

SWAC Meeting Notes – March 3, 2009

Meeting started at 11:15am

Recess 1:05pm to 1:20pm

Reconvene 1:20pm

Meeting ended 3:05pm

Present: Barbara Bell, Paul Buklarewicz, Christine Dochin, Mike Kaha, Alex Leonard, Steve Okoji, Shon Pahio, Russell Ruderman, Ted Vorfeld

Absent: Mike Gleason, Jes Foster, Nimr Tamimi

Staff Present: Lono Tyson, Ivan Torigoe, Mike Dworsky, Linda Peters, Angela Kang, Craig Kawaguchi, Wally Lau, Suzanne Andrade

Consultants: Dan Pitzler, Marc Dexter

DOH Rep: Lane Otsu

Approval of February 2, 2009 Minutes: Motion by Steve Okoji, seconded by Christine Dochin

Adjournment: Motion by Christine Dochin, seconded by Mike Kaha

Agenda

In accordance with the agenda, this meeting included the following topics:

- Introductory remarks
- Statements from the public on agenda items – one speaker made statements in support of implementing the zero waste plan in its entirety. He felt it was timely and encouraged endorsement of its recommendations and that the price for the plan was reasonable.
- Approval of minutes from February 2, 2009 meeting
- New Business
 - Discussion/ decision making on Title for ISWMP Update. Proposed: [3 part title: 1) Hawaiian words for “On the Path to Zero Waste”; 2) On the Path to Zero Waste; 3) the County of Hawai`i Update to the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan]
 - Discussion/ decision making on Residuals Management and value model results.
 - Presentation/ discussion on crosswalks between Zero Waste study and ISWMP Update
 - Presentation/ discussion/ decision making on Implementation Plan – identify options with consensus support; identify options requiring more analysis and/or further discussion during April meeting

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- Announcements - none
 - Adjournment

Discussion

Discussion about ISWMP Goals and Plan title

- Motion to approve goals made by Russell Ruderman, seconded by Alex Leonard
Discussion:
- Zero waste is still a vague word. The proposed title of plan “The path to zero waste” is much better word to frame the issue.
- Consider use of the word “resource” in plan rather than waste. Lane agreed to confirm that the State has no problem with us changing the name of the plan.
- Some concern about statement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It was agreed to broaden the statement to reference minimizing environmental pollution.
- It was agreed to change the focus on littering to littering and illegal dumping.
- Lono suggested that funding for diversion programs is a critical issue: more diversion equals less revenue at landfill. It was agreed to add a statement about the importance of sustainable funding solutions. Comment was to transfer costs for disposal/diversion to waste generators. Thus, goals could state something like: “developing financial incentives to reduce waste while maintaining Division funding to provide required services.”
- Motion to approve title with adjustments by Alex Leonard, second by Christine Dochin.
Discussion:
- Change waste to re-usable resources. Resources imply usability.
- The wording of plan is important.
- The word “management” should remain in title.
- Consider “Integrated Resource and Solid Waste Management Plan”.
- There was consensus by SWAC on the proposed title, pending translation of the proper Hawaiian translation for “the path to zero waste.”
- One suggestion from audience was “Opala A`ole.”

Discussion about Value Model Analysis of Residuals Management Options

- It was clarified that the mechanical-biological treatment (MBT) option was developed with one facility for East Hawai`i and one for West Hawai`i. System scales pretty well.
- Lono suggested that the Council will probably expect to see an evaluation of other technology and will want to issue an RFP. If this were to occur, the County should open up the process to a broad range of technologies and be done for the entire County waste stream (to capture economies of scale) and open up siting options.

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- Whatever residuals management technology is adopted needs to work for all of Hawai'i County.
 - Can we make a case to Council to defer issuing an RFP?
 - SWAC should make the recommendation it believes best meets the needs of the entire County independent of Council or political issues.
 - What do we know about Hilo landfill and future time lines?
 - If you do an RFP now, you may eliminate zero waste options that could be more effective and eliminating waste from landfill. We should recommend "no RFP" to Council.
 - Landfill is a good, low cost option that's available now and allows for zero waste options.
 - Lono pointed out that landfills have significant costs that may not be initially obvious such as closure, long-term maintenance and the potential for extremely expensive remediation. Also issues with potential emergencies, possible future regulator changes or third party lawsuits, all which could increase the cost of landfill.
 - Why not close the SHSL and truck all waste to WHSL which gets us thinking more about a single County waste stream?
 - If there's an RFP, private firms have to make money – the RFP must account for that.
 - Lono indicated that the private sector won't build facilities "for free." The RFP would need to be structured to be sure that vendors actually propose. If too broad or asking private sector to build with insufficient guarantees, vendors won't take the process seriously.
 - We're not ready with the infrastructure needed to support a new technology.
 - Lono felt that many Council members are adamantly opposed to trucking to WHSL. This issue may drive Council to issuing an RFP.
 - Council should not use tax dollars to do an RFP if the outcome is likely to be fruitless.

Dan asked the question for a show of hands for any members that supported issuing an RFP for an emerging technology. No hands were raised.

- Lono felt that the Council may still ask for an RFP, then what? Would they still not think there's an urgent need?
- The sort station is not being used for its intended purpose – its wasteful and not pushing forward as intended. Extending the SHSL would further delay its use. If it was used for commercial recycling or another use, you'd still have an issue if you wanted to change back and use it as a sort station in the future.
- If the SHSL closes and there's an island-wide residuals management facility, the sort station would be used.

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- The costs of these new technologies are not well understood at this time. Delaying any RFP keeps options open.
 - The zero waste study projected \$25 million for a 5-year implementation plan – if we delay and RFP, we can use these funds to implement programs. Perhaps economic stimulus money would be available.
 - Lono expressed support for zero waste programs, but funding is being cut for all County programs. Solid waste staff have been directed to reduce 2008-09 budget by 5% and 2009-10 budget by 10%. There's no money to implement zero waste programs in the near future.
 - We should look for new funding streams.
 - Lono noted that the County needs new funding just to support the status quo. The previous ISWMP has some somewhat weak arguments underlying recommendations, which led its not being accepted by a newly-elected Council. For this plan, if the arguments are strong, the new Council will have a hard time ignoring it.
 - Does this plan have more and new data about the landfill option than the last plan? One member said yes it does. Dan pointed out the feasibility study for landfill expansion and the use of constructed wetlands.
 - If the plan recommends not issuing an RFP, it will have to have a sound rationale and firm reasoning.
 - Lono suggested that it might be able to be discussed in terms of not happening within the 5-year planning cycle.
 - We should remember that there are multiple parts to the plan and all of them need to be integrated.
 - The plan needs to be convincing to the Council.
 - Mike D. mentioned that the SHSL expansion should provide 10-12 years of additional capacity beyond the 4 years remaining for the sliver fill. Dan pulled up a graphic showing the proposed new facilities for the SHSL.
 - But what has fundamentally changed? Why not close SHSL? Dan pointed out that a major change over last plan is that using constructed wetlands for leachate is a major innovation. If successfully implemented, this approach would dramatically reduce the cost, complexity, and opposition associated with traditional leachate treatment methods (the Sort Station EIS suggested piping or trucking leachate to the County's wastewater treatment plant). Thus there is less immediacy about the need to close the SHSL than was perceived during preparation of the last plan.
 - Well if some major technical issues at the SHSL have been resolved, we need to play up that issue. This may help convince some people that a new technology plant is unnecessary.
 - It was noted that plant and equipment costs for boilers used in many emerging technologies increased significantly between 2008 and 2009. It's possible that with the

economic slowdown some equipment may be available for cheap. Cellulose to oil technology is developing rapidly. We could consider offering experimental sites to vendors.

- Mike agreed that getting involved in pilot programs would work: he's heard that from many vendors, but none so far have followed through.
- Consider opening up RFP to consider zero waste solutions too as part of a broader program. Lono thought that this was a great idea, but it's very difficult to write that type of RFP – would be very difficult to achieve a good outcome.
- More defined RFPs tend to get better results.
- One real frustration felt by many was that in the last SWMP, barely half of the recommendations got implemented. We need to improve on that.
- We, as SWAC, need to make a decision about technology. We need to recommend something so that Council doesn't just choose on their own. Is landfill a technology? Yes.

Implementation Planning

Dan introduced an initial draft of options to include, exclude, and discuss further. After some discussion, there was agreement on the options to exclude.

Dan presented an initial draft of how pay-as-you-throw and commercial recycling could be implemented. He committed to providing additional implementation plans for discussion at the next meeting. It was agreed to discuss implementation planning further at the next SWAC meeting.