

MINUTES

COUNCIL ON RECYCLING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2007
DNR SERVICE CENTER
625 E. COUNTY RD Y
OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN

Council Members Present: Jeff Fielkow, John Reindl; Charlotte Zieve

Council Members Absent: Neil Peters-Michaud, Cecelia Stencil, (2 vacancies)

Also attending: Wess Damro, Brown County Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator; Sue Gau, AROW; Jeff Pitcel, Republic Waste Services

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair John Reindl at 9:15 AM.

Minutes: The approval of the minutes was put in abeyance due to a lack of a quorum

Introductions and Announcements: John Reindl said the budget process was bogged down. There is no known decision making being done in our area. Issues include the landfill surcharge and how much of the surcharge would go back to local programs and funding for other projects, such as alternative energy, PCB sediment cleanup and Clean Sweep programs. Jeff Fielkow said it appeared that the surcharge has strong support.

Reports

DNR: No report. The DNR is awaiting budget decisions.

Governor's Task Force on Waste Materials Recovery and Disposal: Reindl said that the members of the Task Force have not met since the last Council meeting. He said that Preston Cole, who served on the Task Force, has been nominated to the Natural Resources Board. He said he was very impressed with Mr. Cole and that he would be a good addition to the NR Board. Fielkow agreed that it was a good appointment. He said that Mr. Cole was a visionary who was committed to sustainability.

Reindl said he was at a meeting in western Wisconsin and people asked him why the Task Force recommendations were not moving. He replied that it was up to the people interested in the issues to push them forward. He also said that many of the recommendations did not need legislative approval. Companies and municipalities could adopt the recommendations at any time. Charlotte Zieve said that part of the problem was that the benefits did not necessarily go to the people who made the changes. Reindl said that was true but that people who make the changes may find other benefits. People should look at the recommendations and see which ones apply to them. He said that all really applied to everyone, though some very indirectly.

Zieve suggested that product stewardship would solve a lot of the problems. Reindl said that he sees bits and pieces of product stewardship showing up. Thermostats, rechargeable batteries, and other programs are up and running.

Priority issues:

Electronics: Reindl said that no legislation has been introduced in Wisconsin. He has heard that the legislation will reflect Minnesota's newly passed legislation. Fielkow said that several companies are running their own programs. Dell and HP have a system that works for them. SONY's system is different but they think it will work for them. It is a big step forward.

Mercury Containing Products: Reindl said that no legislation has been introduced in Wisconsin. However, Illinois, California and Minnesota have passed new legislation. He said that there is a very effective online clearinghouse for mercury. Minnesota's bill was very comprehensive. Everything other than mercury from crematoria passed in the bill. He said that this will put pressure on Wisconsin. Environmental groups in Minnesota have been pushing for this legislation but no groups in Wisconsin have taken this up. Jeff Pitcel, Republic Industries, said that Wisconsin may follow Minnesota and California on this issue but it is still way ahead of the rest of the country on other environmental topics.

Clean Sweeps: Reindl said that there was an interesting article in a local publication called the Sustainable Times. The editor blasted the Dane County Clean Sweep program for the low participation rate and said that the program should be expanded so that every community throughout Dane County would have a program. Fielkow said the current programs are occasional. What is needed is a well thought out, sustainable program. Wess Damro, Brown County, said that some programs are every few years, some are every year and some all year. Some have several collections each year and some are seasonal. There are a few that are permanent. The programs are maturing but not getting ahead. Some larger programs have a 10-15% participation rate. Even at that rate it will take seven to ten years to reach everyone. One of the problems is that the more education and advertising you do the more it costs the municipality holding the event. He said the grant program helps but it really doesn't cover the costs. For example, Brown County gets a \$15,000 grant for a \$350,000 program. The program collects about 750,000/lbs/yr. There are some products that can be sold and there are some products that producers could take responsibility for but there is still a cost to the program. The program has expanded to take a number of different materials. They do charge for electronics. Sue Gau, AROW, said that latex paint is a big cost to the programs. Damro said that anywhere from 25-70% of the program material is paint. On the plus side, paint brings people to the program and then they bring other materials as well. Brown County has an exchange program and a lot of paint is reused. If people would simply buy only what they need a lot of waste would be avoided.

Fielkow agreed that the economics are bad. The more advertising the more cost. He said that some of the problem with the participation rate could be that people did not need the service. A better idea may be to look at what is collected vs. what is actually out there. He didn't know how to get to that number but participation rate does not paint a true picture. Reindl wondered if there was national coalition that could give a better number. He suggested that Elaine Andrews, UW-Ext., and Roger Springman, DATCP, be invited to the next meeting. Andrews may have the data they are looking for. Reindl said that the Task Force recommended that the rules be the same for both businesses and individuals. Pitcel said that his company tries to enforce the same rules for both individuals and companies. It is a matter of personal responsibility. At the same time, automated collection systems and other factors make it difficult to police. He said most customers try to it right but there is 10-15% who don't care.

Zieve said that she never gets information on recycling from her hauler or town. Fielkow said that it is the towns' responsibility. Damro said he gets information out but people may not listen if it's not relevant to that moment. Reindl agreed, saying that the teachable moment is when they need the service. Gau said that the AROW Board has discussed creating a statewide message that is relevant to everyone. She said that recycling does not have a lot of enforcement but the law is generally well followed because it is a statewide mandate. She thinks the same could be true of hazardous waste if there was statewide mandate. Reindl said that financing is an issue. If the costs are not spread amongst a large area then it is very expensive. Dane County's landfill is more expensive than other landfills because it supports hazardous waste collection. Damro said the collected materials are also a resource. A majority of the material that comes in does have some value. Zieve said it returns to education.

Reindl asked if it's better to return materials, like batteries, to a store or to a clean sweep. Gau said that there is a perception that material returned to a store does not actually get recycled. Zieve said that people love to recycle. They want to do the right thing if you make it easy. Fielkow said that you need both types of systems. Damro said that paint is a loss leader. Because people bring in paint, they will bring in the pesticide or other material. Fielkow said that on September 15 SONY will take any SONY product back at no charge. SONY's goal is to take

25% of their product back. Damro said that he thought Brown County would be out of the electronics and pharmaceutical collection business in a few years.

Pitcel said that there is almost too much information. It is up to an individual to find the information that is important. It's hard to wade through all of the information. Counties don't have an effective infrastructure. Fielkow said that you need a combination of education and infrastructure. There is too much difference in infrastructure to do a statewide education program. Gau would like to see more consumer responsibility. Pitcel said that consumers have to be part of the solution. People are still burning trash in Dane county. That's bad. People need more social responsibility but change is difficult. His company is pushing single stream recycling because it is good for his company and good for the environment. Damro said DATCP should change the program and put the funding into capital. By funding capital projects you can build the infrastructure.

Gau said the Council can support education on HHW, recycling and pharmaceuticals with a common message that is statewide. Focus on reduction, personal responsibility. Ultimately, the consumer is responsible for making their own decisions. Statewide bans on electronics disposal would be another recommendation. Fielkow said that HHW infrastructure was set up because of the regulations. Pitcel said that companies, like SC Johnson, should begin take back, educational and disposal programs. Fielkow suggested a label program that would have disposal information or an 800 number on it to call. The Council has to make a good case for funding. The best would be as a partnership with the private sector. Set up a scenario with a plan and goals. AROW may be a better group to push this idea. Reindl said that typically the Council would set up a workgroup on the issue. Need to get the private sector involved. The Task Force said that more effective planning was needed. The pharmaceutical issue could drive this effort.

Damro would like to see a landfill ban. That would be controversial. Another idea is to piggyback on the basic recycling grant program. Allow communities to add programs. Reindl asked who should get the clean sweep grants. Damro said that the larger the entity the more efficient it is. Gau said that local governments can be very effective, especially if the local government is engaged. Reindl asked if private companies would be interested in running these types of programs. Fielkow and Pritzel said that both companies they work for already run these types of programs. They have business models that already work. Gau said that the more partners the better chance of success.

Fielkow said the Council can be very effective in bringing expertise together and then endorsing a proposal. The Council would be better off with less research and more work on drafting a consensus. Gau said groups could include local and state governments, manufacturers, haulers, wastewater treatment plants, fire department, poison control, retailers, and more. Pitcel worried that giving a lot of lead time before a landfill ban went into effect, would educate people that they can legally throw some material away that they now think is banned. Fielkow said that enforcement is an issue. Is the ban effective or is it the infrastructure and ease of disposal the real driver. Damro said that a ban is difficult to enforce but it creates an expectation. Reindl agreed. A ban gets the message out. You must have alternatives and the alternatives must be convenient.

Reindl said he has some communities that contract with their hauler to do all the education. Pitcel said that was true. It varies from municipality to municipality. Larger RUs usually do their own education. Smaller ones want haulers to do it. He said RUs can do this without a ban. The municipalities can make their own rules and require haulers to deal with the issues. Reindl said the Council could put a group together to gather recommendations and get buy in. He noted that several speakers have recommended that the RUs should have to make a plan to handle HHW. However, this is already a requirement of state statutes but DNR has not enforced it. California is the only state to have a ban on universal waste. Other states have banned certain items such as mercury and electronics.

Gau said that most clean sweeps started with fire department or health departments. Reindl said that Fielkow was the lead on the issue. Gau, Damro, Pritzel and Reindl volunteered to be on the group. Others to contact include Joanie Burns, DNR, someone from MMSD, Andrews, Springman, someone from DNR who works with publicly owned treatment works (POTWs), someone from Johnson Controls and a hazardous waste contractor.

Paper: Reindl said that he has contacted several groups about switching to using Recyclable Compatible Adhesives (RCAs). He's had some good responses. Zieve said she has contacted several companies and environmental groups. People she talks to are ready to act on the issue but need something in their hand. Reindl said he will write supply companies. The education process has started. A fact sheet has been developed. The door is open for conversation. He contacted some environmental groups who responded that the cost would go up 30%. Industry people dispute this number. He contacted the *Isthmus* and the *Wisconsin State Journal (WSJ)* about stickies on the front of their papers. The *Isthmus* stopped using the sticky labels but the WSJ said that their supplier said that the current adhesives met the standard. In discussion with industry officials it was learned that the adhesive meets the standard for dirt but not the one for RCAs. He said he contacted several agencies about the Council's recommendation and the DNR is the only one to respond. They appointed Dan Fields, DNR, as the liaison.

Zieve asked how big of a problem are the stickies? Fielkow said it is a problem for the mills. However, the material does get recycled. It is a mill problem, not a recycling problem. There is a problem in the cumulative effect or in high doses. There is clearly a better way to do this than we are doing it today. John Piotrowski's survey found that this was the number one recycling problem for Wisconsin's recycling mills. This issue should continue. Wisconsin is at the leading edge however, this is not the most pressing problem we face. Reindl said it's not a high priority but we will continue to work on it. Zieve said this should be easily solved. Reindl said that nothing is as easy as it looks. Fielkow says this issue is a great success.

Plastics: Reindl said he was contacted by a community about plastic bottles. More are now 4, 5 or 6 and this is making it a challenge to recycle. Fielkow said that single serve is an issue. The 2-liter is going out. Part of the problem is the screw top and the biodegradable plastic (PLAs). Optical sorters cannot tell the difference. PLAs are biodegradable. If that gets into the mix you could have a bottle that leaks or a deck that begins to decompose. The trend is toward biodegradable plastic. We should explore the trends. What happens when you add a new plastic combined with the emergence of single serve plus lightweighting and optical sorters? We should find out.

Reindl said he also received a question about the size of the numbers on beverage bottles. Another problem is that most people think the chasing arrows mean that it is recyclable. Fielkow said that all of these products have markets of some kind but local programs are not set up to take them. Pritzel said that plastics #1 & 2 have a good market. Film has a good market, but # 3-7 do not have markets or volumes. Reindl said we should contact Cynthia Moore, DNR and see if she has heard of any problems with these materials.

Public Comment: Pitcel asked where the Council stood on C&D. Reindl said that the Council had been active in C&D for many years. In 1996 the Council came up with 11 recommendations. Some have been implemented and some have not. The Council made it a priority several years ago but the Council decided that there is not really anything the Council can do in the policy area. It is no longer a Council priority. Pitcel said there seem to be two different methods, typified by the Bruce Company and WasteCap and expressed concerns over some of then processes. Reindl said the Council did not get into specifics on the method of recycling. It decided to let the marketplace decide how the recycling would be done. Instead the Council looked at financial assistance, setting up a clearinghouse, suggesting that the state complete have a comprehensive policy to promote C&D, economic development, waste management plans, etc. The Council thought that setting goals and letting the industry decide how to get there was a better way. Fielkow agreed, saying that this area is consumer driven. That's why it is starting to take off. LEED certification is a driver for the industry. Pitcel said the Bruce Company started with shingle recycling and has expanded in response to the market.

Other Business: The next meeting will be in Madison in November or December. Invited speakers may include Elaine Anderson, UW-Ext., and Roger Springman, DATCP.

Adjournment: Zieve moved and Fielkow seconded. The Council adjourned at 11:55.

Respectfully submitted by Daniel B. Fields, Department of Natural Resources.