

Solid Waste Public Forum Meeting Notes

Date: April 28, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Conference Center, Room 9/10
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

Welcome and Introductions

Jeffrey Smithberger, Director Division of Solid Waste Collection and Recycling welcomed everyone to the meeting that began at 7:10 p.m.

Update on Recycling Program

Pamela Gratton, Recycling Manager, distributed statistics on the Recycling program (report is attached). Staff has just completed the 2010 report to the state; the County's recycling rate is 42%. The largest recyclable material in the County is yard waste and brush.

The County asks residents to recycle glass, cardboard, mixed paper, plastics, metals and yard waste. Businesses are required to recycle cardboard and their principal recyclable material if that is not cardboard.

Electric Sundays is a program to divert waste electronics from the waste-to-energy facility. Events are held monthly at one of the disposal sites—the I-66 Transfer Station or the I-95 Landfill. Check the County's website for exact location, dates and times. During the March event, about 537 tons of scrap electronics were recycled. At the largest event this year almost 1500 vehicles were served.

There are also periodic document shredding events hosted by the County during which residents can shred up to 5 boxes of documents for free. The next shredding event will be held on May 22 at Mason District Government Center. Again check the County's website for event locations and dates at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/recycling/calendar.htm>.

Questions from the community are summarized below along with the answers and comments by County staff.

Q: In looking at the Recycling Report. from 2008 there is a tremendous decrease in the amount of paper being recycled. How come?

A: Paper is now mixed with single stream recycling, so part of the discrete reporting data is no longer available. Note that the mixed waste numbers significantly increased during the period.

Yard waste has also increased because of better reporting by landscapers.

Q: The State requires that 25% of the waste be recycled; Fairfax County is at 42%. How does Fairfax compare to other jurisdictions?

A: Fairfax County is close to the top of the list, having a high recycling rate. Yard waste helps us with the recycling rate. Statistics for all jurisdictions are available on the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's website.

Q: What kinds of plastics can be recycled, Merrifield Gardens would like to increase its recycling, but so much of the materials are films, plastic pots, etc. which cannot be easily recycled?

A: Most of the plastic that is good for recycling comes from bottles with necks. The #1 and #2 plastics have markets where the material can be sold and then reused. Some plastics are very difficult to deal with because there is no place to sell the material collected. Mixing types of plastics is a problem because of their complex chemical composition. County staff can suggest ways for Merrifield Gardens to increase its plastics recycling. We will schedule a site visit. Staff encourages other companies who need help in increasing their recycling program to call the County for assistance.

Q: Office Movers has many customers that are downsizing. These companies want to just have the furniture disappear. Office Movers brings the materials to the Energy Resource Recovery Facility. Is that considered recycling?

A: Most of the fabric-covered desk cubicles, composite board, etc. is incinerated. Metal from the frames is recycled both before (if possible) or after the burn process. In Fairfax County, there is a need for brokers who would take office furniture and sell usable parts, then dispose of the rest. Many jurisdictions have such companies. Fairfax County Government is now selling its used furniture on E-bay. Furniture can also be donated to churches, nonprofits, and other organizations where it can be reused.

Collection Program Updates

Jeffrey Smithberger updated attendees about the County's Collection program. The County has about 44,700 customers in its sanitary districts.

Vacuum leaf collection serves about 22,000 customers, who are charged separately for the service. The County just lost 337 leaf service customers last week because of Board of Supervisors' approval of a community request to be removed from a leaf district.

Collection and Recycling is "going green" and has added a new hybrid truck. It is a hydraulic assisted hybrid that saves about 12-13% in fuel costs and more in reduced brake maintenance costs.

Automated collection is being explored and will be implemented soon in most sanitary districts. At least one private collection company has started to collect some homes that way also. The County plans to have 50-60% of its routes collected using automation in the next few years. The County will not require automated collection for private companies anytime soon.

The discussion moved to charging for services or pay-as-you-throw.

Q: Has the County explored charging customers separately so that everyone pays for what they dispose?

A: Customers do not like the pay-as-you-throw model; it was tried about ten years ago. County facilities for residents (Recycling Disposal Centers) operate on a pay-as-you-throw model. Commercial companies are able to use that model if they want, but none have chosen to use it in the County.

Q: An attendee's homeowners' association changed collectors recently and got a much lower price. Recently, several companies have offered lower prices. County cost seems to be more expensive?

A: County collection is \$26 per month. There are differences in levels of customer service between the County and commercial companies. Some of the newest County customers were paying \$600 per year from a private company, now they get service for \$345 per year.

Disposal and Resource Recovery Updates

Charles Forbes, Assistant Director, Division of Solid Waste Disposal and Resource Recovery advised that the Director was sick and could not attend tonight. He offered the following update of disposal facilities.

I-66 Transfer Station update includes:

- The construction of the new Workers Facility to allow meeting space, offices, showers and replace the temporary trailers. Construction has begun and the employees are anticipating being in the facility by the end of 2011. The new Workers facility will be heated using the landfill gas (LFG) from the closed landfill at the I-66 Complex.
- The LFG project to heat the Vehicle Services garage located next door is operational. Additional gas will be sold to WAMATA for the bus maintenance facility located nearby.

Remote household hazardous waste events will be reinstated at 3 sites during this year. These will augment the permanent ones at 2 County facilities located at the I-66 Transfer Station and the I-95 Landfill Complex.

The Energy Resource Recovery Facility (E/RRF) is owned by Covanta Fairfax Inc. and operated on County property. The contract or Service Agreement (SA) expires in 2016. The County recently explored its right to purchase the facility as an alternative to extending the SA or other options. The Board decided that the best option for the County was to extend the current contract until 2041 and accept an offer from Covanta. However, the discussions with Covanta indicated that Covanta wanted to continue negotiations. The Board of Supervisors directed that County staff explore its other disposal options. The current SA with Covanta will continue through February 1, 2016.

Amajit Riat, Facility Manager at the I-95 Landfill Complex, discussed the current issues that staff are addressing at the landfill. The landfill only accepts ash from the local Covanta facilities and the Norman M. Cole Pollution Control Plant. The MSW landfill is closed and capped; a few related issues were discussed.

I-95 Landfill is a municipal solid waste landfill that was closed to municipal solid waste in 1995. A synthetic cap and low permeability soil cap have been placed on 260 acres of the landfill. The County is required to provide post closure care for 30 years from the time of its final closure, which is more than 60 years from now. Staff is looking at the beneficial uses of the land in the interim. We are looking to gauge interest in how to use the capped landfill to benefit the community. Several projects that have been discussed include solar projects, RV and boat storage, and light recreational use. The County has limitations on what can be placed on the landfill due to continuing settling of the landfill, landfill gas wells, and other safety concerns.

Groundwater. There are some exceedances of the groundwater protection standards. Fairfax County had proposed corrective action several years ago, but the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality just approved Fairfax County's plan. The County has already been implementing the plan by installing engineering controls. A contractor has been selected for injecting chemical compounds into the groundwater to remediate its quality. No permit violations have actually occurred, but there have been exceedances for certain constituencies. The plan will ensure that the landfill does not harm the

groundwater in the area and offer a buffer to allow time for natural attenuation of any constituents of concern.

Expansion of Ash Monofill. Staff is in the process of planning the next phase of the ash landfill, proposed to start construction in August 2011. Construction on the new cell will be finished by July 2012. With the addition of this new cell, the landfill will extend its capacity until 2025. The next phase of the landfill development will assure capacity until 2041. Currently, about 1000 tons of ash per day are disposed in the landfill.

Land-Use during Closure. A consulting company is helping the County explore options for use of the landfill property. Staff will attend the South County Federation Meeting on May 3 to gather ideas and suggestions. County staff has already presented information and answered questions at the South County Land Use Committee. Additional public input is requested to the process of determining how the land resource will be used. The end use of the property will be recreational, but the property must be monitored for 30 years after the final closure of the landfill.

Landfill Gas Projects. Currently landfill gas wells collect about 2300 cubic feet per minutes (CFM) that are used to generate 6 megawatts of electricity with a partner Michigan Co-gen System. The Noman Cole plant uses gas as a secondary fuel in its incinerators. The landfill could provide gas to other neighbors in the area such as the Lorton Arts Center.

Q: Could passive recreation (kite flying) be done there in less than 30 years?

A: County must limit traffic on the landfill because of settling, the functioning LFG wells, requirement for no smoking, etc. Viable projects for the landfill could be solar panel project or parking/storage for boats/ RVs.

Community Forum

Q: Is the County really going back to drawing board to relook at it future relationship with the Covanta facility?

A: Yes at this point.

Q: Could County go out for bid earlier than 2016?

A: The County has a contract with Covanta Fairfax through February 2016. We have time to explore options. The County's back is not against the wall. We want a good deal for County residents.

Q: Will the new contract be with Covanta then or another contract?

A: The current contract is with Covanta. In 2016 another contract is possible.

There are several public meetings coming up. On May 5, we have the quarterly Collectors meeting with the commercial collection companies that operate in Fairfax County. On May 26, there is an Lorton Citizens Alliance Team meeting to discuss wastewater issues and other matters relevant to the Lorton community.

The meeting ended at 8:10 p.m.