

## MINUTES OF THE RECYCLING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE TOWN OF SILVER CITY, REGULAR MEETING

Held at Southwest Solid Waste Authority offices, Ridge Road landfill, Silver City, NM.

March 5, 2009

(Minutes prepared by committee member Richard Mahler)

Present: Terry Timme (Chair), Joseph Schindler, Richard Mahler, Alan Archer, Ramon Arroyo, Ann Alexander, C.J. Laws, Diane Temple. Absent: Deanna Mooney, George Llewellyn, Avery Gentle.

Call to order -

Chairperson Timme called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Approval of Minutes -

By acclamation, minutes of the January 22, 2009, meeting were approved as submitted by Terry.

Report from SWSWA -

Terry introduced the recently hired SWSWA general manager, C. J. Laws, who thanked committee members for their service and said he would "need some help" from them on recycling matters. C.J. talked about some of the problems facing recycling in Silver City currently: placement of dangerous materials in roll-offs (i.e. dynamite, blasting caps), low prices or lack of markets for recyclables, and lack of public understanding of the benefits of recycling (which results in low participation). C.J. also talked about a recent visit he made to landfills and recycling facilities in Los Alamos, Taos, and Santa Fe.

Ramon said the newly modified roll-off recycling bins have been working well, with much less trash and unwanted material deposited. He expects all remaining unpainted bins will be ready for painting by local children by May first, with all painting finished before school is out, thus completing the RAID grant. Ramon said the price paid for recycled cardboard is up slightly and other prices have been about the same. Glass and plastic are still not being purchased. C.J. indicated we have enough storage for now to stockpile this material.

## Old Business -

### A. Earth Day Collection Event

Terry said that, contrary to earlier reports, Earth Day will be celebrated at Penney Park again this year, on April 25. Between 25 and 30 groups will participate. The committee agreed to have a recyclables collection event from 10 to 2 that day, at a more prominent location than last year. Terry agreed to check out Diane's suggestion of using a lot near Belleza Salon. Ramon said that he and Albert would be willing to be on hand with trucks and bins for collection. Several committee members volunteered to assist as well. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

### B. Glass Recycling

Richard said he had received no response to e-mails he sent separately to City Manager Alex Brown and to public affairs at Holloman Air Force Base asked about the status of the glass crusher once suggested for donation to the city. C.J. suggested contacting the government's surplus property unit, which has a wide variety of items ready for donation. This might be a faster way, he said, of getting something like a glass crusher donated to Silver City.

### C. Viva Verde Expo

Richard reported on the upcoming Viva Verde Expo, to be held June 26-28 in Silver City and co-sponsored by the Gila Region Information Project and other organizations here and in Las Cruces. This is a series of educational events designed to promote "green" living and construction, with participation by local organizations, businesses, services, and individuals involved in environmentally sustainable activities. The committee endorsed the idea of having an information table at the event and organizing collection of recyclables. We will discuss this further at future meetings.

### D. Event Recycling

Richard said that the Mimbres Region Arts Council had contacted him and expressed their enthusiastic support for recycling at this year's Blues Festival, scheduled for Memorial Day weekend.

## New Business -

### A. "Scavenging" at Transfer Stations

C.J. discussed circumstances at the Cliff transfer station, where a SWSWA employee was threatened by a resident when the employee tried to enforce the anti-scavenging rule. The resident was trying to retrieve scrap metal being thrown away. Under state law, this activity is not allowed at public landfills and transfer stations, but enforcement has been lax. C.J. said his board of directors will discuss the matter at the board's next meeting, and asked for input from the committee. It was suggested that Habitat for Humanity be asked to provide "screeners" who would pull out usable material for donation to the group's ReStore, thus making it available to the public. The consensus seemed to be that there should be a way for safe, usable materials to be pulled aside in at least some situations.

### B. State Legislation

Terry, C.J., and Alan described pros and cons of various pieces of proposed state laws dealing with recycling and landfills. House Bill 548 and Senate Bill 2 were the primary topics and both are still in committee in Santa Fe. C.J. noted the possible impacts of these bills on the landfill operation and recycling programs throughout the state.

### C. Silver City Recycling Rate

C.J. asked what our current recycling rate is among city residents. Terry said that about 7 percent is diverted from the landfill by volume, according to the most recent estimate, but the actual rate of participation in recycling in Silver City is not known. The consensus is that it is much lower than we would like and all agreed that a stronger public education effort is needed to boost the numbers. Diane agreed to fund publication of 300 more information brochures for distribution at upcoming public events such as Earth Day.

### D. Plastic Bags in Recycling Bins

There was a brief discussion of the use of plastic bags to hold glass and paper in the curbside recycling bins. C.J. complained that such bags are a "horrible problem" because they fly all over the place. "I would like to get them out of the landfill," he said. Joseph noted that other recycling programs would be shocked that we encourage despot of plastic bags in our bins. Terry noted that such bags can be recycled at local stores, but participation is low. Ann suggested wider use of cloth bags as an alternative, or paper bags when available.

#### E. Lightbulb Recycling

Richard asked if there was any place to recycle old light bulbs, since several people had asked him about what to do with them. It was suggested that working bulbs be donated to the ReStore and others be thrown into the trash. Reportedly incandescent are not considered a significant hazard. Our local Ace Hardware, unfortunately, does not recycle CFL bulbs, as do many other stores in that chain.

#### F. José Barrios Trash Audit

Terry described a "trash audit" being conducted by 3rd-, 4th-, and 5th-grade students at José Barrios school. He will circulate details via e-mail.

#### Public Input -

There was no public input.

#### Next Meeting -

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 9, at 4 p.m., at the SWSWA offices on Ridge Road. Carpools will leave from the library on College Avenue between 3:30 and 3:45 p.m.

#### Adjournment -

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.