

SWAC Meeting
4:45 PM—6:15 PM
May 12, 2011

Streets Division
1501 West Badger Road
Madison, WI

Subject: Madison Sustainability Plan Presentation

Present:
George Dreckmann—Recycling Coordinator
Al Schumacher--staff

Steve King
Abigail Van deBogert
Lakshmi Sridharan
Russell Pietz
John Maycroft
Jaclyn Lawton
Steve Ingham
Reginald Weide (COE Representative)

Presentation and following discussion was the only action on the SWAC meeting agenda. Following the brief introductory PowerPoint, members questioned how their comments would be addressed in the SD&E Committee:

- Will SD&E members consider and vote on each comment? Will there be a record of each vote?—Yes, every comment/recommendation will be discussed and voted on and the vote will be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- Will the collected comments/recommendations be aggregated and published as single, publically available document?—Don't know.
- How will minority opinions/votes be publically recorded (e.g. a roll call vote)?—Don't know.
- Will the Sustainability Plan be presented to Common Council as a final consensus document or will it be presented with amendments and/or alternate options?—The Plan will be submitted as a single, complete document.

They were curious to know if other Committees had voiced concerns over parts of the draft (baited question—some were aware of the debates that took place within the Economic Development Committee and Plan Commission).

L. Sridharan expressed surprised that the UW wasn't listed more often as a partner for many of the goals.

The discussion narrowed to their focus of interest: Natural Systems Goal 5—Prevent solid waste from entering landfill.

Didn't like the title of goal; thought the word "prevent" was too pejorative. Committee felt the goal should be recast more positively in terms of their Zero Waste initiative. G. Dreckmann to provide alternative language.

In agreement with the 75% waste diversion rate by 2020 and 70% C&D diversion rate. G. Dreckmann said city has exceeded its interim curbside 2010 recycling goal of 60% [*actual resolution says 65%*] and has 2015 and 2020 goals of 70% and 75% respectively. C&D ordinance took effect in January 2010 and preliminary reporting, while incomplete, suggests 70% is a reasonable expectation (some projects have hit 90% but many others have not reported at all—issue is enforcement). Members again felt these two subgoal's should be recharacterized as interim goals within the Zero Waste initiative.

J. Lawton took exception to "100% compliance with recycling laws..." as unreasonable perfection and clearly an overreach. She thought inclusion of this language sets the plan up to fail (why include a condition you can't meet?). Others argued it was appropriate as a goal statement. For the record, the actual language says "...seek to achieve..."

S. Ingham was nervous with Action item "Enforce recycling ordinance" because it's impractical for the city to do so. The city has neither the staff nor the money to do so. He suggested substituting "Improve compliance with" for "Enforce."

Committee members were hesitant to call into question the data presented throughout the Plan but weren't in a position to challenge any of it either. They were still left with nagging concerns as to whether the numbers were "real" and looked to G. Dreckmann for validation of at least the solid waste data (George was in agreement with the Plan).

S. Ingham questioned an Action item's language about scaling C&D recycling percentage in accordance with project size. G. Dreckmann defended the language, saying it reflects his own belief that larger construction project budgets afford greater opportunities for more extensive recycling efforts.

Others members were curious about an Action item addressing the development of guidelines for home composting, noting that the city already has an ordinance that governs this. G. Dreckmann replied that the current ordinance's size limitations unintentionally restrict larger compost operations. Improvements can and should be made to the ordinance.

Everyone agreed that the Plan must address Madison's and Dane County's need for a new landfill before 2020. While the ultimate goal of the Plan is waste reduction, the reality is the current landfill is nearing the end of its life and a replacement will soon be needed. SWAC will provide supporting language. This topic led to a lengthy discussion of the size and siting of a new landfill and its implications on Madison's carbon footprint.

A. Van deBogert noted that in Education category, Goal 5: Promote Sustainable Purchasing Initiatives, second action bullet, no mention was made of purchasing recycled content materials.

Committee members were asked to vote approval of the Plan as amended by today's discussion. With six members present (two had left during the course of the discussion to attend other meetings), the motion failed on a vote of 1 yes, 4 no's and 1 abstention.

While everyone praised the SD&E Committee for its effort, all believed the Plan was too costly. Two members also believed the Plan was too ambitious and needed to be scaled back and simplified ("You've done a nice job of connecting the dots," said one, "but you've got too many dots."). One member noted her property taxes had just increased 8% and hated to think what this plan would mean for future tax hikes. Another proclaimed the Plan "too Madison" (which I took to mean too Utopian). The SWAC committee asked if the SD&E Committee had prepared a cost-benefit analysis for the Plan and put a price tag to it.

Prepared by:
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