Comox Strathcona Waste Management

Minutes

REGIONAL SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Thursday, December 14, 2023, in the CVRD Civic Room at 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay, commencing at 10:33 am

PRESENT:

D. Baar	Campbell River
D. Birtch	Campbell River
J. Ellis	Courtenay
R. Rowe	CVRD Area B
L. Bryan	BCWMA
A. Kamran	Mowachaht/Muchalaht
R. Savey	Mowachaht/Muchalaht
K. Stubblefield	CVRD Area C
R. Telegus	Denman Island
K. Lukinuk	Hornby Island
W. Semmelink	Town of Comox
M. Stewart	SRD Area D
C. Thompson, Manager of Solid Waste Services	City of Courtenay
C. Perry, Engineering Manager	Town of Comox
A. Milwid, First Nations Liaison	SRD
M. Tatchell, Chief Administrative Officer	Village of Tahsis
K. Hamilton	Tavola Group
L. Eason, CSWM Community Educator	Consultant
M. Rutten, General Manager of Engineering Services	CVRD
V. Schau, Senior Manager of CSWM Services	CVRD
S. Willie, Manager of Solid Waste Planning & Policy Development	CVRD
S. Valdal, Services Coordinator - CSWM	CVRD
J. Ivan, Diversion and Operations Support Coordinator	CVRD
J. Stanger, Branch Assistant – Engineering Services	CVRD

ITEMS:

Review of Agenda and Minutes

M. Rutten acknowledged that the meeting is being hosted on the traditional unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, and the Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM) service area is located in the Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

The committee reviewed the minutes of the October 24, 2023, Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee (RSWAC) meeting, and no errors or omissions were noted. The advisory committee adopted the agenda for the meeting on December 14, 2023.

Roundtable of CWMA and other Solid Waste Related Stories

Introductions of new members, highlight learnings from the CWMA conference virtual attendance and discuss recent waste news from your community.

K. Lukinuk joined the meeting at 10:30 am, and M. Tatchell joined at 11:08 am.

Review of Themes from Step 2 Consultation and Board Input Step 1 and Step 2

V. Schau gave an overview of Step 1 and Step 2:

Step 1:

- Acknowledged support from L. Eason and K. Hamilton, the 'Weigh In On Waste' campaign, and public input.
- Highlighted high engagement in online surveys and a positive attitude towards recycling.
- Emphasized the goal to divert more from landfills.
- Discussed the need for better regulations, education, and awareness about recycling.
- Approved and expanded collection services to enhance facilities and convenience.
- Concerns were raised about the future of rural community collection services.
- Identified barriers from the survey: travel constraints, environmental impact, wildlife concerns, accessibility issues, repair knowledge, and storage challenges.

Step 2:

- Noted the community's desire for more information about recycling processes and materials.
- Recognized the role of manufacturers and retailers in waste management.
- Addressed concerns about affordability, especially in rural communities.
- Explored options like greater access, composting, free store, and free collection day events.
- Highlighted questions and issues regarding the implementation of an organics facility.
- CSWM Board's input: removal of construction and demolition waste from the waste stream, the role of private depots, education, enforcement of material bans, organics diversion, and waste stream licensing.

Advisory comments:

- R. Telegus asked about funding/grant opportunities for rural composting facilities.

- A federal grant for school waste reduction has been applied for, and the committee will receive updates on its progress.

Breakout Group Discussion: Urban Strategies for Waste Management

The committee broke into groups to discuss achieving the goals and guiding principles for Campbell River and the Comox Valley urban residents and how to engage in these strategies effectively.

Breakout Group Discussion Guidelines - Discuss barriers from the survey, including waste diversion, travel constraints, and carbon footprint. Consider concerns about attracting wildlife, nearby facilities, distance to recycling centers, and general accessibility issues such as age, health, and transportation limitations. Additionally, address repair knowledge gaps and storage issues.

Presentation of Urban Strategies

S. Willie reviewed the compiled input from members, discussing the ideas by categories described by the ministry.

Reduction and Reuse:

- Education initiatives for homeowners, building inspections, and demolition permit bylaws.
- Promoting small-scale renovations, contractor checklists and emphasizing life cycle costs.
- Encouraging consumers to voice concerns through social media and grassroots initiatives.
- Explore options for reusing materials and define customer sorting responsibilities.

Recycling:

- Solutions for flooring, both private and public, including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).
- Placing recycling bins at retailers and linking building permits to proof of waste diversion during renovations.
- Providing clear recycling guidelines through websites, apps, and phone support.
- Establishing a cloud-based system to determine where specific items can be recycled.
- Setting clear rules for waste-related permits in the Building Department.
- Improving access to depots and pop-ups for specific items.
- Addressing the lack of pickup service and accountability in multi-family settings.

Organics Management and Processing:

- Incentivizing high-value composting, especially in food rescue initiatives.

- Promoting mandatory recycling and organics for urban populations.
- Engaging family associations to increase awareness and demand for organics.
- Educating the community on invasive species management.

Residual Waste Management:

- Implementing facility licensing to reduce invasives.
- Considering a higher flat rate (minimum charge) to encourage waste diversion.
- Evaluating the use of tip fees to influence behaviour and increase diversion efforts.

Resource Recovery:

- No items were noted.

Supporting Activities:

- Developing a policy emphasizing education first and penalties second.
- Advocating for bans (foam & ICI) through political channels.
- Exploring enforcement tools while considering associated costs.
- Council decisions on extra enforcement staff and increased enforcement at curbside.
- Emphasizing accountability at the source and supporting education on the right to repair.
- Implementing mandatory diversion, waste staging, and enforcement measures.

K. Hamilton discussed the urban engagement strategies:

Community Engagement Strategies:

- Advocate for more community champions and a grassroots approach.
- Model the desired behaviour within the community.
- Utilize direct mail for effective communication with business and property owners.

Awareness Campaigns:

- Launch campaigns promoting recyclable packaging in stores.
- Educate the community about conscious decision-making.
- Use visuals to depict the impact of one week's groceries on garbage, recycling, and food waste.

Social Media Engagement:

- Employ paid targeting on platforms like Facebook.
- Engage with community-specific Facebook groups.
- Conduct contests, events, and pop-ups for resident education.

Input Methods:

- Conduct focus groups for single and multi-families.
- Use targeted surveys, being mindful of engagement fatigue.

Community Outreach:

- Engage with large groups at community events and recreation centers.

- Place messaging in high-traffic locations such as grocery stores.
- Organize landfill tours and disseminate information through schools and students.
- Incorporate competitions and contests to foster engagement.

Tailored Audiences:

- Make waste reduction easy for homeowners and small contractors.
- Collaborate with employers to communicate waste reduction initiatives to employees (e.g., DND, SD71, VIHA).
- Establish inter-municipal links to streamline communication and initiatives.

Advisory comments:

V. Schau – address engagement fatigue, consider collaborating with municipalities and identify opportunities for shared initiatives. Explore areas where responsibilities can be divided, allowing for efficient collaboration. Piggyback on established initiatives to maximize outreach and community involvement.

C. Perry – multi-faceted open houses.

L. Eason, R. Rowe and D. Baar – right to and access to repair, more skill-building workshops and education on repair.

Breakout Group Discussion: Rural Strategies for Waste Management

The committee broke into groups to discuss achieving the goals and guiding principles for rural residents in Strathcona Regional District and the Comox Valley electoral areas and how to engage in these strategies effectively.

Presentation of Rural Strategies

K. Hamilton presented and reviewed compiled input from members and identified gaps or outliers.

Recycling:

- Ensure easy access to recycling, including return options in shopping centers.
- Consider unique considerations for rural curbside and farm waste.
- Emphasize reduction, reuse, and neighborhood-based initiatives.
- Implement single-stream recycling for both depot and curbside.
- Provide curbside pickup for electronics, appliances, and large items in rural areas.

Resource Recovery:

- Focus on parts harvesting within a repair context.

Supporting Activities:

- Establish a central point of contact, a sustainability officer for electoral areas.
- Leverage social media engagement in rural areas.
- Establish fully enclosed volunteer-based free stores to reduce food waste and packaging.

- Provide First Nation support where applicable.
- Foster partnerships between remote First Nation communities to enhance diversion and reduce illegal dumping.
- Clearly define remote, rural, and limited-access communities.
- Conduct education mailouts with tax notices.
- Address the needs of year-round residents, tourists, and seasonal inhabitants.
- Implement beverage return programs with clear funding allocations.
- Emphasize collaboration and partnerships within communities.

Residual Waste Management:

- Use volume metrics in the absence of scales.
- Organize waste sheds instead of adhering strictly to municipal boundaries.
- Combat illegal dumping with pop-up depots and special events.
- Expand community cleanup events to include First Nation communities.

Reduction and Reuse:

- Establish sharesheds and share knowledge.
- Address the lack of recycling options in remote areas.
- Focus on supporting and educating for self-reliance.
- Promote local initiatives, including diverting all food waste back to the land.
- Conduct repair and diversion workshops at community halls.
- Explore taxation across electoral areas to fund increased accessibility.

Lack of Access in Remote Communities:

- Specifically target remote communities, including rural areas and islands, rather than a broader rural classification.

Advisory comments:
None.

K. Hamilton discussed the rural engagement strategies:

- Emphasize natural processes and prevention in waste generation, aligning with rural lifestyles like hunting.
- Encourage diverse partnerships, including local community groups and farming/industry associations.
- Provide education and supplies for the tourism sector, focusing on supporting businesses.
- Attract different demographics through initiatives like clothing swaps.
- Collaborate with associations supporting hard-to-employ individuals.
- Promote heavily in electoral areas, addressing the disconnect and clarifying associated services.
- Explore financial partnerships between rural, remote, and First Nation communities.
- Collaborate with community leaders to drive change.
- Focus on changing views on ownership and consumption through education.

- Recognize and support strong grassroots communities in smaller areas.
- Utilize online engagements and build contact lists for effective communication.
- Frame the following steps as part of an ongoing collective conversation.

Advisory comments:
R. Rowe - provide the actual cost to individuals. Present the costs of taking all actions, opting for mid-grade measures, and the cost of taking no action. Clearly outline the actual consequences of these three different levels.
L. Eason – keep food waste local; don't haul it out.
R. Telegus – community composting facility.
S. Valdal – insufficient resources, including both labour and funds. Standard solutions, like transportation, don't seem practical. Capital projects are more expensive; reconsider the approach.
D. Baar – resource recovery, repair cafes, parts harvesting.

Next Steps
The next meeting is via Zoom on February 15, 2024. Moving forward, meetings won't be of a hybrid format. Proceed with discussing the engagement plan for 2024. Initiate community stakeholder listening sessions, engaging in conversations similar to today's group discussions. Return to refine and narrow down potential solutions.

Wrap-Up
Updates on provincial projects: Starting December 20, 2023 BC is reducing single-use plastic waste. L. Eason has been preparing businesses in the community for this change. Disposable items like utensils, straws, napkins, condiments, lids, and sleeves are available only upon request. Wooden cutlery in composting is allowed, but plastic is prohibited. There are regulations regarding Organic Matter Recycling and concerns about PFAS substances. Contaminants in compostable facilities don't break down.

Advisory comments:
None.

V. Schau adjourned the meeting.

GENERAL:
The next Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee is scheduled for February 15, 2024, at 12:30 pm.

TERMINATION:
The meeting terminated at 3:23 pm.

Recorded by:

J. Stanger

Joanne Stanger
Branch Assistant – Engineering Services

Certified correct:

S. Willie

Sarah Willie
Manager of Solid Waste Planning and Policy Development