

**MEETING NOTES**  
**Regional Solid Waste Plan Advisory Committee**  
**\*Citizens Stakeholders Meeting #1**

Date of Meeting: 7:00 PM, Thursday, July 1, 2010  
Meeting Location: Union County Government Center  
155 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Lewisburg, PA  
Meeting #: **Citizens Stakeholder Meeting #1**  
Attendees: See Attached Sign In Sheet

Joyce Hatala started the meeting. She asked everyone to introduce themselves. Briefly discussed the overview. Information received from this group will be provided to the other stakeholder groups and information from the other stakeholder groups will be passed on to you. This way everyone is involved in the process of this plan. The Stakeholder groups are five different sources of input into this plan. Joyce turned the meeting over to Terry Keene.

Terry reviewed housekeeping items which includes signing in and out for the in-kind services match, keeping mileage for travel, also for the in-kind services match, doing as much as we can electronically, she handed out most recent schedule, handed out the list of Recycling Stakeholder Committee members and asked everyone to please make sure all their information is filled out completely, gave everyone the website for the plan process, and requested that one person from this committee be designated to serve on the Steering committee. Terry briefly went over the PowerPoint presentation and pointed out the map of all five (5) counties and its landfills and transfer stations. Terry commented that there is a lot of focus on interaction in this process. We want to get feedback, we want to have stakeholders involved, and we need to keep DEP involved so they can approve it in the end. We are interested in finding out what's best – curbside recycling or drop off. Terry turned the meeting back over to Joyce.

Joyce briefly explained her experience. She understands what's good about recycling and what's hard about it. For a business or institution, if you're in a mandated community, you have to make an effort to recycle your corrugated cardboard, office paper, aluminum cans and your leaf waste. A mandated community can make the requirements stricter but they must recycle these items. Residents in a mandated community must recycle three items at the curb from a list of items provided in Act 101. Things like festivals, carnivals, etc., are important to recycle at also, and this is required in mandated communities too. You can make those things mandated by ordinance if you want, even in non-mandated communities. You could have special collections, for example, for items that go to a scrap yard. Some things that are recyclable are also compostable. 10-15% of our trash is food waste. Yard waste is 15-20%. Try to look at the best and highest use. For example, paper would be better to recycle than compost. Joyce commented that throughout the summer months, it is recommended to recycle grass clippings, or leave them on the lawn. This is good for the environment, and also

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saves significant money, since grass can be most of our waste during summer months. She wanted to make sure you know this is an option.

Charlotte Resek, a Citizen, asked what Scranton did with grass clippings? Joyce responded that Lackawanna County operated the compost site, not the City, and they had people who bought it by the cubic yard. Charlotte asked how did the County do Q&A on that? Do you test it, were there any issues with it? She worries about people using pesticides and herbicides. Joyce said that's a very good question and there are studies on that. They didn't know what came in. The only way they could restrict it was by saying that items not allowed in were things like no treated lumber, painted wood and similar items. People should not use it for vegetable gardening but for flowers and mulch. Steve Tucker stated that Lycoming County doesn't actually make mulch – they sell it to people who manufacture mulch. They don't compete with private industry that manufactures mulch. Joyce said Lackawanna County charged the going rate, they did it the colors the public wanted (black, brown and red), etc.

Joyce wants everyone to think about agricultural recycling. Some of your farms often take some source separated food waste (pre consumer). PSU has set it up with some local farmers, for example taking leftovers from the separation process. Many farms may want to get into the food composting. Ag plastics are a big issue also. Every county is very different. Often times open burning is an issue, illegal dumping is an issue, and many areas have subscription and not mandatory collection. If you want to have more money in your recycling fund, collect more recyclables; do less burning and that money will go back into your recycling program through the \$2.00/ton recycling fee. Joyce said that the \$2.00 per ton goes toward recycling grants for things like equipment for composting, balers, recycling trucks, leaf vacuums, and similar items. If recycling is part of this 5 county regional solid waste plan and DEP sees that many municipalities are participating, DEP may look more favorably on that when awarding 902 grants. Joyce provided a brief overview of Act 101. Dave commented that each of the stakeholders had a different perspective yet everyone moved into this same topic – recycling.

Bill Dietrich from Union County asked about the mandatory recycling - is it 5,000 people **and** 300 people per square mile? Joyce responded that both these requirements must be satisfied for the state to mandate recycling. He realizes it's a state issue but what he sees in his county is 300 people per square mile but not a population of 5,000. Joyce stated that many of those areas not mandated went with drop off programs (voluntarily). Many places do mandated recycling and state law doesn't mandate them; they mandated it at a municipal level through ordinance. Gwen Jones stated that Shamokin Dam does recycling and they aren't mandated.

Charlotte Resek asked if you could make money recycling? Joyce said no, you could make money only if you collected a limited number of items that made money when sold

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like aluminum cans. For example, in Lackawanna County, we wanted to collect many items for the long term. This would help the municipalities even if it cost the county money. If the economy isn't doing well, usually recycling markets aren't doing well either. There are economic differences. When Lycoming County makes an investment in infrastructure, they're doing it to help the public but most of the time they are losing money because of it. There is no consistency in recycling. It's hard to control the quality. You have to clean up the incoming materials. You have to throw out the bad, get rid of the waste and sort through it. At times you make money, at other times you don't. Steve commented that Lycoming has a source-separated system. They bring in prisoners to sort recyclables. Even with that low cost labor, they can't make a profit. Charlotte says that there's a trend toward single stream recycling now. Is it good or bad? She's confused. Steve said they are saying the quantity recovered is worth it. It's not as good a grade or recyclable but you'll get the volume of material. When the markets decline, the single stream people will hurt the most. Steve said Waste Management isn't looking for quality; they are looking for volume, and make money through collection.

Phil asked how does Waste Management recycle the single stream? Steve answered that they have large magnets and they separate it easily and quickly. Joyce said if you have a place that has been doing an excellent job that does source separating for years; do not ever go less restrictive. Single stream may work in certain areas with high population density. Steve said that Lycoming's costs are right on the web. There's no special deals, no leverage for one and not the other. They are trying to do dual stream to see how it works with his 104 haulers for that county. It seems to be working, but they are still investigating it. It goes with the goal of this program too.

Dave commented Fayette County uses Goodwill Industries to do their recycling. Goodwill industries uses mentally handicapped to sort their materials. They are happy with the process, and making a little bit of money doing it.

Gwen stated that the purpose of recycling is taking it and keeping it out of the landfill so it can be reused. It is not necessarily for making money. It reduces costs of raw materials. Gwen states that reusing is simply just the right thing to do. Householders have to decide if an item is recyclable or if it is trash. They must be educated to learn this, so education is very important.

Steve Tucker commented that Lycoming County does not charge for recycling, it is subsidized. There's a savings, a subsidy going into it. Residents don't see it on their taxes. If it's anywhere, it's in the user fee of what they pay for their waste. It's not a misguided fee. There's no actual charge. Lycoming charges the counties and that's the only charge out there. If you pay for something, you use it. The state actually has services available for tin cans, glass in the 5-county region, but around Lycoming there are 25 drop off sites, 12 curbside collection programs.

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Joyce stated that she's fanatical about recycling. When she worked at Lackawanna County, they just wanted to break even, not necessarily make money. Break even, however, meant you had to actually make money selling a product if you are to cover the costs of running the program. We have to look at how it covers the costs. Steve also looks at the sustainability aspect of it. They pay the prisoners \$.30 an hour, they've had issues that aren't perfect, and it's very difficult to keep the costs down.

Michelle Schlenker commented that she's heard a lot of information in this meeting tonight like what is not working, what needs to change and what changes will be happening over the next 10 years. She asked how all of that is being addressed? Joyce said these are the things that we want to hear from the citizens; things that are not working in your areas, we are looking for recommendations on what direction we need to go in. We would like to know what's going on in your specific area, are there existing problems. We want to improve and make a more efficient system. Michelle stated that there are a lot of experienced people in the room and asked if our energy should be changed, should we be looking at a more efficient, economical means of recycling? Terry said we are trying to look at what's most economical. We have to try to come up with a funding strategy to make it work and be economical. Gwen Jones suggested that one way could be the "pay as you throw" option which is another type of collection system. Michelle suggested that we have to educate enough people. Her dumpster at work is constantly overflowing and she told them that it is because everyone is throwing their recycling in the garbage. Joyce said the public has to keep being reminded what to do.

Leslie O'Malley asked what does she do as a homeowner when the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month is pick up; and she's away for that weekend, and her bins are overflowing? She currently crosses county lines to drop her recycling. She is a schoolteacher in Selinsgrove and it's great to see that recycling is beginning to work, but now they have a custodian assigned to rinsing recyclables. It's difficult for homeowners to accommodate one Saturday a month; can there be other options? Joyce stated that the reason that it's only one and two weekends might be the cost of paying staff. Hauling is another expense that limits the amount of recycling which can be offered. They have to keep their costs down. It's a real challenge.

Terry stated that recycling is a thought that has been growing. We've had each of the groups comment on this subject. What is amazing is at the college level, students are demanding recycling, and schools are making it work; however at the high school and lower levels we can't seem to get things going. When Act 101 was implemented, one reason recycling started was because kids started it. They went home and told their parents to do it. Terry asked how we could encourage the public to have more interest in recycling.

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Brian Johnson asked, for future meetings, if open burning could be on the list. Joyce said yes that is could. He is frustrated to live in a rural township where there's no control. He feels that open burning contributes to other environmental problems. Homeowners put trash in a pile with a screen over it, and then a wind comes along and it's now considered litter because it flies to other areas and lands in neighbors' yards. This is a very local environmental issue that no one seems to care about except the neighbors who are the recipients of the problem. He just wants to put it on the table for possibly the next meeting. Joyce commented that she believes DEP would like to ban burning throughout the state however, it seems that the local officials won't take it on the issue due to citizen opposition. Steve Tucker said that the Agricultural community needs to burn. Brian Johnson stated there's a difference between burning brush and burning trash and household everything, including plastics and, hazardous materials. That is a mis-argument, an excuse argument that's used, but it doesn't mean you're allowed to burn at the household level. Steve stated that every county could use their tax listing as one of the backdoor methods of reducing open burning. They know what's occupied and what's not occupied. If you took all the occupied properties and send them certificates of service for waste, and those certificates can be turned in with payments, it would show they are either in the waste collection system or out of the system. If they didn't turn in the certificate with their payment, it could mean they are burning. If we backdoor them into it, it might work. Dave said the haulers would resist anything that lists their subscription residences. Steve stated that doesn't put them on a list. Terry stated that they might look at it to make sure they have mandatory trash service. Better service for the haulers but it also tells the county who is burning or not burning.

Steve said that you might find out if you sent a follow up letter to them about not having trash service. It's all a matter of policing it too. Who would do that? Brian Johnson asked that, as a part of this planning process, if there is anything that can be done to encourage townships to control open burning? If not, there's no reason to even talk about it. Joyce said we could give a model "no burn ordinance" for them to use, something that works in other areas. There are a lot of different programs that go on in other areas. The burning can occur only by approval of the Fire Marshall, limit what can be burned, limit the hours of burning, and make it very difficult to burn.

Gwen asked who is going to go around, look at it, and enforce it? She suggested that if you want people to come to this meeting, put a notice in the paper that they aren't allowed to burn their garbage. Most residents would argue they couldn't afford service. Education is another thing. We need to stress that open burning is hazardous to health. If someone knows that the neighbor is emitting many toxic chemicals into the air, they would tell the other neighbors that they are breathing this, and ask them to please stop. Joyce said that many organizations including American Lung Association have materials

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stating that open burning is hazardous to health. These could be used in the education process.

Joyce asked for a volunteer for the Steering Committee. Charlotte Resek volunteered and put Samantha Pearson as alternate. Everyone agreed that this current location is a good place to meeting. It was voted that moving up the time to 6:30 PM would be good.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Date for the next Citizens Stakeholder meeting is Thursday, August 26, 2010 at 6:30 PM at the Union County Government Center in the Union County Cafe.

The next Steering Committee Meeting is: Wednesday, July 14, 2010 at 1:30 PM in Montour County at the Courthouse at 29 Mill Street, Danville, PA.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Johnson  
EfficientC