

GREATER MAPLE VALLEY UNINCORPORATED AREA COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING – SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

The monthly regular meeting of the GMVUAC held at the Maple Valley Fire Station was called to order by Chair Hiester at approximately 7:00 PM on Monday, September 9, 2019.

Roll Call: Present: Hiester, Neuner, Haynes, Rimbo, Harvey, Sterling, Blacklock, Hansen, Buchanan, Thompson, and Iverson.

Agenda Items

No changes. M (approve) - Sterling S - Blacklock Approved - Unanimous

New Members

Bob Keller and Andy McDonald were sworn-in as new Council Members by Chair Hiester.

Public Comments

Question was asked whether the Council had any update re Asphalt Facility - no new info. Sterling noted construction activities at Cramer/MV Industries site west of Maple Valley.

State Representative Bill Ramos (Issaquah) gave a brief update of legislative activities, including (a) changes to property tax relief for seniors and disabled vets (now tied to median income of county of residence instead of flat amount); (b) work with Lambert and Dunn re funding of King County roads (will keep GMVUAC updated); and (c) SR 18 projects that will ultimately provide 4 lanes from Issaquah-Hobart Road to I-90 (upwards of \$400 million).

Panel Discussion

Cedar Hills Landfill panel introduced themselves and gave brief opening remarks re the proposed expansion of this site and the preparation of the EIS. Panel members included: Glynda Steiner, PE, MSE, Deputy Division Director, KC Solid Waste; Darshan Dhillon, EHS, Public Health - Seattle & King County; Sue Sander, BS Biology & MS Finance+HR, environmental consultant; Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann, MBA, Zero Landfill Initiative.

Steiner gave an update to the landfill expansion project and EIS schedule – DEIS due this fall and will be subject to public review and comment; 37 cities are in the process of reviewing the SW Comp Plan (to-date, 17 have approved, 2 rejected (Issaquah and Newcastle)); KC Council has approved the Comp Plan and landfill expansion (subject to WaDOE final approval). Only Seattle and Milton handle their wastes separately and do not use the landfill. EIS alternatives include 3 different height and area options.

Dhillon is a senior inspector and inspects the landfill operation once per month for compliance with conditions of the operating permit issued by PH-S&KC. The health department reviews groundwater and gas monitoring and leachate control; issues notice of violations.

Sander has been involved with numerous landfill operations, including closures, and in the preparation of EISs. Submitted comments on both the SW Plan Update and EIS Scoping. Stated that about 200 eagles (protected species) have been seen at one time at landfill feeding on garbage. Key issues include operation/maintenance of existing facility and adequate mitigation of impacts. States that this site should be closed as there exist alternative solutions to waste management in KC.

Schmidt-Pathmann strongly believes that landfill operations in general should come to an end and alternative solutions put in place (cited Germany as an example of what can and should be done to handle garbage and recyclables). Stated that landfilling poses danger to human health; releases gases; and destroys resources. Stated it is time to totally phase out landfills – increase recycling and strive for zero waste (become more sustainable).

Council Questions:

Harvey asked whether expansion is a done deal and whether there is still hope that anything can be done to change the proposed expansion? Steiner said EIS is appropriate tool to effect any changes, including no action – but likely outcome will be expansion plan with mitigation of expected impacts. Sander emphasized inadequate analysis of alternatives and held out hope for alternatives. Schmidt-Pathmann hinted that major changes may be coming that could ban landfilling of garbage having > 3% organic content – everyone should contact local cities and try to get them to reject the SW Plan (make KC go back to the drawing board and take a real look at alternatives).

Rimbos challenged the methodology employed in weighing alternatives – considered the analysis faulty and bent results towards landfill expansion rather than other off site alternatives. Steiner said that would be looked into and will get back with info. Sander stated that economic impacts were not adequately addressed. Rimbos also stated that regulations for DS require that the environmental impacts associated with a proposed action must be disclosed in the Scoping process. Steiner stated that the SW Division presumed there were impacts that would require an EIS to be prepared, without being specific as to any one or more significant ones – thus the DS was issued.

Haynes asked whether the EIS could lead to closure of the site or moving disposal elsewhere? Steiner stated that the EIS would only address the onsite alternatives (location of cells and height of fill) and mitigation of impacts (traffic, odor, etc.).

Buchanan raised concerns regarding groundwater contamination, including disposal of medical wastes. Steiner stated that numerous groundwater wells have been installed in many locations and were monitored – results are published – is a complex aquifer system. Sander stated that these concerns demonstrate why the landfill should be closed and not simply relocated, and use Waste to Energy with integrated waste management system as ultimate solution. Schmidt-Pathmann stated that compliance standards are inadequate to protect public health – should be based on risk – implement integrated waste management as solution.

Iverson wanted to know a rough time frame necessary to stop landfilling and implement alternative – is 8 years a sufficient time period? Steiner stated likely no, as it depends on a lot of factors that could take upwards of 13 years or more even if rather simple. KC handles more than 1 million tons of waste per years and contracts for the disposal wastes from 37 cities – all of this would have to be redone and repriced for alternatives. Steiner indicated that KC going to a W to E facility would be preferable, but unlikely in a short time frame – need to keep Cedar Hills operational. Sander stated that mitigation of impacts can now be implemented, and it only took 3 years for Spokane to implement its W to E facility.

Hansen wanted to know how long it would take to actually construct a W to E facility? Steiner stated it could take upwards of 20 years. Schmidt-Pathmann stated 2.5 years to actually construct, and maybe 5 - 8 years start to finish. Hansen indicated that with such a time frame of 5 - 8 years, it wouldn't be necessary to expand into Area 9. Steiner stated that Area 9 would not be adequate for all landfilling during time period in which to go to W to E – plus must renegotiate contracts for disposal with the 37 cities. KC's back up plan is to rail wastes out of the county if landfill cannot be expanded as proposed.

McDonald asked what would stop the proposed expansion into Area 9 – the EIS? Sander stated a legitimate cost analysis would help. Schmidt-Pathmann stated that each alternative for expansion must be assessed by its advantages vs disadvantages.

Blacklock asked about possibility of rail hauling to Spokane to use its W to E facility? Both Sander and Schmidt-Pathmann stated that the Spokane facility is limited in capacity and would have to be expanded, and the cost to rail haul with such expansion would be costly.

Public Questions:

Janet Dobrowolski questioned elevations of proposed fill in new Area 9, cost analysis of alternatives, and need to redo SW Comp Plan with accurate information; also wanted to know how leachate is treated. Steiner stated that KC used worst case scenario in estimating costs, including no reduction in waste generation by recycling – the only decrease in waste generation was a result of the economic recession. Steiner stated that leachate is treated only with aeration at this time.

Monte MacGregor and Mirrormont residents stated that odors from landfill have increased and are so intense at times that even indoor air is sickening, and cannot enjoy outdoor activities – what can be done now to mitigate? Steiner stated that KC had an ongoing pilot project to use hog fuel/chips to mitigate odors, and such looked promising. Steiner also stated that closing Area 7 in early 2020 with final cover should correct any odor emanating from that cell; and future use of other lower elevation cells, such as Area 8, should also mitigate odors.

MacGregor stated that leachate could travel to underlying mine tunnels that could then discharge to the Cedar River. Steiner did not have info on this possibility. WaDOE Tim O'Connor, hydrogeologist, stated that the agency review of ground and surface water monitoring data showed no impacts, but would be interested in receiving more information on the Jones Road Bridge mine shaft that MacGregor mentioned as possible source of leachate pollution. O'Connor also stated that there are no known maps of the mine shafts that could be affected by the landfill operation; as for Schmidt-Pathmann's inquiry as to what tests were conducted on samples – O'Connor stated that the samples were subject to standard testing for contaminants (metals, volatiles, etc.).

Kim Brighton stated odor comes from leachate system and faulty flare – what's in the odors that's making people sick? Dhillon stated that improved leachate collection and treatment (aeration) systems should help reduce odors, and closing Area 7 should help – and health department does monitor air and odors in vicinity. Steiner stated that KC is working on leachate treatment, and that aeration system has periodically failed. Steiner stated that each employee in the leachate treatment system wears personal monitors and WISHA also has requirements for worker safety. Brighton stated that odors need to be tested for constituents – harmful to human health?

Panel Discussion ended about 8:55 PM – Hiester thanked all participants and also the public attendees for a very well conducted discourse on the Cedar Hills Landfill.

Regular Agenda / Council Business and Committee Reports

1. 2019 GMVUAC Survey

Sterling stated that to-date have 70 respondents and one new possible volunteer; however, none invited to tonight's meeting appear to be in attendance. Keep the Survey open through November 30th – final report due at our December 2 meeting. Member bio updates due.

2. PSRC Vision 2050 Draft Plan

Rimbos has coordinated and prepared comments from GMVUAC and other UACs/UAAs (all have approved). Rimbos stated that although PSRC presented good ideas, the actual implementation of them are problematic, as the only teeth PSRC has to force compliance is its certification of Comprehensive Plan Updates, which makes a jurisdiction eligible for consideration to receive federal road funds. Council members discussed draft comments sent to all by email; no one had any substantive changes that should be addressed for final comment letter.

M - Haynes S - Buchanan Approved - Unanimous

(Rimbos and Mike Birdsall are authorized by the Council to complete the final comment letter, with any minor changes that may be necessary but which are consistent with Council policies, and to submit the final comment letter to the PSRC by the Monday, September 16, deadline.)

3. WaDOE Public Participation Grant

Thompson presented an update, but no new information as still waiting to speak with WaDOE's Lynn Gooding; however, it now appears that a significant change is soon coming re Reserve Silica that could result in shortening the time frame for GMVUAC grant-related activities to just the next several years. Thompson indicated that Sander has expressed an interest in contracting as the consultant for both the Reserve Silica and Landsburg Mine PPG projects; stated that budget should be sufficient to perform the necessary review and input to Council for our required public meetings. WaDOE has not yet given us a deadline to act on the grant.\

4. Guest Speakers/Topics for Future Meetings

Thompson to invite TSD Superintendent Tony Giurado to our October 7 meeting – at least 1 hour.

Thompson to invite Mike Birdsall to our November meeting to discuss traffic and transportation issues.

5. Committee Reports (9:15 PM)

All Committee reports previously sent out by email. Harvey stated that the Maple Valley/Covington Reporter newspaper would no longer be delivered to our local service area.

6. Minutes of Prior Council Meetings (9:20 PM)

Sterling stated the only change to the draft August 5 meeting minutes was to change PRSC to the correct PSRC – no other changes to the draft previously email to all Council Members were made.

M - Sterling S - Blacklock Approved – Unanimous

Chair Hiester Adjourned the Meeting at 9:25 PM.

Minutes by Sterling.