

NEWAC

Northeast Waste Advisory Council
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A partnership with the counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis, and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District.

April 14, 2014

Call to Order

Chair Raukar called the NEWAC meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; 525 Lake Avenue South; Duluth, Minnesota.

Present: *Thomas Proulx*, Heather Cunningham – Carlton County; Tim Nelson – Cook County; Doug Morris – Crow Wing County; Mary Jo Davis – Itasca County; Dale Olson - Koochiching County; Curt Gadacz - Lake County; Hank Fisher, Heidi Kroening – MPCA; Diane Hildreth, Mary McReynolds, *Steve Raukar*, Allison Sawyer, Terry Soderberg - St. Louis County; Susie Darley-Hill, Heidi Ringhofer and *Paul Thomsen* - WLSSD
***names in italics indicate voting members*

Approval of NEWAC Minutes – January 13, 2014. There was no quorum present; therefore no action to approve the January 13, 2014 minutes was taken.

Financial Report – Heather Cunningham, Carlton County handed out a copy of the January 13, 2014 thru April 14, 2014 financial report. There has been no financial activity. The current balance on hand is \$1194.61. There was no quorum present to approve the financial report at this meeting.

Current Business:

Legislative Update: SCORE Recycling Funding ~ Terry Soderberg handed out a copy of an April 10, 2014 StarTribune article titled “*Minnesota needs a recycling jump-start*”. Discussion from the group on current Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) funding, allocation of SCORE monies, increase recycling programs to include organics composting and additional SCORE revenue followed. The Solid Waste Administrator’s Association (SWAA) and Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) continue to support increased SCORE funding.

Product Stewardship: Hank Fisher, MPCA stated there is a product stewardship bill moving forward specifically for textiles. Fisher will track the textiles bill as it moves through the House and Senate and will update the group on the status at a future meeting.

Sharps: Soderberg stated that St. Louis County staff met with WLSSD staff to discuss renewing a sharps collection effort in St. Louis County. Currently there is no product stewardship on sharps. Discussion on sharps by individual counties followed. Soderberg would like to see sharps discussed at the next SWONER meeting.

Soderberg also updated the group on the Closed Landfill Program. Soderberg gave two handouts to the group that discussed the Closed Landfill Program. One was an update from AMC which talked about a Closed Landfill Investment Fund (CLIF). SWAA and AMC will be sending a letter about concerns regarding the closed landfill fund changes. The second handout was sample language for the closed landfill letter from the Solid Waste Administrators; which summarized by saying to remain effective, the Closed Landfill Program funding needs to be safeguarded and maintained. Soderberg stated that the MPCA would still be obligated to manage the Closed Landfill Program however; the funding would likely come out of other areas of the MPCA budget which may negatively impact other areas of county funding and activities. SWAA and AMC will continue to monitor the Closed Landfill Program.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Updates: Heidi Kroening updated the group on the Compost Rule. A compost hearing was held March 24th and the Agency provided an overview of the process and components to the draft rule. Testimony was heard from industry, local units of government, and citizens. All testimony from the hearing is being reviewed by agency staff and responses are due to the Administrative Law Judge by April 15th. After this date, all comments and the Agency's response will be available for review and the comments during the rebuttal period ends April 21st. At that point a 30 day review period begins leading to a report from the Administrative Law Judge around May 21st. As this draft rule was contested it will have to go to the MPCA Board which will take place sometime between July and August, 2014. Agency staff are planning to adopt the compost rule by October, 2014. Discussion from the group followed. Kroening advised the group to direct any questions on rulemaking to herself and she will forward them on.

Kroening updated the group on enforcement issues. There is one staff person left to be hired and then the Department will be operating at full staffing levels. Staff focus will be concentrated on open burning, burning of structures and burning prohibited materials.

Hank Fisher handed out a listing that shows the solid waste management plan schedule and discussed the current status of individual county plans with the group.

Fisher stated the Agency filed a third application for a Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) Grant and has been informed that the application does not meet the guidelines.

Fisher gave the group a Green Jobs Deconstruction Pilot Program jobs bill handout. Fisher discussed the purpose, partnerships, goals, outcomes and appropriations of this bill. Fisher will update the group as this bill moves forward in the legislative process. Discussion from the group followed.

Construction & Demolition Legislation: Fisher stated that there is a program available through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) that provides loans/grants to local units of government that have inherited buildings or structures through the forfeit process provided the proposal or application comes in with at least 80% deconstruction, recycling or repurposing of the structure. Soderberg stated that starting in 2014 new legislation was passed that residential and commercial buildings have three years not seven before the parcel goes tax forfeit.

The group discussed the Agency's new data base tracking systems. Kroening will invite Peder Sandhei and Lisa Mojsiej to the next NEWAC meeting to address any issues and concerns.

Kroening updated the group that the school cost benefit billing study will be completed by June and Agency staff will give a presentation on the results at an upcoming NEWAC meeting. The study will show what schools have paid for trash and recycling services and will offer data on how much money schools could save by increasing their recycling/organics programs.

Kroening informed the group that the Recycling Association of Minnesota/Solid Waste Association of North America (RAM) / (SWANA) conference will be held on October 8th and 9th.

Heidi Ringhofer updated the group on the status of PaintCare. PaintCare submitted a Plan on March 3rd and responses are due in writing by April 15th. At this time there has been a lot of discussion about the PaintCare plan, but not very detail specific. SWAA will be putting together a response to the PaintCare Plan. PaintCare has requested an extension for implementation of the Plan. The extension date is November 15th. MPCA staff have stated there is no timeline for the State to accept or deny the Plan or the extension of the program and are waiting for a contract to be established with household hazardous waste programs before final approval would be given. Ringhofer informed the group that beginning July 1st there will be a fee added to all paint sold for paint care management; however no monies will be reimbursed until final contract details are completed. Five year storm water permits are coming due and comments are due by the end of April. SWAA will be writing a letter that Counties are concerned about storm water issues relating to roll-off containers.

April 17 Northeast Minnesota Recycling Forum: Allison Sawyer, St. Louis County gave a Northeastern Minnesota Recycling Processing and Markets Forum handout to the group and informed the group about the upcoming forum. Anyone planning to attend will need to RSVP Allison by April 17th. Items to be discussed at the forum will include recycling volumes, market history, quality and quantity of recyclables, transportation costs, market prices and next steps.

Items by Counties and WLSSD:

Carlton – Construction projects are underway at the transfer station. Staff are in the process of amending the zoning map to include a zoning district for closed landfills. Staff are waiting for final approval to add a food waste drop off site at the transfer station. Carlton County is working to adopt a no burn policy. Carlton County has had a textile recycling program since 2010. Six tons of textiles were collected in 2010 and 83 tons of textiles were collected in 2013.

Cook – Department staff have an informal agreement with a company to process electronic collections for the County.

Crow Wing – Crow Wing County is in the third year of pharmaceutical collections and will be adding a collection box in the City of Nisswa within the next few months. Sixty Five percent of mattresses coming into the sites are now being recycled; this is due to the fee for mattress disposal. It costs six dollars for a mattress to be recycled and twelve dollars for a mattress to be landfilled. Staff have noted a decrease in the number of appliances and tires processed in 2013.

Itasca - County staff are working with a private company to process the glass recyclables that were accepted at County sites and an agreement with the City of Deer River and Waste Management to help pay transportation costs for the glass is also near completion. Itasca County along with the City of Deerwood and the Blandin Foundation entered into an agreement to purchase a new baler. Staff are looking at expanding electronic waste collections and starting a Sharps collection program. 2013 recycling rates have increased. Staff have completed necessary permits, annual reports and the solid waste management plan. Itasca County will be doing a major reorganization of staff due to five current staff members retiring in 2014.

Koochiching – Staff have completed necessary permits, annual reports and the solid waste management plan. Retrofit Recycling is hauling all of the County's e-waste. The county pays the transportation costs only. The MPCA has finished the closed landfill project in Koochiching County. The Department has entered into a new tire contract with Liberty Tire. Due to the increase costs associated with this contract, the County Board has increased the fees collected for tires to three dollars per car tire and nine dollars per truck tire. A private hauler in Koochiching County is in the process of opening up a recycling center in 2014. Dale Olson updated the group on the plasma gasification project and stated that the project has moved to a private operation.

Lake - The County Board has approved solid waste funding in 2016. Staff will present information to the commissioners for a new recycling center, a household hazardous waste building and additional demolition capacity at the landfill.

St. Louis – Department staff will be overseeing a leachate spray site expansion at the Regional Landfill this summer and will be adding three new leachate ponds. County staff are talking to WLSSD staff about hauling leachate to the District. Staff are finishing up with the school recycling programs. McReynolds informed the group that Green Corp host site applications are available and this is a great opportunity for counties. The Department will be opening a new canister site in Cedar Valley Township this summer. The Department has signed a one year contract for electronics haulage with Electronic Manufacturers Recycling Management Company "MRM". The Department will be adding two additional pharmaceutical bins, one in the Aurora Sheriff's Department and one in the Chisholm Police Department. Terry Soderberg announced that he will be retiring on May 30th.

WLSSD – Pharmaceutical collections are going well and another drop site was added in West Duluth.

Scheduling Next Meeting:

The next NEWAC meeting has tentatively been scheduled for Monday, July 14th at 10:00 a.m. at Western Lake Superior Sanitary District, Duluth. The meeting was adjourned.