

A special meeting of the Solid Waste Management Planning Committee of the County of Calhoun was held on Monday, September 17, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. at the Calhoun County Road Commission, 13300 Fifteen Mile Road, Marshall, Michigan 49068.

Committee Members Present:

Arnold Arquette	Lewis Cooper
Steve Essling	John Bomba
Eugene Klisiak	Mike Myszka
John LaForge	Marilyn Hennon
Ken Kohs	Walt Obrinske
Terris Todd	

Committee Members Absent: Cheryl Vosburg

Also Present:

- Bob Brownell, Marengo Township Supervisor
- Frank Manke, Clarendon Township Supervisor
- David Dunnigan, Liberty Landfill
- Sharon Drumhiller, Tekonsha Township Supervisor
- Kimberly Hinkley, Eckford Township Clerk
- Eugene Hamaker, Marshall Township Supervisor
- Fred Dadow, Marengo Township
- Kent Anderson, Marshall Township
- Rodney Winchell, Marengo Township
- Mary Jo Budrow, Marshall Township
- Chris Olson, City of Marshall Manager
- Jase Bolger, Calhoun County Commissioner
- Greg Purcell, Calhoun County Administrator
- Tiffany Eichorst, Calhoun County Solid Waste Director
- Mary Jo Crumpton, Calhoun County Road Commission

Chairman John Bomba called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Ken Kohs asked that Public Comment Period be moved from item 8 to item 6, under the Community Compost Center on the agenda.**

**Motion made by Ken Kohs to accept the meeting agenda with the change noted above. Supported by Mike Myszka. Voice vote: motion carried.**

#### **COMMUNITY COMPOST CENTER**

Chairman Bomba welcomed the public and informed everyone that we have heard from many county residents, as well as the County Board of Commissioners and other public officials, regarding the closing of the Community Compost Center to county residents. In 2006, the SWMPC voted to cease funding the center at the end of the City Marshall's 2006/2007 Fiscal Year (June 30, 2007). Earlier this month, the City of Marshall reduced the hours of operation for the center from 24 to 8 per week, and closed the center to county residents. City of Marshall residents continue to have use of the center, as their tax dollars support the center, but at the reduced hours of operation.

Chairman Bomba explained that the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator have requested that the SWMPC give consideration to providing funding in the amount of \$5,106.24 to allow the Community Compost Center to remain open to county residents for the remaining 9-10 weeks. Given the time of year, he is in favor of keeping the center open for the remainder of the season/calendar year, and he noted that part of the charge of the SWMPC is to fund composting activities. Chairman Bomba noted that the SWMPC is in the process of strategic planning for future programs and services, including composting activities.

**Motion made by Ken Kohs to amend the Solid Waste Management Fund budget to provide funding in the amount of \$5,106.24 to allow the Community Compost Center to remain open to county residents for the remainder of the 2007 Calendar Year.**

A committee member asked what happens to the procedure when the SWMPC voted to discontinue funding the center, but is now being asked to reverse our decision. What is the next step? Chairman Bomba responded that this would be addressed in the same manner as an unbudgeted item.

**Supported by Terris Todd.**

**SWMPC Member Comments**

Committee member comments included the following:

- During the Fall season, the City of Marshall is the only one who benefits from the center; therefore, the City of Marshall should fund it. The SWMPC budget does not call for funding the center. Our revenue continues to go down and we can't keep operating this way. Monies should be going back into the Solid Waste Management Fund to reinvest.
- The SWMPC agreed that they would provide the seed money for programs, but the programs would become self-sustainable. When Challenge Grant recipients returned for additional funding, the SWMPC turned them down.
- The committee voted to gradually cut back funding for the center, from the original \$25,000 to \$14,200 to \$0 and this was communicated to the City of Marshall. Tiffany Eichorst, Solid Waste Department Director read the following excerpt from the November 8, 2004 SWMPC meeting minutes: "Motion made by Mike Myszka to recommend that the Community Compost Center agreement be accepted as written (with a SWMPC budgeted line item of \$14,200), but that the City of Marshall reconsider the fee schedule to promote sustainability of the center, equality for all county residents, and prepare for gradual phase out of funding from the Solid Waste Committee. Supported by John LaForge. Voice vote: motion carried."
- It was clarified that there are two separate issues being discussed. The first is the one time Challenge Grant program that provides seed money for new programs with the understanding that they will become self-sustainable. The second are the programs and services that we fund each year, e.g., recycling bins, compost center, and household hazardous waste that are clearly not sustainable.
- The SWMPC voted to discontinue funding of the center; therefore, the County should address funding issues with the center.
- It is the charge of the SWMPC to utilize funds to provide programs and services like county composting opportunities; therefore we should not only fund the compost center for the remainder of this year, but should be funding it year-round. It makes sense that the center is in Marshall, as Marshall is the county seat. Through the strategic planning process, the committee will have the ability to explore other composting activities.
- The committee supports environmental recycling.
- Part of the strategic planning process that the SWMPC is currently undergoing is to prioritize programs and services with regard to the budget.
- The committee supports many programs that are not self-sustainable such as household hazardous waste collections, recycle bins, department wages, etc.
- Do county residents want the committee to spend all the funds on programs and services or manage the funds to preserve them for the future?
- There has been tremendous feedback in support of the compost center from the public in response to the center closing to county residents and many are willing to pay for the drop-off service.
- Most compost centers and recycling programs are not now and never will be self-sustaining.
- Nothing is free – users should pay a fee.

- This is a social issue, not a public health issue.
- Years ago, the SWMPC foresaw problems with different groups pressuring for funding of their programs. At this time, the funds were shifted into Certificates of Deposit.
- This may not be a public health issue but it will be a cost to the Road Commission to pick up what is dropped off along our roadsides. Composting activities are part of the committee's charge.
- The City of Marshall and the County need to consider other funding sources for the future.

### **Public Comments**

Public comments included the following:

- The Community Compost Center is not a City of Marshall program. It has been open to all county residents. The City of Marshall will continue to use the center, regardless of the funding issue. This is a solid waste issue that affects township and village residents throughout Calhoun County. We should want to continue the collaborative efforts between the SWMPC, Road Commission and City of Marshall to continue to provide programs and services to all county residents. Composting activities are stated in the charge to the SWMPC and it is a valuable service. It is appropriate that the center is located in the county seat. There is a difference in providing an ongoing service vs. a grant to start a new program.
- It is important to have an ongoing composting program that is available to all county residents.
- The committee should reconsider their current position on funding to, at least, fund the center through the end of this calendar year so that it is available to township residents countywide.
- There are residents who have used the center consistently and currently have nowhere to dispose of their yard waste.
- Several years ago, Marengo Township gave the County permission to use the area as a compost center. As part of that agreement, Marengo Township residents would be allowed to drop-off yard waste at no charge. If that agreement has now been broken, Marengo Township will shut the center down completely.
- If residents have nowhere to dispose of their yard waste, we will find bags along our roadsides and the Road Commission will have to pick them up.
- Where is a copy of the written agreement allowing Marengo Township residents to drop-off at the center?
- City of Marshall residents fund more than one-half of the Compost Center's operating costs, as well as staffing and equipment. This is a countywide issue, as City of Marshall residents are not affected. If the Compost Center could be self-sustaining, it would have been by this time.
- Yard waste will be dumped on our roadways if we don't provide a place for drop-off.
- The County is facing significant budget issues. We need to collaborate to provide services that improve the quality of life of county residents. The SWMPC has a fund balance just under \$500,000 and they are being asked to contribute just over \$5,000 to keep the compost center open to county residents for the remainder of this calendar year and, to consider continued funding while going through their strategic planning process.

Chairman Bomba called for a vote.

**Roll call vote: Cooper-NO; Essling-NO; Myszka-YES; Bomba-YES; Klisiak-YES; LaForge -YES; Arquette-NO; Hennon-YES; Kohs-YES; Obrinske-YES; Todd-YES.  
Motion carried 8-YES, 3-NO.**

### **FOLLOW UP FROM STAKEHOLDER'S WORKSHOP ON 9-6-07**

A Solid Waste Stakeholders Workshop was held on Thursday, 9-6-07 at Convis Township Hall to provide an opportunity for the community, solid waste industry representatives and other interested parties to

brainstorm and share ideas regarding the solid waste strategic planning process. Notes from the workshop were provided. Copies of the strategic plan PowerPoint presentation were also available.

Discussion took place on the following:

- Direction with the budget: maintain funds or maintain services?
- What is related to solid waste?
- Need for a long-term solution if the landfill were to close. Do we cancel recycling drop-off bins and household hazardous waste?
- SWMPC needs clarification and direction on their charge: manage the fund/stay within the budget or provide recycling and solid waste programs and services.
- Can the funds be put in a trust? It was clarified that we cannot put public dollars into a trust. The strategic planning process is addressing the issue of the high fund balance.
- What will happen if there is an accident at C&C Landfill?
- A committee member feels that there is a target on our back – where do we fit into the food chain, with regards to the County Board of Commissioners? Our opinions are no good because we have said no to funding certain activities.

It was noted that Tiffany Eichorst would forward these comments to Shaw Environmental to incorporate into the draft strategic planning document. The committee members were told that the strategic planning documents are being drafted and will be discussed at a later meeting.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

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Chairman John Bomba

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Mary Jo Crumpton