

A regular meeting of the Leelanau County Solid Waste Council was held on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at the Leelanau County Government Center.

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Chair Lois Bahle.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: L. Bahle, C. Sharp, K. Cavanaugh J. Fletcher, A. Gale, T. Peterson, P. Deering
J. Palmer, M. Bevelhymer (Ex officio members)

Members Absent: K. Ross, T. MacDonald
(Prior Notice)

Staff Present: T. Galla

Public Present: 14 people total
T. Dowd, R. LaPorte, Sarna Salman

Bahle asked for all members to introduce themselves.

Cavanaugh stated she is from Lake Leelanau, Fletcher from Lake Leelanau, Sharp from Maple City, Bevelhymer from Green For Life (GFL), Gale from Bay Area Recycling for Communities (BARC), Deering from Cedar, Palmer from Gaylord of Waste Management, Bahle from Suttons Bay and Peterson of Burdickville.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

STAFF COMMENTS

Galla provided information on the scrap tire and mattress recycling collections held in May and June as well as the household hazardous waste (HHW), electronics, and document shredding collections held this year. A new addition to the May collection, will be eye glasses collected for the Suttons Bay Rotary Club to refurbish for an eye clinic in Esperanza, Honduras. Galla also mentioned that this year the SWC will need to renew the recycling agreements with all of the recycling sites except for the Cedar location. She will be sending out notifications for renewal. Lastly, a zoom meeting will be presented to learn more about the changes to Part 115 and the materials management plan that counties need to do. There are also dollars available for projects and grants which she will pass along to members. Bahle said the Suttons Bay Rotary Club has been doing the eyeglasses project for many years and gave thanks for allowing them to be collected at the HHW collection and used for 'Doctors without Borders'.

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

Motion by Gale, seconded by Sharp, to accept agenda as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

CONSIDERATION OF JANUARY 3, 2023 MINUTES

Motion by Gale, seconded by Sharp, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS- None.

NEW BUSINESS

RFPS – HHW/Electronics services and Recycling Services after 2023

Galla said she sent everything to corporate counsel, they developed a new Request for Proposals (RFP) because the HHW agreements expire at the end of this year and they need to put that out for bidding since there are no more extensions allowed on the contract. The attorneys finalized the RFP and she will send members a copy to review and to make any comments or suggestions. Galla pointed out that GFL has submitted a request to extend their contract for another 5-year term which is written into the agreement under the current conditions. Galla will be taking this request to the County Board for approval.

Motion by Gale, seconded by Peterson, to accept the extension request from GFL under current terms and send it to the County Board for approval. Motion carried 7-0.

Composting Presentation – Bob LaPorte

Presenters introduced themselves as Tim Dowd of Cedar, Tim Overdier of Northport, and Dr. Bob LaPorte of Northport. Dowd thanked those in the audience that came to support the composting issue.

Dowd stated the biggest concern is that USA landfills incinerate enough organic material each year to fill a line of 18 wheelers from New York City (NYC) to Los Angeles 10 times. Dowd mentioned a study done on composting to tackle global warming, reduction of landfill use and incinerators. Food scraps and yard material make up 30% of materials in landfills and paper, wood, and textiles make up another 29%. Other stuff that is compostable make up another 20%. Composting can support agricultural systems. A study found that 1/3 of top soil is already degraded. Supporting local community composting programs helps a lot.

Dowd spoke about what could be done to get this program started. Making composting material pickup cheaper than garbage pickup, selling the product. Requiring large producers of organic waste to bring to composting facilities and not landfills, encourage it at schools, and in backyards. On January 31 they met with Galla, Bahle and others and brought up possible locations of an old landfill or Deering's in southern Leelanau County. They looked at a parcel where there is a drive and is owned by state of Michigan. It has lots of beneficial locations for composting such as, access to state highway, decent road to cul de sac. He did some research on it and it was approved by Kasson Township for government activities.

Gale asked who at the state owns it? Dowd said they called the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and are waiting to hear back from Matt Fletcher at state. LaPorte said on this property, there is a huge square where clearcutting has occurred. It would be interesting to have a piece of property like that next to a site for composting. The County will be an important part of this whole project.

Overdier talked about tree waste, leaf bags full of twigs that have been taken to a site and burned. It's a carbon rich resource that could be used for bio-char. Bio-char is indigenous technology from amazon. Technology has been used for years. Bio-char is a stable material that lasts thousands of years. Tubular pores are left and it holds nutrients, gases, keeps CO2 from going into the atmosphere. Overdier reviewed the reasons to use Biochar with compost: odor control, GHG reduction, nutrient absorption, double the carbon sequestration, biodiversity increase. Bahle asked about biochar and open burning? Overdier said they have a lot of material and Gale said he has material from mattress recycling. Barry Krull is selling it with his compost and people are loving it. Palmer said right behind Glen's Landfill is an

old county run landfill that could be suitable for this. He wonders what the process is to make it biochar for the amount you need – a kiln? Overdier said there is a whole range of kilns. There is a group in Oregon using biomass plants. Deering said there is a place in Michigan that has some similar to Oregon-out of Marquette. Overdier said there is a group in Marquette that bought patents to make this stuff. Bahle said it might be interesting if there was a model with similar population like Leelanau County to see how it would apply, economically? Overdier said there is a whole range of people in the industry and academics looking at this right now. Some have a 10-year plan to do the research and answer the outstanding questions.

LaPorte one of the things that is interesting to know is it is a process to burn in a low oxygen environment. Open fire has high oxygen. Cut off that process and do a slow burn, low oxygen and know when to stop it. It saves carbon and you have a product that is all carbon and compact. What's also interesting is it can help clean our air. Munson has 6 hospitals and come up to about a 900-bed capacity and by taking those food scraps came up with 487 tons of waste, just by scraping plates. That can reduce greenhouse gas omissions that are not landfilled, by 64%. It can also prevent the most dangerous greenhouse gases: co2, methane, and nitrous oxide. Second thing composting can do is treat polluted water or prevent it. Composting can bring back all of those microorganisms, shredders, worms, millipedes, nematodes, nothing is wasted in nature. They keep the living soil. There is a theory now that soil is a living component because it needs air, water and needs to breathe.

LaPorte would like to ask the SWC to please allow them to continue to do some of this work in partnership with the County and several other non-profits in the ten-county area, and ask that they can put together a subcommittee to work on these issues and come up with goals for next phases. Maybe in next six months or so they can apply to FLOWS (for love of water) and create a partnership with the County and others for sustainable funds.

(A copy of the PowerPoint is available in the Planning & Community Development Office.)

Gale liked the idea of putting a facility like that with biochar next to a landfill. Has anyone done research on using the methane gas as a heat source for creating the biochar? LaPorte said it was not in their horizon right now

Bahle said the recycling program started in Leelanau County with a bunch of volunteers and semis and participants came by on Saturday and went up steps to dump their materials. This is the next step with some eager volunteers. Sharp asked if they are looking for a sub group? Bahle said in their goals they were talking about backyard composting. LaPorte said Sarna is the executive director at SEEDS. This was a 10-county composting project. They want to get more counties included and SEEDS is willing to help.

Discussion ensued on a few members volunteering to work with Dowd, LaPorte, and Overdier on composting. Gale, Sharp, Cavanaugh and Peterson were interested in biochar and composting workshops. SWC members will report back at a future meeting.

LaPorte asked about Deering's composting program. Deering said they moved most of their processing out of the yard in Kasson Township. It needs to be out of sight because of odor and amount of compostables in food waste that looks like trash blowing around. Gale said he looked at the area they discussed as well the old landfill area. The parcel in section 36 area is forested and they are clearcutting. Palmer met with a forester that was there before and doing it to manage wildlife. Palmer pointed out the location on map of the old county landfill.

LaPorte said there are a lot more issues with securing a site than anything else. Palmer said they need to be very, very clear on what they are asking for. Confusion will get you a no. Bahle said to get with members after the meeting to distribute information. Gale clarified that the SWC is an advisory to the board. Bahle thanked members for their presentation and to the public for attending.

COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Galla said a fence is needed for the recycling site at Buntings. They may need a special meeting to make a recommendation on that and take it to the County Board, as well as anything else that may come before the SWC.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

STAFF COMMENTS – None.

MEMBER/CHAIR COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.