



Solid Waste Advisory Commission Recycling Ordinance Reform Subcommittee

October 28, 2009, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

City Hall, 301 West 2nd Street, Austin, Texas
Council Chambers

APPROVED – MEETING MINUTES

Sub-Committee Members:

Rick Cofer (chair)

Maydelle Fason

J.D. Porter

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Introduction of the Solid Waste Advisory Commission Subcommittee Members
All commissioners present
- b. Inform audience of process and rules

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

The first (4) speakers signed up will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to speak.
No speakers.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve minutes from October 14, 2009 subcommittee meeting
Motion by Commissioner Fason, seconded by Commissioner Porter. Approved 3-0.

4. REGULAR AGENDA (Discussion and Possible Action)

- a. Staff presentation regarding SWS pilot glass recycling program.
Presentation from Keith Bible, SWS WRAP. SWS manages a contract for waste disposal in the downtown district "T" which includes 6th Street from IH-35 to Guadalupe and Congress from Cesar Chavez to 11th Street. The glass recycling program has been in place since 2007 and is a voluntary program available to businesses in the downtown district "T." Informational brochures were delivered in September 2007. Input from downtown clubs, Downtown Austin Alliance, and other stakeholder, Waste Management, the City's contracted service provider, retrofitted dumpsters for glass collection and locates them in the alleys closest to businesses who have expressed interest in participating. The program was rolled out in phases. Staff trained participants, provided indoor collection containers, door decals, etc. Containers are serviced every Thursday, Friday, and Monday and delivered materials to the City's MRF. Originally, contamination included plastic bags, plastic containers, and cardboard. Staff reconnected with the participants, educated the staff about contamination issues, which resulted in less contamination. SWS Staff performs regular audits of the area to monitor dumpsters for contamination. Staff

dumpsters over a 10 block area. Program seems to be very successful. Glass collected and diverted in FY07-08 was equivalent to 56 tons. In FY08-09, 83 tons were collected and diverted. Successes include increased diversion of glass from last year, keeping contamination to a minimum, and adding new partners as interest grows. Challenges mainly deal with space limitations inside and in alleys. Sorting becomes difficult inside establishments. In alleys, staff must balance space limitations for garbage dumpsters versus recycling dumpsters. Staff turnover at businesses as well as SWS Staff's ability to perform regular site visits are difficult due to late night operations.

Commissioner Porter asked if commercial single stream would eliminate space challenge issues. Staff explained that commercial single stream could help. Commissioner Porter also asked what the feedback had been so far, complaints, concerns, etc. Staff explained that businesses have been pretty happy with the program. Little contamination occurs and most of that may be in part because of employee training. Commissioner Porter asked how partners have been added. Staff explained that the program has spread through word of mouth and that support from DAA has been helpful. Commissioner Porter asked if the program could be adopted city-wide. Staff explained that he wasn't sure and that it would take a lot of cooperation.

Commissioner Fason asked how clean the glass had to be. Staff explained that the containers had to be rinsed out. Commissioner Fason inquired if the staff had enough time to rinse containers. Staff explained that space was the issue and the businesses had to become creative on how to sort and clean the materials. Staff provided a copy of the T district and identified location of the glass recycling dumpsters.

Commissioner Cofer inquired as to whether or not the Warehouse District had been included in the program. Staff explained that the Warehouse District opted out but was not sure why they chose to opt out. Staff believes that physical sorting could be a reason for participating in the program.

Ryan Hobbs (Texas Disposal Systems) asked what happens with the glass and what the strategies are for the product. Staff explained that the glass was sent to the MRF, weighed, crushed into glass mulch, and then shipped to the closed FM812 Landfill. The glass mulch is available as a free product to the public and is also shared with City facilities that wish to use it in landscaping. Staff further explained that the City is evaluating the specifications needed to improve the value of the glass mulch to create a greater market demand. Commissioner Porter explained different uses for glass aggregate and shared the different uses for commercial application. Andy Andreisi explained that TXDOT already had specifications in place that might be useful. Commissioner Cofer asked where the glass from residential curbside went. Staff explained that Greenstar processed it and recycled it. Commissioner Porter added that Greenstar works with Strategic Materials to manage the glass.

Commissioner Cofer asked the cost of the glass recycling program, how it was funded, and if more dumpsters could be added to the program and if so, would the cost be absorbed by the current WM contract cost. Staff explained that the dumpsters were partially included in an existing contract with WM but that the contract had some limitations. Adding additional dumpsters could potentially come at an additional cost. Staff would touch base with the contract manager to obtain answers to the Commissioner's questions. Commissioner Cofer explained that he

they would inquire about the contract impact of adding more dumpsters and would look into touching base with program participants to get their input about the program.

- b. Presentation(s) from representatives of multi-family properties Sunshine Mathon and Stephanie Perrone-Freeborg (Foundation Communities) presented their findings of a pilot recycling program implemented at their Sierra Ridge apartment complex. Stephanie Perrone-Freeborg provided a copy of their report, background and explanation of their pilot project.

Recommendations included: requiring site planning to be more thorough in planning, making recycling containers/stations more predominant than trash containers, amend the city code to require by code all new residential construction, especially in multi-family, dedicate space inside the unit for sorting of recycling, identify a number of recycling containers per unit/resident, at existing properties – partner with the City to provide totes to aid with in-unit sorting options for residents, provide city staff to help focus on education and outreach for multi-family recycling efforts, provide a centralized database for access by multi-family property owners/managers to access their diversion data, identify a universal/identifiable icon specific for multi-family recycling program that is different than what is currently used, require recycling bins to have bilingual signage.

Bill Roland (Austin Apartment Association) provided background and explanation of plan that the AAA could support. Mr. Roland reminded the commissioners that one size would not fit all, but that there could be a way to phase in recycling programs keeping in mind the challenges that each property faces in terms of staffing and space constraints.

AAA recommendations include: (1) phase in -- first year, 75 units and more; second year, 50 units and more; third year, 25 units and more; 25 units and less when COA can provide service. The smaller the property gets, the harder it is to provide service. Gives more opportunity to manage the challenges. Smaller complexes also tend to be in older neighborhoods where there are a lot of single family homes. (2) Due to limited space, allow owner to carve out parking spaces to use for recycling. (3) If parking can't be carved out and has no other option other than to use ROW, COA waive ROW lease fees. (3) City should include a fee to the tenant to help owners deal with cost and buy into the program. City should then off-set the fee to the master meter. (4) COA service would be an option to properties. (5) If single stream could be required, that would help, especially to help with space constraints. (6) Fees from haulers should be fair. (7) Haulers should pick up recycling containers wherever they are placed.

Commissioner Cofer shared his support for AAA's recommendations and asked for an update on details regarding moving forward with changes to the development code and waiving of fees for ROW. Staff explained the ordinance amendment process. With regard to fees however, staff would need to do some research and meet with the appropriate department/person.

Commissioner Cofer asked if the fee to each tenant would be feasible. He explained the structure – tenant would be charged and then the fee would be credited back to the master bill issued to the property owner. Staff asked if the fee would only apply to all multi-fam properties regardless of size or if it would only apply to properties that

properties regardless of size since all properties would be receiving service. Sunshine Mathon (Foundation Communities) stated that he agreed with the fee in general, but it was based off of the assumption that each unit pays for their utility bill. Some properties however, especially in an affordable housing situation, do not always have their own utility bills. Another challenge would be an all bills paid situation. Staff explained that some research would be necessary.

Commissioner Cofer asked if staff could also provide a report of the number of small scale properties so that an analysis could be performed to determine the city's cost of providing service to smaller properties. Staff agreed to provide an estimated number of properties with 25 units or less and reminded the Commission that the Master Plan would consider the issue of fees and implementation.

Mike Watson and Katherine Park (San Miguel Management) provided background on the materials they currently recycled at some of their properties. 7 properties with over 3,000 students. Recycling results are very lack luster, even with the distribution of totes to units. Education is critical and single stream recycling would be more beneficial. Estimates that 10% of their population would participate in any recycling program. The rest throw it away. Single stream would resolve all issues by the apartment community. Ms. Park works mainly at a private dormitory setting. With students, it is difficult to mandate what they do with their waste. Mr. Watson explained that recycling chutes should have been created along with their trash chutes, but they didn't. Recycling must be carried down separately.

c. Presentation(s) from representatives of institutions

Jennifer Goeth (CapMetro) provided a power point presentation on current efforts by CapMetro. Recommendations included phased in approach, partnership opportunity with the City with an emphasis on helping with managing recycling where patrons from events enter buses in mass quantities (ex: ACL, Trail of Lights, etc).

Jim Walker and Jeff Basile (University of Texas) provided an explanation of programs implemented by UT. Focusing on paper/cardboard, plastics, aluminum, and wooden pallets. Has a staff of UT employees that go out and retrieve 96 gallon containers that collect the materials. For wooden pallets, collected and sent to UT's surplus for reuse or sold on open market. Recycling of plastics (1 and 2) and aluminum cans are collected by UT students and recycled by the university. Ink and toner cartridges are recycled. Excess furniture is sent to surplus properties for refurbishing and/or reused on-site or at other Texas system facilities. Trash to treasure program is also very successful and COA partners to help with promotion and collection.

Jim Walker explained how Department of Housing and Food Services helps minimize/reduce waste for student housing. Facilities have gone 'tray-less' at the facilities. Composting is something that is being explored. Longhorns don't litter program is also successful. Even though UT would not be subject to a city ordinance, UT understands the large footprint it has in the community and is interested in partnering with the city and others to promote recycling and minimizing that footprint. UT will likely not go to single stream and will likely continue with a source separated system but would like to stay in contact with the City in development of the city's regulation and infrastructure.

Commissioner Porter inquired about construction at the University and asked who

broken into large projects and smaller projects. Large projects are handled by a division of UT system. Other projects under \$4M are handled in-house. UT has committed to construction for new LEED Silver. Recent project diverted 91% of C&D. UT does struggle with how to recycle many materials for different markets such as ceiling tiles and carpet.

Commissioner Porter expressed interest in the training and education campaigns that UT developed. Mr. Walker explained that they provide yearly evaluation of their programs and could get the staff that oversees that program in touch with the City to share ideas and best practices for handling staff turnover.

Commissioner Cofer inquired about Jester's recycling program, specifically recycling containers placed in each room. Jacob Bintliff (UT student recycling staff) explained that there is inconsistency between the 14 different dorm recycling programs. In some programs, a recycling container is provided inside the rooms. Containers is the same color as the trash container so it became an education issue. Additionally, some students have turned their recycling container into a trash container. Staff has resorted to putting bins in each floor rather than in one room located somewhere else. It has been an issue locating containers in each room. However, staff is also looking at an educational placard to be placed in each room so that when a person moves in they are immediately aware/educated about the recycling program. Additionally, with regard to C&D recycling opportunities, UT students are doing research to identify realistic guidelines for bidding process to require C&D Recycling at projects.

Commissioner Fason inquired about the composting program. Mr. Walker explained that UT has been composting landscaping debris for some time. Incorporating food scraps is something UT is evaluating and may take more time. Food waste audits have been done and UT is exploring the best way to manage items like meat that makes it difficult to implement. Expects more info and ideas coming in the next couple of months. Currently, service ware (corn based) is used at UT. Jacob Bintliff explained that there is a signage and students have sorted their composting. Contamination rate was high at first, but new signage clearly designating what was compostable and what was not helped reduce contamination. Audit process is still underway. Karen Blaney (UT) also explained that processing the service ware was difficult and staff is still researching various options to handle food scraps and compostable service ware. In the mean time, UT will continue to train/educate students how to appropriately sort their materials.

Mr. Walker further stated that costs are a consideration and developing markets for all the materials is very important.

Andy Kim (ACC) explained that program being implemented at ACC. ACC does not have the staff that is currently available at UT. Baby steps are important. WM provides service to ACC at a cost. Single Stream is what most of their students are used to and ACC would like to provide single stream on campus. WM does not provide that service. Therefore, ACC can only recycle mixed paper, cardboard, plastics (1 and 2), tin/metal cans. ACC uses a dry and wet separation system – dual stream – clear plastic bags are used to contain materials and then all recyclables are placed in one dumpster due to space limitations. 7 campuses – 6 in Austin, 1 in Cedar park, 1 more coming in Round Rock; 2 service/admin offices in Austin. Vendors use is pre-packaged/pre-cooked foods. No food prep occurs on-site. ACC will certainly be exploring food scrap program and is working with the culinary arts

ACC staff. ACC has adopted LEED Silver standards for new buildings and LEED EBOM for existing buildings.

Commissioner Porter asked if there is any effort to be compliant with existing recycling ordinance. Mr. Kim explained that multiple sites make it difficult to provide consistent programs at all facilities. ACC looks forward to working with COA to expand programs.

- d. Presentation(s) from representatives of restaurants
Presenter was unavailable to shall be moved to the next meeting
- e. Discuss possible revisions to the ordinance affecting multi-family properties, institutions, and restaurants.

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Meetings shall be scheduled on the Nov 23 and the 24 (3pm to 5pm) to discuss specific recommendations with all stakeholders. Meetings will not be televised, but will be taped via tape recorder.

Council update (memo) to be released Nov. 5th.

6. ADJOURN at 5:05 pm