

MEETING NOTES
Regional Solid Waste Plan Advisory Committee
Steering Committee

Date of Meeting: 1:30 PM, Thursday, October 21, 2010
Meeting Location: Career Link, 713 Bridge Street, Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Meeting #: **Steering Committee Meeting #4**

Attendees: See Attached Sign-in Sheet
Counties Represented at Meeting: Lycoming
Snyder
Union
Columbia

Stakeholders Represented at Meeting: SW Haulers
Recycling

DEP Representatives Michelle Ferguson

Not represented: Municipal Stakeholder
Montour County
Citizens Stakeholder
B & I Stakeholder

Terry Keene from Barton & Loguidice started the meeting and handed out the notes from the last meeting. Michelle Ferguson from DEP made a slight correction to the previous notes. Terry reminded Michelle to send the list of composting sites to him. The notes from Meeting #3 are considered (with the one change) final. They will be uploaded to the website soon. He thanked Debbie and Gwen for bringing cookies to the meeting for everyone.

Project Schedule: The next set of scheduled meetings will be the Stakeholder Groups in December. Under the current schedule, the next Steering Committee meeting will be in January. That would mean that we are looking at a release of the draft Plan at the end of January. Terry suggested that we have one more round of Stakeholder meetings in February, before the release of the draft Plan, and delay the release of the draft plan to the end of February. Terry reminded everyone that once the draft plan is released, there is a 90-day comment period. Terry asked Michelle if it would be a problem to push the date of public release of the draft plan back a few weeks (due to the holiday, etc.) to the end of February. Michelle said it shouldn't be a problem to float it one month.

Dave Minnear mentioned that several people suggested that we form a subcommittee (1-2 from each stakeholder group) to discuss recycling – specifically, how do we pay for it, which commodities to focus on, what entities would provide the services, what should the private haulers' involvement be, what services would be provided, etc. Dave said that

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there is a lot of interest in recycling and we need to decide what's appropriate, how it will be funded, and who's going to provide the services. Recycling is of interest in all 5-stakeholder groups and each one should have a representative involved. Kevin McJunkin said we should also include the County Planners, and others, to participate.

Jason Yorks said, along that line, he'd like to give Jack Pyers credit for a potentially good idea regarding how to expand recycling. Jason would like to meet with the haulers because they would be the one selling it and he would like their input as to how they can accept the recycled materials. Jason wants to offer dual stream – one bag with fiber and one for containers with the exception of glass– to the haulers. Jason said that glass would be collected at drop-off sites. Jason stated that the Recycling sub-committee has not met to discuss this issue but he feels they can do dual stream efficiently in his facility. It will take time and an investment, and he feels this is something that definitely would work in the future at the other locations as well. This could be a significant change in the plan, but Jason commented that there's real potential here. Joyce Hatala asked if Jason's facility would still do curbside. Jason said he could do curbside in any community if he can get the haulers involved, and certainly in mandated communities. Jason said he'd like to take control of the bags. He thought it might work if there were an ID number for each hauler, and they could use this number to track which customer was disposing of what material. Jack said he doesn't feel ID numbers are necessary; and that it might be too difficult to track; this system should be relying on the haulers to train their personnel and possibly go with some kind of sticker. Jack said if a contaminated bag is delivered to the MRF, they would know which hauler it was and pass it back to them. Jason said this is the reason he wants to meet with the haulers. He wants to maintain the quality, without increasing the burden on the haulers, since that could reduce the volume of recyclables. Jack asked if Jason would consider a single bag for fiber and allow the other things to be loose. Jason said his concern with that would be that some haulers don't clean out their packer trucks in between dumps, and that would lead to contamination. Jack said almost all the guys are doing cardboard now anyway, so that shouldn't be an issue. Jason said he gets phone calls from elderly people regularly. If we had something like this to offer for curbside, we can offer the people tools like this and can take care of the public.

Dave said it sounds like a good thing for the haulers and the counties but commented that the Plan needs to show that it benefits the public, as well, and hoped that we could show that this type of a plan would result in increased recycling without a significant fee (since the landfill tipping costs would decrease). Jack said if we can do a cost analysis overall, factor in people keeping the materials for a month, waiting to deposit all those materials, the convenience factor and eliminating the effort, it should be a good thing for the public to consider. Dave said that it's good for recycling, it's good for the MRF and its good for the haulers, but we need to show that it's good for residents. Dave asked if there was a way that there could be no charge to the resident if the haulers gets reductions in tipping fees. Jack didn't think that was possible.

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Joyce asked Michelle if we still need to reach the 35% recycling goal. Michelle said that Larry Holley had said that the 35% goal might not be important in the future. Dave Minnear said that eliminating the percentage goal makes sense since using weight as the measuring stick is no longer logical, since the average weight of recycled commodities has reduced over the years, due to more plastics and less glass. Terry Keene said we might want to think about our recycling goal in terms of volume, rather than tonnage. Jack said it's good but it's also confusing since it seems to imply that increasing recycling is not the goal. Gwen Jones from Snyder County said the percentage should be looked at as a goal. If you don't have a certain number to shoot for, what do you use as your criteria? Terry said we need to figure out the yardstick for our goal on what we should consider. Joyce said she's not sure if it's a bad thing to give a number to the residents. She thought it would be a good thing for the planners to have; however, Joyce also thought that focusing on increases in certain "difficult to recycle" items like HHW, tires, electronics, fluorescent bulbs, might be better for the environment.

Bob Aungst from Columbia County thought that we were going to try to set up some type of fund or account where the counties could utilize this fee and access it for solid waste issues. He thought that the money could be used to subsidize programs. When he had a similar program, he helped the haulers pay for certain projects. What does DEP think about this?

Michelle said that DEP can't tell you what to have in your plan, but that they want to be able to see that the Plan can become sustainable. She commented that it looks like the County Commissioners don't want flow control. Kevin McJunkin said the political climate has changed since they had the preliminary discussions regarding sustainability during which flow control was included as one option. It is no longer available as an option. DEP is concerned that the Plan will recommend increased recycling without the means to make that sustainable. Flow Control would have provided a predictable income for funding recycling programs. The alternative is a menu driven plan, wherein haulers can select from a variety of landfills to take the material, and the Counties can negotiate a fee with these landfills, with the fee used for recycling. Both Lycoming and Clinton said they would pay the fee. Jack asked if Jay agreed to pay a fee and Dave said that Jay from Clinton County said he would. Most disposal sites understand the purpose of the plan.

Michelle said it's more about the certainty of sustainability than perception. We have to have everyone in agreement that we've looked at everything. Bob Aungst said the goal should be to take it out of the hands of individual residents, mandate where you're going to have recycling, and subsidize it through the fee and not have residents pay directly for waste collection and recycling. Terry commented that part of our challenge as consultants is to come up with options on how we're going to fund recycling. Gwen asked, when you have flow control, who pays for that? The citizens pay for it whether you have flow control or not. Michelle said the difference though is guaranteed funding because with flow control, the fee is there.

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Jack commented that, oddly, in Lycoming County, they can legally do flow control. Going into this Regional plan, it gets confusing because the other counties don't have any public monies invested directly in the operation of the landfill. What's even more ironic is that the other four (4) counties have a higher percentage of waste going to Lycoming than Lycoming has going to its own landfill.

Kevin McJunkin said we need to come up with a target - what other programs do we need, how is the county (or the Region) going to fund it, etc. Joyce said you need to fund your glass drop offs, fund other things that are already there, and see what other municipalities are doing that make it successful. Joyce is worried about the other four counties besides Lycoming who do not have a recycling center or landfill – how would they fund their programs? They really need a fee from the landfills to run programs. Michelle said Bloomsburg charges (she believes \$30 per year) to the residents. Joyce also commented that she liked the idea from the Citizens Group to charge people a sticker fee to use a drop-off.

Terry asked if the Steering Committee would be in agreement to have a sub-committee to discuss the recycling options. No one objected. Terry asked if everyone would be available for a meeting in Mid-Nov (18-19th). Jason Yorks said the 18th would be better for him. Bob Huntington from Union County said 3PM seems to work best for everyone and he will check on the availability of the Union County Café.

Terry summarized the recent meeting with DEP and the Steering Committee. DEP was under the impression that this was going to be a flow control plan, and that there were good discussions clearing this misconception up and clarifying the current path of this plan. He also stated that DEP does not want to see this plan impose administrative fees. Terry commented that DEP had said that if a menu driven plan is selected for the Regional Plan, then the available grant funding for the Plan development could be reduced (since DEP believes that type of Plan is not as complex); however, we're trying to do an innovative program, and noted that this is the largest Regional Plan in the history of the Commonwealth. Michelle commented that DEP doesn't care if we do flow control but they want to know what is planned, and that the grant application scope may need to be modified to be more specific. Kevin McJunkin stated that the current Plan probably would only require roughly half of the amount of grant money originally requested in the application. Dave Minnear commented that the courts aren't helping us, since they have severely limited the means that can be used by counties to raise fees to support waste and recycling within their regions.

Rural transfer stations are still operating throughout the region, and there is a permit by rule proposed to handle these facilities, which currently are difficult to permit. DEP currently allows some of these in the region through their discretionary powers; revisions to the current regulations may formalize permit by rule for rural transfer stations. Debbie

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said she feels that formalizing permit by rule may put a damper on the rural transfer stations in Snyder County. Michelle said she doesn't agree it would cause them a problem as long as they abide by the rules. Debbie said they don't have the expertise to fill out the permit by rule forms, like the county does. Michelle said she doesn't think it's difficult at all to submit the paperwork. We need to be careful how we address those in the Plan, especially if we propose expanded service in certain areas.

Jesse Pyers from Hometown Disposal attended a portion of the recent DEP meeting. Terry stated that Jesse did a great job expressing the haulers' feelings about this plan to DEP.

Michelle said the big question is still the means for sustainable funding for the plan. Kevin McJunkin said we need to look at all kinds of alternatives. Terry said that our biggest challenge is to come up with those ideas and alternatives.

Jack said that from the haulers' standpoint, all of the haulers are in favor of recycling. He commented that if that fee is imposed on the landfill and it forces the haulers to collect the money from the residents, it makes it difficult for the haulers to participate in the program. Disposal volumes would continue to dwindle and recycling volumes would continue to escalate. The haulers are struggling to make that conversion. The previous fee structure (wherein the haulers collected a small fee from each resident, paid it to the landfills in increased tipping fees, and then the landfill paid the fee to the counties, for use in recycling) excluded haulers from benefiting from the fee. The haulers aren't in favor of doing a municipal contract, although if waste/recycling services were provided that way (which isn't always practical), the haulers wouldn't have to be the tax collector.

Joyce said Bloomsburg has a recycling fee. Some people don't want a tax but they pay a fee for something. It works in Bloomsburg. Michelle said the difference is that Bloomsburg is mandated. Bob from Columbia County said the areas that aren't mandated aren't going to want to pay a fee for recycling. Terry said that if a fee is imposed on each household, the individual fee could be relatively small, and not burdensome on the residents. Joyce reminded everyone that even counties that don't have a recycling program can offer more revenue by paying for a sticker to use another county's services for drop-off. It may be a combination of doing it different ways.

Dave commented that the consultants are each working on portions of the Plan narrative, and he passed out a handout that breaks down how we're going about putting the data together. Information in this report is based on historic reports and the RFP from the counties. Dave said the plan would use graphics and charts to make it easier to read. Those portions that discuss what has been accomplished over the previous 10 years is coming together well, but what we don't have is what we have set up for the next 10 years - that's what's still in discussion.

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Dave commented that this handout is not a final document in any way and it's still a work in progress. One of the tables in this plan shows only 61% of the waste being classified as municipal – which is kind of unusual by comparison to other counties and plans. Gwen asked what the total waste per person figure used was. Michelle said 0.8 tons per capita per year of waste generation is generally used. That's just landfilled waste. Debbie from Snyder County said she deals with a problem on designation of waste – where it's coming from. Dave asked everyone to look over what he circulated for comment. As we complete the chapters, he will email them out for everyone to look over.

Summary of current issues – Terry will prepare and circulate a memo summarizing the issues developed to-date, show which groups made certain comments and make an indication on how we're going to deal with that issue.

Joyce said that, to the recycling coordinators, education of the public is getting harder and some things are more important to explain – like co-mingling, etc. People get confused and we need to clarify the purpose and logistics. Debbie said she receives phone calls all the time. Joyce said it's a shame that DEP doesn't fund those refrigerator magnets anymore that show what's recyclable. Those were so helpful. With the new system of collection, there will need to be a good deal of education on the new program; who will pay for this, and what is the best method?

Terry said, in regard to the haulers stakeholder group meeting on October 6th, there was a consensus from the group that the haulers want to be included in recycling conversations. They are interested in becoming a bigger part of the recycling program. Jack said if we were able to formulate a program that the haulers can run with, they would hop on board. He feels the meeting got bogged down with discussions of paperwork documentation, but there is a desire to do it and a way to figure out how to do it. Jack said if we can get the other process on board (Jason Yorks' idea), it makes the most sense to use what's available to the haulers. Single stream is tough in this market. Dave said we're trying to favor local haulers as well as favor local landfills and MRFs in this region. We're not allowed to favor them contractually in this plan but there may be ways to create opportunities that benefit local businessmen. Jason Yorks said it doesn't concern him whether the material comes from drop-offs or curbside; there are still so many people that don't recycle or feel that they don't have access to it. There's a lot of market out there that isn't touched. Getting the haulers on board and implementing these systems, we'll see the percentages increase.

Terry asked if anyone had anything to share with the group. Debbie from Snyder County confirmed that they need to do an RFP for disposal capacity assurance as part of the plan. She would recommend as part of the RFP, that we require that landfills accepted to the plan provide recycling services so there is an onus for them to also participate in that. She feels they need the opportunity to offer it. Debbie also asked if there would be a

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point in time to evaluate if it would be beneficial to have separate plans. Terry said that the intergovernmental agreement prepared at the beginning of the process says this is a 5-county plan. Negotiating with landfills works better when they have 5 counties coming under one plan.

The date for the next Steering Committee Meeting is currently scheduled for Tuesday, January 11, 2011 at 1:30 PM. We can shift it over to February or even push it up to December if everyone feels we should. Kevin said he believes the holidays caused the steering committee meeting to be pushed into January since there is no time to do one after the stakeholder meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Johnson
EfficientC