

Broome County Environmental Management Council

Barbara J. Fiala, Broome County Executive • Stacy Merola, Director



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Broome County Environmental Management Council Recycling & Waste Management Committee (RWMC) Minutes from September 22, 2008

Conference Room "A", Broome County Health Department, 225 Front St, Binghamton, NY

Present: Tony Lubzanski, Laurie Haskell, Kevin Mathers, Josephine Chu, Julia Hoover, Chris Burger, Ron Keibel, Stacy Merola and Kris Lau. **Absent with excuse:** Debra Smith.

1. Meeting was called to order at **4:05 pm**; introductions followed. July minutes were not ready for approval.

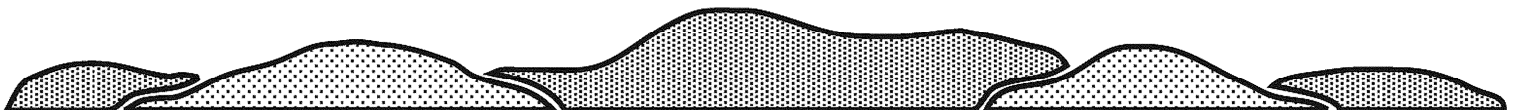
2. Announcements / Member Items of Interest

- Riverbank Cleanup, Oct 4 – The EMC will have a team; Tim Wolcott will be Captain at Billy Hill Park. Several groups returned this year again to participate - The Binghamton Community Friends Meeting (Quaker), headed by Ralph Mc Grew from BCC, will clean the area behind Home Depot. The Binghamton University Student Environmental Awareness Club and the Outdoors Club will clean up the Riverview Park area; Sigma Alpha Lambda, a professional honor society will take the Route 201 bridge area, along with some residents from BU Seneca Hall, to name a few.
- Free electronics recycling collection – A flyer was circulated announcing upcoming dates for community-wide collections. Three collections days remain: Sept 27 at Vestal Town Hall and the Chenango Bridge Park & Ride; Oct 4 at Grippen Park; and Oct 11 at Otsiningo Park and the Broome County Fairgrounds in Whitney Point. The Division of Solid Waste Management (DSWM) ran a newspaper ad, sent a press release and sent posters to libraries and town clerks to promote the events. The first collection was held in Windsor Sept. 13; there were approximately 71 vehicles and 7.29 tons of materials collected. Discussion about workable mobile phones collection followed along with discussion about bulky items disposal.
- HHW dates for 2009 – The 2009 collection schedule for household hazardous wastes (HHW) and electronics was distributed. Dates and information regarding how to transport wastes are available on <http://www.gobroomecounty.com>. Discussion about collection/disposal fees followed.
- Tony noted the issue of pharmaceuticals in water supplies (recent article in paper), which lead the RWMC to discuss health issues related to food consumption out of plastics # 5, 6 and 7, which contain the chemical PBA. Stacy noted that proper disposal of pharmaceutical appears on the agenda for discussion later.
- Chris stated that a Sustainability Conference will be held November 14 & 15 at Broome Community College (BCC). There will be a workshop specifically on resources management, looking at topics such as recycling, composting, zero wastes and sustainable future.

3. Division of Solid Waste Management (DSWM) Reports

Landfill Gas Collection System

- The NYS Environmental Notice Bulletin, published on September 11, noted that Broome Landfill Gas Associates LP is applying for a permit under Article 27, Title 7 of Solid Waste Management Act. The Broome County Landfill Gas Recovery Facility needs a part 360 operation permit. The applicant is proposing the expansion of an existing landfill gas recovery facility within Section II and III of the Broome County Landfill. Deadline for public comment on this project to the DEC is September 25.
- Laurie Haskell from DSWM showed a map of the BC Landfill gas collection system - prepared a year ago – that showed the location of new gas wells and collection piping. She offered a summary about the landfill gas recovery system.



DSWM has a contract with Broome Landfill Gas Associates, who put in the gas collection system in 1998. The pipes put in are perforated except the top twenty feet, which is solid so that air intrusion into the system can be prevented. The collected gas goes around the perimeter to the electric generator, while the gas that is not used to generate electricity is flared off. Currently 1000 standard cubic feet is collected per minute, which is more than before (low point around 700). However, there will always be waste gas because steady gas flow to the engines is desired. About 3% of methane is going up into the air.

The company's permit was issued in 1998 and expired in April 2008. They applied for permit renewal and planned to include additional wells to collect more gas to support more engines. It will go into section IV for gas and will probably be around for at least 10 to 15 years. There are a total of 78 wells in Section I, II and III, but some have been decommissioned since Section I is running out of gas – probably 65 wells are functioning.

The overall operation efficiency of the system is high, as it is online over 98% of the time and is offline only during disruptive events such as storms. The electricity is now used to power a leachate treatment plant and the company hopes to double the amount it generates. The issue of odor from landfill was discussed as well – whether or not there has been in a decrease in odors since the gas collection system was operational.

Recycling Updates

- Recycling Guide – Stacy reported in Debra's absence that DSWM is pursuing a redraft of the recycling guide to provide more details on what is recyclable and to clear-up any confusion. Once the new version is completed, various advertising outlets will be secured to promote the recycling program.
- Book Recycling Fair – At the event in mid-August, about 5.96 tons were recycled and 15,000 books were given away. More monetary donations were generated than last year; \$1,100 will go to various agencies that support literacy. One hundred and twelve volunteers participated. A 2009 event is tentatively planned for August again, perhaps at the County's highway garage off of NYS Route 12.
- Spiedie Fest & Recycling Container Loans – DSWM provided 60 Clear-Stream units for the event, and Parks Department set them up. DSWM transported the recyclables to Emma Street; there were 14 tons of trash and 1.2 tons of recyclable bottles. Debra also loaned six Clear Stream units to the Windsor Arts Festival. She will be loaning 15 containers to the American Cancer Society for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk. Tony mentioned that the Blues on the Bridge event could have used recycling bins or Clear Stream units, and that ideally, there should always be a recycling bin wherever there is a garbage bin.
- Misprint in the Susquehanna Sierran Newsletter – FYI - There is no Landfill Open House on Saturday, September 27, as mistakenly advertised in the newsletter. The newsletter was circulated.
- Ron circulated an article published in the September 2008 Grassroots regarding Cornell University's recycling Ag plastics project. The newest generation of Ag plastics baler is traveling New York State for demonstrations and collections. For more info: <http://environmentalrisk.cornell.edu/AgPlastics>. Discussion followed.

4. BC Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) Update

- Stacy met with Mary Chamberlin, a consultant from R.W. Beck, which is working with Stearns & Wheler on the SWMP update. Stacy directed Mary to the RWMC's minutes on the County's website to familiarize her with the various topics that the committee has discussed, including issues with operation, landfill, recycling, things that are not recyclable, and things beyond our control.

R.W. Beck interviewed 14 stakeholder groups and asked generic questions such as, what type of solid waste management services does your company/organization provide? Are the fees for the services appropriate for the level of services provided? Should they be adjusted? What is currently working with the solid waste management system? Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

The County's Book Recycling Fair was listed as one of the program area of the EMC, in terms of providing education and outreach, volunteer coordination and advocacy. Stacy noted to the consultants that the fees

charged by the county for waste disposal are very reasonable and competitive. Ms Chamberlain is trying to make adjustments based on feedbacks and suggestions from other people and municipalities.

Stacy made some other suggestions: increase institutional recycling, funding for new programs, more education and outreach through the Internet and television, training in food composting, household hazardous wastes and electronics recycling (Debra and Solid Waste have been working on it to make it more user-friendly), construction and demolition debris program, etc.

Mary is looking at SWMP from Wisconsin and Idaho or Ohio to see which one closely mimics Broome. So far, Broome is similar to Wisconsin in terms of size, college community,

Fourteen of the 15 stakeholders participated in the interview with R.W. Beck. Several attempts were made to meet with Lois Dilworth, the Landfill Citizens Advisory Chair, but the consultants were not able to get a response. R.W. Beck issued a summary of stakeholder comments that is currently being reviewed by DSWM. The County met with R.W. Beck and Stearns & Wheler for a Continuous Improvement Workshop that provided opportunity for DSWM Staff to give input and facilitated “brain storming” to shape the new plan.

- The week of September 29, R.W. Beck will be conducting a recycling characterization. They will hold a training session on Monday for the sorters. They plan to sort recyclables coming into the Emma St. Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) September 30, October 1 and October 2 from 8am to 2pm. Debra is working with the consultants to finalize the characterization categories and plan, the draft of which was circulated.

5. NYSDEC “Don’t Flush Your Drugs” Campaign

Recent reports showed that pharmaceuticals are found in the drinking water supplies in at least 24 major metropolitan areas, as drinking water treatment plants do not necessarily remove all drug residues. This is an emerging environmental issue with unclear consequences, though studies have indicated that wildlife is being adversely affected.

In a mid-August press release, the NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation (DEC) tells New Yorkers not to flush their medications. A new DEC educational campaign and websites were recently launched to help protect water quality by reducing the growing presence of pharmaceuticals in water bodies; they will help raise public awareness and provide information about how to dispose of medicines properly. The DEC is also working with other agencies to address the proper disposal of drugs. Articles about proper disposal of household prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs and what DEC and others are doing to reduce drugs in surface waters are available on the DEC website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/45083.html>

A fact sheet on pharmaceuticals in drinking water compiled by Josephine was distributed, and a letter from the state of New York to the USEPA providing information on DEC’s activities related to pharmaceuticals was also circulated. Discussion followed about what could be done; the RWMC feels that local outreach involving the Health Dept should take place sooner rather than later.

6. Other

- Lenovo Group Ltd. is starting a free consumer electronics recycling program to reward consumers for recycling old devices and to offer them incentives to power their new computers with renewable energy. Separately, the company is working with Vestal-based asset management and electronics recycling firm ECO International to offer consumers and small businesses free recycling of Lenovo and IBM products.
- Chris said he saw an exhibit on bicycle-powered computers.

7. Next meeting: Monday, Oct. 27, 4pm, Room “A”, BC Health Dept, 225 Front St, Binghamton
The meeting adjourned at **6:17 pm.**

Kris Lau, Recorder

Stacy Merola, Editor