

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE
AND
ALAMEDA COUNTY RECYCLING BOARD**

Thursday, May 11, 2017

7:00 P.M.

**Castro Valley Public Library
3600 Norbridge Avenue
Castro Valley, CA 94546
510-667-7900**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dianne Martinez, President, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Adan Alonzo, Recycling Programs
Bernie Camara, Recycling Materials Processing Industry
Jerry Pentin, ACWMA
Peter Maass, ACWMA
Dianne Martinez, ACWMA
John Moore, Environmental Organization
Jim Oddie, ACWMA
Michael Peltz, Solid Waste Industry Representative
Tim Rood, ACWMA
Steve Sherman, Source Reduction Specialist
Toni Stein, Environmental Educator

Staff Present:

Wendy Sommer, Executive Director
Tom Padia, Deputy Executive Director
Meri Soll, Senior Program Manager
Mark Spencer, Senior Program Manager
Elizabeth Earls, Outreach Associate
Farand Kan, Deputy County Counsel
Arliss Dunn, Clerk of the Board

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

There were none.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

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| 1. Board Attendance Record (Tom Padia) | Information |
| 2. Written Report of Ex Parte Communications (Wendy Sommer) | Information |

Board member Maass made the motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Board member Pentin seconded and the motion carried 7-0 (Ayes: Camara, Maass, Martinez, Moore, Peltz, Pentin, Stein. Nays: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Alonzo, Oddie, Rood, Sherman)

V. OPEN PUBLIC DISCUSSION

There was none

VI. REGULAR CALENDAR

1. Reusable Bag Ordinance Update (Meri Soll)

Information

This item is for information only.

Meri Soll provided an overview of the staff report. A link to the report is available here:

[Reusable-Bag-Ordinance-Update-memo.05-11-17.pdf](#)

Ms. Soll distributed copies of the outreach materials developed for both retail stores and eating establishments. Ms. Soll stated that over 13,000 stores and restaurants have been notified at least once by mail regarding the new law and approximately 25% of retail stores have display cards at their cash registers to inform consumers of the new law. Ms. Soll introduced Elizabeth Earls, Outreach Associate, who came onboard in February to provide technical assistance to affected entities. Ms. Earls has visited over 500 stores throughout the county providing information and assistance to stores in order to become compliant with the new ordinance. In addition, we have conducted outreach regarding the expanded law to business district associations, chamber of commerce, city staff including TAC reps to identify geographic areas to focus outreach activities. Board member Stein inquired about the rationale for charging ten cents for both paper and plastic bags. Ms. Soll stated that the ordinance language requires charges on both paper and reusable bags (including more durable plastic bags) to encourage consumers to bring their own bag or to not receive a bag at all. Ms. Soll reminded the Board that the ten cents bag charge is retained by the store.

Board member Moore stated that he disagrees with the messaging of stores to “use up their existing inventory of single use plastic bags” as it is counter to our mission of removing the bags from the waste stream. Ms. Soll stated that this measure was a courtesy to stores who have substantial inventory of single use plastic bags as they may have been unaware of the expanded ordinance prior to purchasing bags for their business. However, the agency has information on the website directing stores to establishments such as food banks where they can donate the single use bags. Board member Pentin added when the ordinance was originally developed the Board considered the impact on stores with regard to existing inventory. The ordinance has been effective as there has been a significant decrease in the number of single use bags in the waste stream. Board member Sherman inquired about any unintended side effects or ancillary benefits of the ordinance. Mr. Padia stated that a noticeable benefit was waste prevention due to a large number of consumers choosing to forego any bag at point of purchase in lieu of paying the 10 cent fee. Board member Maass suggested connecting the retailers to dog walking areas. Ms. Soll stated that she can consult the regional park district.

President Martinez commented that she is pleased to see the use of press releases and inquired about the timeline for sending them out and asked if there are plans to disseminate them prior to the expanded ordinance affecting eating establishments. Ms. Soll stated the first press release was sent out in April right before retail stores became affected by the ordinance and we will send another one prior to expansion to eating establishments, sometime in October. President Martinez inquired if staff has data on how people are being led to the ReusableBagsAC.org website and if there is information on the website informing consumers that the bag ordinance is a countywide law and not an individual city ordinance. In addition, she inquired if staff is using search engine optimization to direct consumers and businesses to the [reusablebagsac.org](#) website. Ms. Sommer stated that we can utilize search engine optimization and will work with our webmaster to direct city bag ordinance searches to our website. Ms. Soll added staff will be using media buys for social media portals such as Facebook, NextDoor, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Ms. Earls added some of the issues raised by retailers are confusion over the State law. Board member Stein inquired if staff is finding confusion with regard to the compliant bags for example the Target reusable bag. Ms. Soll stated that the Target bag has been tested and verified as compliant as well as bags used at other large chain stores. We also have information for retailers on where to purchase compliant reusable bags.

There were no public comments. President Martinez thanked Ms. Soll for her presentation.

2. Presentation of 2016 Benchmark Data (Mark Spencer)

Information

This item is for information only.

Tom Padia provided an overview of the staff report and Mark Spencer presented a PowerPoint presentation. A link to the report and presentation is available here:

[2016-Benchmark-Data-Presentation-05-11-17.pdf](#)

Board member Peltz inquired if there was an attempt to obtain samples from all sections of the city. Mr. Spencer stated no, the Benchmark study sought to collect samples from random routes within each city and jurisdiction across Alameda County. Board member Sherman inquired about whether the weight of single family waste varied by the size of their container and whether we found many bins that were too full or overflowing. Mr. Spencer stated that most families have trash cans big enough to fit all their trash and they tend to right-size their service. Board member Stein inquired about the significant decrease in the amount of good stuff in the garbage for Oro Loma Sanitary District. Mr. Spencer stated that they attribute the decrease to effective outreach and education. Board member Sherman inquired with respect to the multi-family sector if staff has looked at waste that is attributed to the residents as opposed to the property owners. Mr. Spencer stated that our collection efforts are focused on what is found in the bin and not how it arrived there. He added there was not a significant amount of plant debris or carpet and other like waste materials and considers the mandate and visual signage is having an effect. Tom Padia added in past Waste Characterization studies, in 1995, 2000, and 2008, sampling of single-family, multi-family and commercial was conducted at the Transfer Stations and staff was told that the multi-family waste component of commercial loads was easily distinguishable from commercial as it was more uniform. Board member Alonzo stated that in Fremont they are still seeing batteries in the recyclables. Mr. Spencer reminded the Board that the Benchmark study is sampling garbage only. Board member Rood inquired as to why the 2016 samplings of restaurants with garbage and organics service are so few in number and is staff able to draw statistical differences from such a small sample pool? Mr. Spencer stated that we are literally only sampling restaurants and in our selected pool, only seven had just garbage and organics service. In order to perform statistical analysis, we pool the variance.

Board member Peltz inquired if we can interview those exhibiting bad behavior and find out why they are not responsive to the information and outreach provided. Mr. Padia stated that in the past we have conducted phone polling of households that had been randomly sampled and around 75% of those respondents claim that they consistently recycle however our sorting data shows that only around 25% of households actually do recycle everything or nearly everything. Board member Stein stated that it may be worth the effort to go after the middle ground and get them to improve. She added people may be adverse particularly with organics due to the “yuck factor” and recommended that staff consult with sanitation experts and the public health sector. Mr. Spencer noted that the agency conducted a community based social marketing study in the City of Fremont and residents were provided with compostable bags and pails, hangtags, and a benchmark report and we found that for all three treatments there was a significant but small change in behavior. Board member Rood commented that informing the residents that their neighbors are recycling well may affect behavior change. Mr. Padia added a mailer providing this information was sent to one pilot group of Fremont residents. Board member Pentin stated that in his encounter with residents their perception is that they are doing well and recycling much more than they used to. He added we should tout the good progress but also include the ability to do better. Board member Sherman inquired about other programmatic efforts. Mr. Padia stated that we’re hoping that the 2107 Waste Characterization Study will show that the mandatory recycling ordinance has had some effect. Mr. Spencer added the agency has also increased its outreach to community groups.

Board member Alonzo commented on the cost involved to the transfer stations, jurisdictions, and the public to realize the long term goals of less than 10% good stuff. Board member Oddie inquired about the households that were nearly 100% good stuff. Mr. Spencer stated that when we see that it is typically because someone seems to have had a party- that is both the recycling bin and garbage bin are filled with wine bottles, etc. Board member Stein commented customers that don't use their green or recycling bins should be charged a higher rate to offset the transportation expense for pick-up for garbage only services. Ms. Sommer affirmed the comments from Board member Alonzo that nearly anything can be done with sufficient revenues from rate payers.

President Martinez thanked Mr. Spencer and Mr. Padia for a great presentation.

**3. Castro Valley Sanitary District Less-Than-Weekly Garbage Collection Pilot- Information
Transmittal of Final Report (Tom Padia)**

This item is for information only.

Tom Padia provided an overview of the staff report. A link to the report is available here:

[CVSAN-Garbage-Collection-Pilot-Report-05-11-17.pdf](#)

President Martinez inquired about the cost of the study. Mr. Padia stated the total cost was around \$200,000. He added the agency funded two pilots, Castro Valley and Fremont. The Fremont pilot included providing kitchen pails and compostable pail liners, direct mailing, and hang tags, and the three methods yielded a significant but not huge effect on food scraps recycling. Castro Valley provided pail liners and pails but produced no effect. Board member Sherman inquired if staff was able to uncover any evidence of any cost savings in other jurisdictions from having reduced frequency of collection of garbage and recyclables. Mr. Padia stated that there are many different variations of collection services and transitions from one set of services to another, so it's difficult to arrive at a one size fits all conclusion. Board member Stein inquired about the plastics market and if the agency can reach out to Silicon Valley with respect to building materials and recycled content. Mr. Padia invited the Board to forward any research opportunities to staff. Board member Peltz commented that the concept of content laws and encouraging fiber recycling occurs at the State level and plastics are complicated because it is not a standardized commodity. However it may be worth investigating the issue and focusing on an industrial application. Board member Alonzo stated that the primary draw for the waste industry for plastic bottles is the CRV value. Board member Stein inquired about the Energy Councils' work with solar. Ms. Sommer stated that the Energy Council works on specific projects that are funded externally for specific tasks and they have adopted their priorities for the upcoming year. The Energy Council focuses on energy efficiency and not product procurement.

President Martinez thanked Mr. Padia for his report.

VII. OTHER PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBER COMMENTS

There were none.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.