
City of Anacortes, SWAC Chair
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers
Lautenbach Recycling, District 1 Citizen
District 3 Citizens
Haulers
Agriculture Representative

Visitors

David Bader
Elena Pritchard
Samantha Russell

Representing

Lautenbach Recycling
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division/*recorder*
Skagit County Public Health

Introductions

Mrs. Margo Gillaspay, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business title introductions were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items.

Call to Order

Mrs. Gillaspay, called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. at the Continental Building Crane Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, Washington.

Public Comments

Mrs. Gillaspay, opened the floor for public comments.

There were no Public Comments.

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Review and Approve Minutes

Mrs. Gillaspy opened the floor to discuss the December 19, 2018 minutes.

The following changes were submitted by Diana Wadley, Department of Ecology:

Page 3: ~~Lewis~~ = Lovaas

Page 3: ~~ETC~~ = UTC

Page 7: ~~Stan~~ Weston = Dan Weston

Ms. Pritchard

I've made all the necessary changes as requested by Ms. Wadley.

Mrs. Gillaspy

If there are no other changes, and we can vote on next time.

There were no other changes.

A sufficient quorum was not in place to allow for a vote of approval of the minutes.

Agenda Items

Mrs. Gillaspy moved forward to begin discussion of agenda item(s):

a. Update on Solid Waste Rates

Mrs. Gillaspy

I want to do an update on where we are with the Solid Waste Rates.

We had our Public Hearing in January and it was sparsely attended, we didn't get many comments in. The Board of Commissioners wanted me to wait another month to see if we got any other comments. We did get one from a citizen who came in and spoke about the increase in minimums that we are going to have at the Transfer Station. He wanted to suggest that we impose surge pricing. What we have is \$10 minimum at the Transfer Station. We would do like \$20 on Saturday and Sunday during weekend peak hours. I was like, that seems a little harsh if that is the only time that you come out there.

I have the Resolution that has been routed. I have it set to start for June 3, 2019, which is the first business day in June, we wanted to start it just before summer to have a little bit of time to get everyone ready. I had it through and just pulled it for one modification because I needed to add another sentence in there that future annual increases will also be on that first business day in June. I kind of forgot to set that up in there. That will be back through for routing and will go before the Board for signature, in about 2 weeks if all goes well.

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b. Results of Recycling Survey

Mrs. Gillaspy

We put together an on-line survey about recycling in Skagit County. This was a response to a lot of citizens requests that we have been getting about wanting to see expansion of curbside service in Skagit County. The stand-alone presented to the Commissioners what the steps would be if we were to put in place a minimum service ordinance. If you signed up for curbside garbage in Skagit County, you would automatically get recycling, which is not the case now. Curbside recycling is not available in the eastern part of the County. I worked with our outreach person and prepared a simple on-line survey. We wanted want to get at what people had for their garbage and recycling service now, what they thought about it, and what their interest was in expanding this curbside recycling service. It was open from November and December up on-line. I presented the results to the Commissioners at the end of February. We asked for their locations. The software that we had is kind of neat because you can filter out responses that people give for questions by their locations. We got a fair amount of unincorporated county participants in the survey. The main things that we saw that people wanted and did like the idea of increased recycling, but they didn't want to pay more for it, and they didn't want to make it mandatory. One thing that surprised us that we didn't think about, was that people really wanted yard waste collection. This was something that we hadn't originally thought about because we were some focused on curbside recycling. When I presented this to the Commissioners, I kind of wanted to get a response from them on how they were feeling about this minimum service ordinance. It is really not something that they are interested in supporting at this time. They did not feel that there was enough of a interest from the community. From that, I was just going to reach out to Waste Management because I know that they are kind of looking at expanding their yard waste service area, and have already expanded their curbside recycling area down along Lake Cavanaugh Road area. Just seeing what their interest was in expanding either of those services without a minimum service ordinance.

Ms. Thomas

Have they expanded into Nookachamps Hills at all?

Ms. Gillaspy

I think so. I've had people drive around and kind of look at where the bins are. I reached out to the UTC saying that we are seeing more of the bins outside of their service area. They said that they talked to Waste Management and it seems like WM is interested in expanding, especially yard waste maybe over in that area. I haven't seen any information come through where they want to update their tariff. That's the area that I am thinking of where they are interested in.

Ms. Thomas

Was there any way of telling if you got any response from the Town of Concrete? Yes, I did see this. Just trying to think of where the clusters of population are east of Highway 9.

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Mrs. Gillaspay

Yes we did. One percent. I don't know if you've had any more discussions with people.

Ms. Thomas

I haven't really. I think that they are hoping that the county will do something. With recycling being so difficult in general, it's hard to get a lot of energy around that. Not knowing from one day to the next what's going to be actually recyclable. I don't think that you can do a service ordinance.

Mrs. Gillaspay

If we could at least see some expansion of that service area; try to get more people the service that want it.

Ms. Thomas

Since it's not something that's accepted at the drop-off locations for people east of the county, there just isn't any place. Environmentally it's not a good thing to see dumped in the ditches, which of course is where it always ends up.

c. Projects for 2019

Flow Control Workgroup

Mrs. Gillaspay

Moving on from there, this kind of led me to thinking of what kind of projects and things we want to focus on in 2019. A couple of those that I thought of was getting a Flow Control workgroup back again since it's been about a year since we met the first time. I would love to get that back meeting again. Leo Jacobs is a good spear-head for that one too. Maybe I'll e-mail the group and see if and when people are interested in meeting.

Food Recovery

Mrs. Gillaspay

I wrote food recovery here, but this is really more of a food waste reduction. Callie is very interested in that for this year, and that's what she kind of wants to focus a lot of her education efforts on. We have printed up a bunch of materials for households for food waste reduction. She also wants to work on promoting organics collection. These are all high priority Recommendations in our Management Plan so she is very motivated to get going on those. We did have a meeting with a group that is working in Whatcom County on food recovery. So this is more of recovering edible food that would be thrown out and getting it to hungry people. We would look to work with Skagit Gleaners. Whatcom County Solid Waste does have a grant that they use to help pay Sustainable Connections to help run this program for them. But we are really just in the early stages and don't want to replicate if people are already doing this successfully.

Mr. Thomas

Are you referring to something beyond grocery stores?

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Mrs. Gillaspy

Yes. He recommended places like breakfast buffets in hotels. Nursing home facilities and assisted living apartments. He thought you would get a lot of consistent food from those places. We are sort of exploring to see if there are any options there. We are looking into that whole food waste diversion aspect of it.

Announcements/New Business

Mrs. Gillaspy opened the floor to address any announcements or new business.

Ms. Russell

Secure Medicine started implementation on February 14 of this year, so they are now active in installing boxes at pharmacies and replacing Law Enforcement facilities drop boxes. We are also looking to Municipalities and Mayor's offices, places like that. Fire Stations and Libraries to host as a mailing distribution locations. The Med Project also offers mailer return programs. Individuals can order them off of their website or they can go to a centralized location; like where they would pay a utility bill, and pick up a mailer or two. They would put their medication in a pre-paid, pre-addressed envelope and send it in safely. We are just in the process of getting people on board with that and getting everything in place.

Ms. Dunton

Unfortunately, we just have you from one City. I was hoping to have the other Cities here too. The ordinance provides that various Municipal buildings that request to be mailer distribution bases, can get these mailers and hand them out for free. City Hall and the Library would be perfect spots for those to be displayed and people can get them for free. They would get replenished by Med Project. In La Conner, the pharmacy is working on getting a box installed. It is a combination of drop-boxes at the pharmacies and law enforcement facilities and then the other option is the mailer option. If you call in or request from a website, you get only one and it can take 10 days or more. It could take 3-4 weeks to get an injectable container. We want to be able to get a stockpile of those envelopes and containers and then be able to give those out to distribution points that would want them, and then people could walk in. If they are having to wait 2-3 weeks and are doing spring cleaning and want to get rid of the stuff now and the mailer doesn't come and its going to go in the trash or down the toilet and not disposed of properly. We need to have those options readily available.

Ms. Thomas

What about when they have the drop-boxes, what is the procedure when they are full?

Ms. Dunton

It looks like a mail box. Inside is a cardboard box with a plastic liner inside. People put their medications in there. When it fills up, they will lock up the kiosk. The theory is that Med Project will remove those medications before it gets full. If their rotation when they come out to do the pickup isn't enough and its full, then that pharmacy or law enforcement is suppose to lock it and call Med Project and they should come out within 1

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or 2 days. Having mailers as a backup option is a good thing to have. As we set up a system, the drop-boxes and the mailers is suppose to be getting replenished directly from Med Project to those sites. The Health Department will serve as that troubleshooter so we will want that Library to call in and report that they are not getting their box service properly because we are the ones that are doing the assessment and the enforcement.

The way the ordinance is written, it is a stewardship ordinance so it is putting the producers of the medication to fund the collection and disposal. The producers chose to hire a stewardship company, which is Med Project, LLC; a non-profit organization that runs the collection and disposal. They are the entity that has been doing the medicine pickup in King, Snohomish, Pierce, Kitsap, Whatcom, Callum and Skagit Counties.

Ms. Thomas

When they add a county, do they add a physical presence in that county?

Ms. Dunton

Placing the boxes, that person is out of Seattle. Writing and approving the plans, we are dealing with someone out of D.C. They added on additional counties and have not staffed up so the response that the last 3 counties are getting, Whatcom, Skagit and Callum, is very slow.

Mrs. Gillaspy

Is there suppose to be a drop-box every place there is a pharmacy?

Ms. Dunton

Every place there is a pharmacy that is willing to accept it. It tends to be the independents that are willing to do that type of contracting. The chain stores generally are not as interested.

Mrs. Gillaspy

Can we have the mailers at all 3 of our sites, can we host them there?

Ms. Dunton

We can definitely have them here at the county building. The ordinance indicates Municipal buildings such as Fire Departments and Libraries. If you are interested in having them at Transfer Stations, we should request them and see if they deny it. Send the request to Samantha Russell/Skagit County Health Department and she will send it to Med Project. They would need to provide a logical and legal response as to why the Transfer Station would not apply. There is a disclaimer on their printed materials and website that says that this Med Project collection disposal system exists because it is mandated.

Mr. Thomas

Legally speaking, Skagit County is a Municipality.

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Ms. Thomas

Does it need to be mandated that its done efficiently?

Mrs. Gillaspy

Apparently not.

Ms. Dunton

That's in the ordinance, but again the ability to enforce on that, you have to be able to prove the intent.

Ms. Russell

That's why we are trying to work with the pharmacist and the people directly to put pressure on them from the other directions so that by increasing that pressure from consumers on pharmacists, by pharmacists on Med Project, and by us as that interim person between all; we can try to help that grow in this county where it might not have grown as much without.

Ms. Thomas

For the request process, if I walk into the Library and say, how come you don't have these, they request it from you?

Ms. Dunton

Yes, or indirect from Med Project. One of the things that is also helpful is, as the consumer, if you are saying to the Library or the pharmacist at Costco, etc, hey Hilltop Pharmacy or LaConner Drug, their doing it why aren't you? And so they are getting that pressure from the consumer in addition to us trying to tap them and say, how about signing up.

Ms. Thomas

I love that and have no problem pressuring them. But the problem is, when you pressure someone into doing something that doesn't work, you get a long time backlash. I've heard, we've tried that back when, and it just didn't work.

Ms. Dunton

Technically, to get those mailers, they are suppose to go to Med Project. We are saying, send it to us so that then we can do the pushing so that the Library or Fire Station or City Hall isn't responsible for that right now.

Ms. Russell

They are working on it. It is not all terrible. There have been some areas where it has worked relatively well in. Some of the pharmacists in other counties have had good experiences in terms of service. This is not the expectation of service, but that is some of the roadblocks and realities in this establishment period.

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Ms. Dunton

When the operation first started in Snohomish County, they had 20 boxes out within a month's timeframe of their official start. They did a good rollout there.

Ms. Thomas

What is the outreach process and how is that suppose to happen? Once the boxes show up, how are people suppose to know that that is available?

Ms. Dunton

Then we will be doing social media websites. Med Project is also suppose to advertise through radio and print ads.

Ms. Russell

Part of what I'm doing with every request that I send in for mailers for distribution location, is requesting that they distribute physical copies of their outreach materials with those distribution things. They do have radio PSA's listed on their website, but they are not making the connection to the public. So we are trying to make that connection, because that's where it matters.

Ms. Thomas

In terms of awareness, the waste water treatment people should be informed.

Ms. Dunton

Once we have enough sites available that would be a perfect thing to put in the City utility bills. We have not even done a press release yet from the county. We only have 2 boxes so it doesn't help for us to have this expectation out when we aren't there yet. We are trying to put more time in getting more boxes out, get mailer distribution places setup in place, then we'll put the press release out and the flyers.

It's also a matter of getting that information to the decision makers. Ms. Russell was able to talk with the law enforcement and some of the Mayors. Law enforcement has been writing and saying, we've already got boxes, why do we need to switch. Med Project called them and said we want to switch out your boxes. They were just not understanding the full rationale behind it. Reaching out to the additional law enforcement folks by e-mail and letters saying yes you do want to do this, it will save you money.

The Sheriff's Office had set up a take-back system and brought in boxes there were offered to the law enforcement locations. The City of Mount Vernon, the Sheriff's Office in downtown Mount Vernon, Anacortes, Sedro-Woolley and Swinomish Tribal had a box. They were collecting the meds and then they were being brought into the Sheriff's Office and they were physically driving them down to Marysville State Patrol. The State Patrol was then driving it to the Spokane incinerator, all being covered with their own budgets. That was the kind of commitment that they were making to keep that thing going. The beauty in this, that collection and disposal will not be paid for by Med Project. Once the boxes get switched over, the Sheriff's Office won't have to have that

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additional expense. When the drop-boxes first started up, it was only allowed at law enforcement legally through DEA regulations. A change in the DEA regulation allowed these drop-boxes to exist at either law enforcement or at pharmacist that had changed their DEA license to also host a drop-box site. The pharmacist has a simple process to change that license by using an application on the DEA website. It simply involves checking an additional box on their license that they already hold through the DEA. Drop-boxes cannot be in a location where you do not have law enforcement or a pharmacist. Municipal building locations can provide mailers only. The mailers must be mailed through the United States Postal System by the customer.

The county Health Department, downtown office, has lock-boxes that are available for people that have routine medication needs and that need to be locked safely from access by other family members. These boxes were funded by the Behavioral Health Department and is not part of the Med Project.

Public Comments

Mrs. Gillaspy opened the floor to address any public comments.

There were no public comments.

Unfinished Business

Mrs. Gillaspy opened the floor to address any unfinished business.

There was no unfinished business.

Adjourn

Mrs. Gillaspy thanked everyone. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:25 p.m.