

**RAMSEY/WASHINGTON COUNTY
RESOURCE RECOVERY PROJECT BOARD
APRIL 28, 2011
MINUTES**

A meeting of the Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Project was held at 9:00 a.m., April 28, 2011 at the Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health, Environmental Health Section, in Maplewood, Minnesota.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioners Toni Carter, Rafael Ortega, Victoria Reinhardt, Janice Rettman – Ramsey County
Commissioners Dennis Hegberg, Gary Kriesel, Bill Pulkrabek, Lisa Weik – Washington County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Jan Parker – Ramsey County

ALSO ATTENDING

Peter Barthold, Ginny Black, Tim Brownell, Gary Bruns, Larry Carlson, Deborah Carter McCoy, Zack Hansen, Joe Heinz, Mike Hoppe, Judy Hunter, John Jaimez, Curtis Johnson, Lowell Johnson, Julie Ketchum, Dan Krivit, Susan Kuss, Rebecca McCarty, Tim Patton, Norm Schiferl, Katie Shaw, John Springman, Warren Shuros, Dale Stoerzinger, Jodi Taitt, Kevin Tritz, Jim Wollschlager

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Weik moved, seconded by Commissioner Kriesel, to approve agenda.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5 Nays – 0 Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 27, 2011 MINUTES

Commissioner Weik moved, seconded by Commissioner Rettman, to approve the minutes with the addition of “of the waste stream” be added under Organic Waste Management, Policy Discussion, second paragraph, second sentence.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5 Nays – 0 Motion Carried.

Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt arrived.

SECTION A: ADMINISTRATION

Monthly Report of Budget Activity

Susan Kuss said the monthly disbursements are routine. There were no questions.

Commissioner Toni Carter arrived.

SECTION B: POLICY

Continued County Organic Waste Discussion

Judy Hunter stated that this is a continuation of the policy discussion about joint work on commercial organic waste management from the January 27 Project Board meeting. She reviewed the joint approach, policy development criteria and range of alternatives. Source separated organic waste includes food waste, soiled and non-recyclable paper and other organic materials.

Commissioner Rafael Ortega arrived.

Warren Shuros, Foth Infrastructure & Environment, summarized the greenhouse gas benefits associated with different types of organic waste management. Models have been developed by the US EPA and in Canada to estimate GHG emission differences between options. Both models were applied to Ramsey/Washington County organic wastes, comparing current methods versus more composting or anaerobic digestion. The results are that there are reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that are greater when organic waste is managed by composting or anaerobic digestion, than through GHG waste-to-energy or landfilling.

Dan Krivit, Foth, did on-site interviews at restaurants, food stores, and food distributors. All food establishments are aware of food waste and very sensitive to customer and government perceptions. All establishments interviewed have cardboard and fats, oils & grease recycling bins. Most restaurants and grocery stores are not recovering food and other organics. Half of the restaurants were aware of the CEC. Almost all rely on their waste haulers to keep them informed about programs and rules.

Mr. Shuros also summarized work that had been done on collection efficiencies. The Foth reports are available on the Project's website.

Zack Hansen reviewed the possible commercial organic waste intervention strategies and scenarios. These approaches were developed following the Project Board discussion in January, 2011. The strategies are divided into three categories: education and outreach, financial and regulation. The scenarios are strategies bundled into four levels.

- Scenario 1 the low level which is the reduction from the current county level of effort. Provide existing educational resources on an as needed basis and collect data required for annual reporting.
- Scenario 2 the current level which is active efforts to explore options to increase organics recovery. Continue education on management options, monitoring of existing programs and targeted assistance to schools, managed care and other businesses.
- Scenario 3 the moderate level which is more aggressive interventions that are focused on active involvement and expansion of organics program.
- Scenario 4 the significant level which is an active engagement by the counties in the development and implementation of existing and new organics recovery programs.

Following a brief break, introductions were made, and Judy Hunter introduced a panel of private sector firms involved in organic waste management.

Panel: Industry Perspectives on Commercial Organic Waste Management

Panelist 1: Organic waste composting facility, Specialized Environmental Technologies (SET), Kevin Tritz

Kevin Tritz stated that he manages the Empire Facility for organics. This facility was opened for organics recycling in 1997. In 2008 and 2009 SET received around 8,000 – 9,000 tons/year. Currently, they expect to receive 15,000 tons per year.

A barrier is the separation and collection. You need a separate truck to pick up the material and route density is an issue..

Plastics contamination is a big issue. If the material is not clean, the finished product will not have a high value. The compostable bags have been very helpful to their process.

Areas where the Counties could have a role include education and procurement of end product as soil additive and/or erosion control.

Panelist 2: A waste hauler that has expressed interest in organic waste management, Waste Management, Julie Ketchum

Julie Ketchum stated that she is the Director of Manager Affairs of Waste Management. They realized that their company had to change. Their waste volumes have decreased due to the economy. They are looking at ways to invest in different technologies. Instead of just composting organics, they are taking it to the next level to where you are extracting

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chemicals. They are investing in new companies in alternative energy, synthetic gas, and chemical extraction. They are moving towards green chemistry.

They want to ensure that regulations are protective of human health and the environment. They are looking at designing trucks to handle this type of material. They are looking at how to transport the material safely.

They are looking at the demand for organics. The larger companies such as Walmart and Costco have been requesting organics recycling and want to put that in their corporate policy. They are looking at zero waste policies.

Suggested County roles include education. Companies don't want to train staff and purchase containers for organics recovery. Counties should work together on a solution to organics recovery.

Panelist 3: Independent waste hauler that collects organics, Randy's Sanitation, Jim Wollschlager

Jim Wollschlager is with Randy's Sanitation in Delano. They started residential collection of source separated organics in the City of Wayzata six years ago. The organics were looked at as another recyclable. There were neighborhood coordinators who educated their neighbors on what they were removing from their garbage and why they were doing it. There was a method to the program that created sustainability to the program long-term. By pulling out the organics, they saw an increase in recyclables of up to 15%. There have been several pilot projects since then, but that was the most successful one.

They have 11 municipal contracts for picking up organics residentially. They collect organics in 18 schools and 48 commercial stops.

Major issue in growing organics recovery is lack of facilities to manage collected organics. Education is the key component. To be successful in this program, you have to involve the senior management of the company. Keeping them updated with monthly progress reports is very important.

The reduced \$15 tip fee at the Hennepin County Transfer Station is a big deal. He would like the MPCA to take the role of administering the tip fee.

Suggested County roles include education (internal champions are not always aware or communicate requirements to upper management) and training of staff.

Panelist 4: Waste Recycler that has expressed interest in commercial organic waste management, Eureka Recycling, Tim Brownell

Tim Brownell is the President of Eureka Recycling. They are providing commercial composting collection services. Their current collection programs are in Hennepin County. They have been piloting residential organics recycling in St. Paul since 2001.

Education is imperative. He stated a few of the barriers they face is a shortage of processing capacity, and transportation to distant processors is difficult. He encouraged a system similar to Hennepin County's, in which the reduced \$15 tipping fee is convenient for collectors.

He said that residential and commercial organics waste management to many people equates to composting. He said that organics management should be developed in a manner consistent with community values, such as a preference for local foods.

Panelist 5: Second Harvest Farms, Curt Johnson

Curt Johnson, from Second Harvest Farms said the farm has been in the family since the 1960s. He said the County Environmental Charge (CEC) has worked to provide businesses with an incentive to manage organics. Education is needed for organics recycling.

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Chair Hegberg thanked the panelists.

Commissioner Reinhardt questioned Ginny Black, MPCA, on how close the MPCA is to having compost rules completed. Ms. Black responded that there was a public meeting last fall on the issues of the rules and opportunity to provide for public comment. They took public comment in November and December 2010. She said she has started a draft on the rule and is hoping to have something for public comment in September 2011.

Commissioner Reinhardt stated that when rules and regulations are unknown, that can have a real impact in what is developed by the private and public sector.

After much discussion, Zack Hansen stated that staff could come back with some recommendations around education, technical assistance, consultations and financial assistance. He said that staff will get something together by the next Project Board meeting in June.

Staff Updates

The Budget Committee meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, May 26th at 1:00 pm.

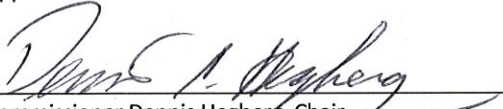
The next Project Board meeting will be Thursday, June 23rd at 9:00 am.

Commissioner Reinhardt requested an update on the proposal of the organics be part of the recyclables materials definition.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hegberg adjourned the meeting.

Approved:


Commissioner Dennis Hegberg, Chair