

Broome County Environmental Management Council

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**Broome County Environmental Management Council
Recycling & Waste Management Committee (RWMC)
Minutes from February 2, 2009 (rescheduled from Jan 26)
Conference Room "A", Broome County Health Department, 225 Front St, Binghamton, NY**

Present: Adam Robbins, Tony Lubzanski, Kevin Mathers, Mario Nirchi, Dan Schofield, Deb Smith, Ron Keibel, Jaime Welch, Chris Burger, Josephine Chu, Julia Hoover, Mailey Urdanick, and Stacy Merola.

1. The meeting was called to order at **4:07 pm**. Introductions followed. Ron Keibel moved and Chris Burger seconded to accept the November 24, 2008 minutes as submitted.

2. Division of Solid Waste Management (DSWM) Reports

BC Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) Progress

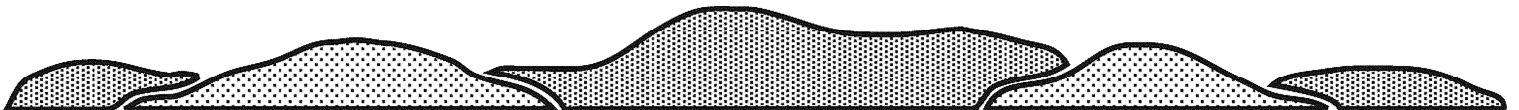
- The sub-contractor for Stearns & Wheler, RW Beck is drafting white papers to look at effective strategies for alternative technologies that have been implemented in similar communities. RW Beck also completed the Recycling Characterization Study; DSWM expects that soon. Discussion ensued about what was being evaluated, the different groups of recyclable goods, and the weight of each recyclable group.

Landfill items/Recycling Outreach

- Debra circulated a DSWM flyer about HDTV conversion with info on proper disposal of TVs. It includes convenient locations/alternatives for disposal, including the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility (w/ dates and times), and info for two other local outlets. The flyer will be posted on DSWM webpages.
- The DSWM plans to partake in the local Sustainability Conference held by Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition scheduled for March 13- 15. However, Chris announced that because the local Home Show will be the same weekend, the date may have to be changed again. Discussion ensued. [**Editors Note:** The Sustainability Conference is rescheduled for Fri, April 17th - Sat, 18th.]
- Debra continues work on the County's annual recycling tonnage report for the NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation (DEC). She is still collecting data, but noted it has been hard to obtain data from businesses.
- Tony inquired about a reference in November's minutes for phonebooks – how do people stop receiving them. Debra will share the link again (<http://%20www.cataloguechoice.org>). One can sign up to stop receiving junk mail as well (see DSWM webpages).
- The DSWM's pilot wetland for leachate treatment received a "permit" from DEC and began on February 1.
- Stacy clipped a legal notice that appeared Christmas day from the DEC for DSWM's Notice of Completion (NOC) for their Solid Waste Management Permit modification. The notice stated that permit modifications include access design changes that were subject to the FSEIS for the new entrance to landfill Section IV. The analysis resulted in an at-grade entrance with a realignment of Knapp Road and changes to the line-of-sight on Dunham Hill Road at the point of the entrance. Other permit modifications include consolidating the separately issued HHW Permit in its entirety into the landfill permit, and the DSWM's proposal to eliminate an outdated monitoring requirement.

DSWM website enhancements

- DSWM updated their County webpages to include a page about the HDTV conversion, a page for Businesses, a page for Schools (forthcoming), and a new Contacts page. The Landfill info page was updated, and the new BC Recycling brochure and full-color flyer were posted to Recycling pages. Debra had more color copies printed as demand for flyers has been high. Stacy will send a follow-up with links for member's information.



3. NYS Budget ('09-10), the EPF and the Bottle Bill

NYS moved \$50 million of \$250 million from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to offset current ('08-'09) budget deficits elsewhere. For the '09-'10 State Executive Budget, the Governor proposes to take the Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT), which was solely dedicated to the EPF, and reallocate those funds to the NYS General Fund. By supporting the expanded bottle bill to incorporate non-carbonated juice and water bottles, and by dedicating unclaimed nickels to the EPF, this will offer some support to replace money in the EPF that will soon be removed. This addition could be a sustainable revenue source for years to come. However, given that the RETT funds will be redirected out of the EPF, and if the State Legislature does not support the expanded bottle bill, then the EPF could be further shortchanged thus jeopardizing many funded programs.

Stacy circulated a draft letter to NYS Senate and Assembly leaders in support of Governor Paterson's Executive budget revenue provision to expand the current "bottle bill" to cover additional containers, and to provide for the return of unclaimed deposits to the State for deposit into the EPF. The EMC's Natural Resources Committee supports sending this letter, which may be brought before EMC at the February general meeting for adoption. Discussion ensued.

Chris advocated including compromise language in this letter, which EMC supported twice before – swapping out the large bottles in exchange for inclusion of the single-serving water and juice bottles, which usually end up as litter. Ron stressed that the burden for retailers is from storage and handling of bottles, especially smaller stores that have hard times keeping up. Retail and beverage associations are strongly against a bottle bill expansion, especially any provision that unclaimed nickels go to the EPF. Unclaimed nickels currently go into the hands of the bottle distributors; they would have to forfeit these funds if the bottle bill provisions are adopted as proposed in the Governor Executive budget. Perhaps another compromise could be a 50/50 split of unclaimed nickels - allocate 50% of the unclaimed nickel deposits to the EPF and the other 50% to the distributors – a win-win for both sides.

Chris moved to adopt the letter but include EMC's compromise language, acknowledgment of the burden to retailers, and the 50/50 compromise as another option to consider. Julia seconded the motion. Stacy asked if any additional recipients should be included on the letter. Motion carried.

4. Announcements/Member Items of Interest

- NYS plastic bag recycling law - Before Christmas, Governor Paterson signed the Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act into law that took affect January 1, 2009. The DEC sent a letter to Retail Associations notifying them about the new law and asked for help with notifying their members. Stores with greater than 10,000 sf or more of retail space, and chains with five or more stores with greater than 5,000 sf of retail space that provide plastic bags for their customers as a result of product sale, must establish an at store recycling program to ensure plastic bags are recycled. Stores must label their plastic bags for recycling, keep records of plastic bags being recycled for at least three years, and they must offer reusable bags for sale to customers. Stores are prohibited from disposing plastic bags as solid waste.

New York City passed a law last year that would go into affect this year, but it is preempted by the new State law. NYC cannot take any stronger action on bag recycling now or in the future. The NYC law would have applied to stores with 5,000 sf or more (due to the compactness of city stores), and also require the recycling of plastic film (plastic wrap, dry cleaning bag and newspaper bags). The NYC law also has clear responsibilities for manufacturers, who must at the request of store owners, arrange for the collection, transport and recycling of plastic films pursuant to the NYC law. City Council is displeased with the change because it now applies to fewer facilities than the NYC law would have covered, and it takes the power of enforcement out of local hands . NYC Council is requesting a chapter amendment.

A fact sheet on the DEC website (www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/50063.html) that shows frequently asked questions including the different types of plastics that can be recycled in accordance with the new program.

Question was raised on how these collection centers get the plastic bags to the recycling centers. Discussion followed. Kevin mentioned that he read an article about agricultural plastics conversion to pellets to use for energy.

- Waste & Recycling News magazine no longer requires a password to access their website and free digital editions.
- Best Buy is opening a new facility in Vestal. Nationwide they are expanding their electronics recycling program. Best Buy will take most consumer electronics including TV's and monitors up to 32", desktop computers and notebooks, video cassettes recorders, DVD players and phones with a \$10 fee for any item that has a screen such as televisions and computer monitors. In exchange for the recycling fee, Best Buy will award a \$10 dollar gift card.
- The NY Recycles campaign is underway. 2009 Calendars were circulated. There will again be a poster contest for school children in four themes (composting, waste reduction, etc.) based on grade.
- Stacy announced the submission deadline for the Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Show & Competition – March 11. A reception will be held in May 13 at the BC Library.
- The Earth Fest will be Saturday, April 25th at MacArthur School and Park. DSWM and EMC will participate.

5. Next Meeting:

Monday, February 23, 4:00 pm, Lourdes Conference Room, BC Health Dept, 225 Front St, Binghamton.

The meeting adjourned at **5:10 pm**

Adam Robbins, Recorder

Stacy Merola, Editor