

**URBAN AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2008**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Urban Affairs Committee was brought to order at 6:30 p.m. by the Chair Shirley Doering.

Members Present: Barry Berg*, Sandy Breuer, Shirley Doering, Sharon Schwartz, Pam Sohlberg and Earl Wilson.

* Barry Berg arrived at 6:45 p.m.

Members Absent: Robin Curran

Staff Present: Kathy Bodmer, Associate City Planner; Margaret Dykes, Associate City Planner; and Susan Bast, Dakota Valley Recycling.

Guests present: From Waste Management: Bruce Wuolle, Eric Dahlager, Jennifer Klennert and Julie Ketchum. From Allied Waste: Jim Rauschnot and Rich Hirstein. From Eureka Recycling: Chris Goodwin and Tim Brownell. From Dick's Sanitation: David Domack. Resident: Victoria Nelson.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Sharon Schwartz moved, seconded by Pam Sohlberg, to approve the agenda. The motion carried 5-0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2008

MOTION: Earl Wilson moved, seconded by Sandy Breuer, to approve the minutes. The motion carried 5-0.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. PANEL DISCUSSION – DUAL SORT AND SINGLE SORT RECYCLING PROGRAMS

Shirley Doering opened the meeting by asking for introductions. She said that the primary goal for the meeting was to hear industry representatives' perspectives on dual sort vs. single sort recycling programs.

Tim Brownell, Eureka Recycling, explained that his company is a non-profit waste reduction company whose goal is to reduce waste from going into the waste stream. Tim stated that he has been in the recycling business for over 20 years and has seen many changes. Eureka used to be part of the St. Paul Neighborhood Energy Consortium, but now is its own separate company. Tim said that in the early days, residents of St. Paul had to separate their recycling into 7 streams

for collection. Over time, programs have become more and more consolidated so that now, many companies offer single stream recycling.

Sharon Schwartz asked whether single sort programs produce residuals that end up in a landfill.

Tim responded that true recycling doesn't take place until the material is at the mill and it has been processed back into to glass again. Currently, 15% of the waste stream is made up of glass. While residual levels were worse in the past, today, Eureka achieves a residual rate of 2% with its dual stream program. He said single stream has greatly improved so that residual rates are now between 5-7% of residuals result from dual-sort program. Eureka now has an optical scanner and Allied now ships their broken glass to Chicago.

Barry asked whether glass could be heated to the point where color or tint is removed, so color of glass is not a concern. Dave Domack, Dick's Sanitation, answered that Anchor glass is the only end market in the Twin Cities metro area for glass. Different colors of glass actually have different densities. Tim agreed and said that heat doesn't remove the color of glass.

Sharon asked how other countries handle recycling. Jim Rauschnot, Allied Waste said in Europe, there is more sorting of materials. Also, it is common to find drop off areas near neighborhoods where residents can deliver their recyclables themselves. Several countries also put a deposit on cans and bottles so that they are returned. Many Asian countries mandate the amount of material that must be recycled.

Sharon asked about recycling facilities. All of the haulers responded that they have their own facilities. Eureka does recycling collection only, it doesn't provide waste hauling services. However, small haulers can bring their materials to them for processing.

Earl asked whether color is an issue for plastic. The haulers responded, not color, but the type of plastic, like HDPE and PET and others.

Sharon asked for clarification concerning St. Paul's collection program. Tim explained that they went from biweekly source separated to weekly dual stream. They saw a 16% increase in participation, but he attributed that on additional information rather than on the switch from biweekly to weekly. Tim noted that any time the program changes you educate the customers. Sometimes this encourages more participation. The public education included press releases, bin drops, city flyers, events with the Mayor.

Shirley asked about cities comparable to Apple Valley. How many of the cities are single sort and how many are dual sort?

Representatives from Allied stated that they are working on switching to single sort bi-weekly in Lakeville. But in general, trying to switch most customers over to single sort. Dave Domack of Dick's said that they are moving from 2-sort to 1-sort programs. Waste Management said about half of their cities are dual sort and half are single sort.

Barry asked whether any of the haulers had tried to do a program with a single sort collection but separating the glass out since it has the residual issue. Tim commented that the City of Portland has a program called Single Stream Plus. They separate glass out, but commingle everything else.

Julie Ketchum, Waste Management responded that it was important to really look at the issue. She stated that glass only makes up 5% of the recycling stream according to the State's SCORE report. Of that, 50% can be recycled glass-to-glass, the other 1/2 is reused for sandblast material, roadbed and fiberglass.

Julie continued that in her opinion, MPCA needs to give grants for optical scanning. No doubt, glass-to-glass recycling is challenging because Anchor glass is the only end market for glass in the Twin Cities and it will not accept mixed colored glass. But, Julie said the Committee should also keep in mind that whether the program is a single sort or dual sort, there will still be an issue with residuals.

Julie noted that the main reason Waste Management moved to single sort recycling was that it was a way to reduce fuel use. The single sort recycling program helped Waste Management to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fuel use. Collection at the curb with a cart reduces idle time saving on average 20 minutes per route. Waste Management is also exploring other types of fuel for vehicles like liquid natural gas. Currently they are focused on conserving energy by checking tire pressures, regularly maintaining the vehicles, etc. to make sure they are running most efficiently.

Shirley, remember a meeting many years ago with haulers when a representative from Knutson said in the future garbage will be one of the biggest issues the City will have to deal with. She said that the collection of garbage has changed over the last 25 years.

Sharon asked about the education and conversion process.

Jennifer Klennert, Waste Management, explained how her company helps to implement a conversion from a dual sort to single sort recycling program. She said they start by mailing a letter to the customer, separate from the bill, notifying them when the cart will arrive and what to do with the existing tub. A 64 gallon container is usually delivered to single family homes and 32 gallon delivered to townhomes. Next, when new cart is delivered, a baggie is attached to the cart with a copy of the letter along with a copy of the collection calendar. Then Waste Management has an auto-phone reminder call done the week of the new collection. After 90 days, a survey is sent out to find out how the program is going. Waste Management includes newsletter stuffers in the bill. New calendars are mailed out each year.

Barry stated that one of his concerns with every other week collection is how to address the problem of people who miss their recycling day. He asked whether that creates a problem with recycling material accumulating.

Jennifer stated that Waste Management collects from 350,000 households in Minnesota. She said she finds that people are pretty smart and catch on quickly to the biweekly schedule. Waste Management has a policy where they will go back and pick up for someone who forgot to set out their materials one time per year. Eric Dahlager, a route manager for Waste Management said that missed collections are really not an issue. People see when their neighbors are setting out their cans. Jim from Allied Waste said that another reminder is when people see that their bin is only 1/2 full they assume collection is next week.

Earl noted that setting up districts will help people to remember when to set out their materials.

All of the haulers concurred that generally people figure out their collection days and that missed collections aren't an issue.

Sharon asked what type of response Waste Management has you received from their surveys. Jennifer said that they have received very positive feedback. In a recent example, in a city of 12,000, only 5 people refused the recycling cart. Those folks may not be recycling right now. Julie stated that Waste Management works to encourage their customers to at least try it.

Shirley asked Dave Domack what their experience has been with dual sort and single sort recycling programs, given the fact that they are a smaller hauler. Dave agreed that they are a small hauler who used to offer two-sort recycling to their customers. But, they were losing market share, so they have switched over to offering a single sort program. Dave believes the program is popular because it is convenient. People don't want to and don't have time to sort. Dick's has seen more participation with the single sort program. Also, to deal with the residual issue, their drivers don't pack the truck as tight as they did in the past to help reduce the amount of broken glass.

Rich Hirstein, Allied Waste, said one of the things they are doing is to mold a label right into the top of the recycling cart that is a full-colored image that states in pictures what goes in the container and what does not. The reminder on the lid is helpful for people who may not speak English, because the pictures illustrate what is collected. They distribute mailings. They find that their residual rate is 3.8% from single sort recycling because they have newer separating machinery. Primarily, what they see as residuals is not paper mixed with broken glass, but more non-recyclable material placed in the recycling bin. For example, he noted that someone threw a hose in a recycling container last week. In their MRF facility, the first part of the recycling materials that are processed are hand sorted.

Tim from Eureka Recycling said that they don't operate in areas with subscription service (open hauling). They haul in single contract situations and do processing for smaller haulers. Tim noted that single stream recycling is not cheaper than dual stream, so it's more difficult for a smaller hauler to implement. He commented again on the fact that residuals continue to be an issue. He said that a representative of Anchor glass recently told Tim that in 1992, 92,000 tons of glass was received for recycling; today only 22,000 of glass is recycled. Tim stated that there is definitely seeing a decrease in glass recycling.

Eric from Waste Management responded that there is much less glass used today for containers. Most manufacturers have gone to plastic. Dave Domack added that single sort recycling offers more flexibility. The number of items that can be recycled continues to grow. For example, in the past, phonebooks and chipboard couldn't be recycled, but today you can because there is demand for the materials. There are more end markets.

Sharon said her household frequently has more recycling than garbage to collect. She said, to play the devil's advocate, why not collect garbage biweekly also. Julie from Waste Management pointed out that garbage is putrescible, which means there is food and vegetable matter that will rot and become a public health issue. It must be collected at least weekly to keep it from rotting. If you miss recycling collection, nothing will decay and become rotten.

Sharon said her concern about biweekly collection is the size of the container. She states that it wouldn't fit in her garage. Dave commented that the footprint of the recycling cart is actually only 4" larger than the current tub.

Shirley thanked the haulers for attending the meeting and providing information to the Committee.

B. DRAFT ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Staff stated that the draft ordinance included in the packet would allow for day-specific hauling zones, biweekly collection of recyclables with conditions, and curbside collection of garbage and recycling.

MOTION: Sandy Breuer moved, seconded by Earl Wilson to recommend approval of the draft ordinance amending Chapter 50 of the City Code and that it be forwarded to the City Council for their preliminary review and comments at an upcoming informal meeting.

Barry said he has a concern with having Friday as a collection day. Shirley and Sandy noted that the haulers stated that being able to set up Friday routes was important to them economically.

Shirley stated that since she's been on the Urban Affairs Committee, she's looked at this issue 10 times in 25 years.

Sharon said she continues to be concerned about the storage of the single sort recycling container. She's also concerned that the City doesn't enforce the screening requirements for garbage containers right now. She's concerned about having to look at even more containers outside.

Shirley noted that establishing day-specific districts will help the Code Enforcement Officers to be able to tell which containers have been set out for collection and which are just sitting there.

MOTION: Barry Berg moved, seconded by Sharon Schwartz to table the item until the next meeting. The motion failed 2 to 4 (Breuer, Doering, Solberg and Wilson).

Sandy called the question on the original motion. The motion carried 4 to 2 (Berg, Schwartz).

5. OTHER BUSINESS

- None -

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Sandy Breuer moved, seconded by Earl Wilson to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.