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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Zero Waste Task Force Minutes
February 6, 2014**

The Zero Waste Task Force met on Thursday, February 6, 2014 at 1:15 pm in Conference Room West of the County Outreach Building, 2550 N. Annie Glidden Road. In attendance were Zero Waste Task Force Members Steve Challgren, Deirdre Davis, Connie Handel, Mike Hey, Marc Johnson, Ken Koch, Greg Maurice, Roy Plote, Jerry Smith, Christel Springmire and Steve Wolf. Task Force member absent: John Emerson. DeKalb County Health Department staff present: Cindy Capek and Jane Lux.

Approval of Agenda

Marc Johnson moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Christel Springmire. Marc Johnson moved to amend the agenda and to add his recommendations on Ways to Implement Zero Waste under Old Business, Review of Zero Waste Task Force Concepts Generated by the Task Force, seconded by Jerry Smith, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Steve Wolf moved to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2014 meeting, seconded by Greg Maurice. The motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence

None.

Old Business

Cindy Capek noted that the ideas generated by the Task Force were updated to include the January discussions. She asked for comments or additions to the list. There were none. Marc Johnson was asked to present the Zero Waste concepts he recommended. A detailed list of these concepts was distributed to the Task Force.

Marc explained that he would like to see a county wide Zero Waste goal by 2035, noting that the Task Force was charged in determining whether or not a Zero Waste Plan should move forward. He also felt that progress should be tracked monthly; and that the DeKalb County Health Department website was a good vehicle for this purpose. He reviewed the four R's of Zero Waste: Refuse, Reuse, Recycle and Recover and noted that the term was often confusing to

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the public. Zero Waste is considered by many to only include recycling when in fact this should be the last option chosen. Marc continued with his recommendations.

He suggested that Zero Waste Policies should be institutionalized across all DeKalb County departments to include paperless systems, controlled waste at public parks; exploring the feasibility of a material recovery facility (MRF) and that other governmental entities be encouraged to adopt Zero Waste Policies. He suggested that the County Board adopt a resolution to support adoption of Zero Waste principals at the municipal level of government.

Marc commented that all public events, festivals, etc. should have recycling and that any messaging from the County government support Zero Waste. He would like to see every school lunch room and class room have recycling containers for the collection of food and other waste.

Should a material recovery facility (MRF) be considered; it was suggested that municipalities who utilize the facility be given a discounted rate. He presented options for funding such a facility via a voter approved increase in sales tax as well as the sale of recycled waste to private entities. Marc also suggested looking for grant opportunities.

Greg Maurice asked for clarification on funding regarding taxing the waste hauler or the consumer. Marc said that if the hauler had increased taxes; these would more than likely be passed off to the consumer. He said it was important to have the public support the initiative and an approved referendum would be a good indicator.

Jerry Smith asked if we currently compost yard waste. This is currently being done; the challenge is contamination. Mike Hey explained a pilot program with Jewel Food as well as Costco for food waste composting. He explained that controlling contamination for residential customers was very difficult and hard to be "cost neutral".

Marc went on to highlight his recommendations for the business community. He suggested the use of incentives for businesses that have best practices such as not using plastic bags as well as a tax disincentive for those who do not make any effort regarding recyclable materials. He explained that a county wide ordinance be implemented to require recycling containers as well as food composting containers in addition to regular waste. Also, the waste evaluation programs should be promoted and some form of recognition to companies for best practices could be implemented. Roy Plote said that consideration should also be given to those businesses who have implemented zero waste principles on their own.

Marc discussed the concept of "Pay as You Throw". He supported this program for apartment complexes that do not recycle and said that this could be expanded to businesses or residents. He also discussed expanded and ongoing education for the public.

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Marc then went on to say that in order for a Zero Waste Policy to be effective the following would need to occur: (1) the ability to secure food composting services for all county residents, (2) A county run material recovery facility (MRF), and (3) a referendum to support funding initiatives.

To summarize, Marc said that while many of the concepts presented were not politically or economically feasible, they were what he would like to see done.

The Task Force thanked Marc for his recommendations noting that they would be considered with all recommendations.

There was also discussion if the Task Force supported the adoption of Zero Waste as a guiding principle. There was consensus and the question will be placed on the March agenda.

The draft article for the County Board President's column was discussed. Christel clarified that not all trash is disposed of in the county landfill but may go to other sites. Jerry Smith asked if there should be a call to action in the article. Marc explained that the opportunity for several columns and that the first one was simply to be an introductory piece. The words four easy steps should change to ways. Lastly, the group felt the phrase shocking statistic should be removed since it was somewhat vague having not been defined in the context of the column. All changes would be incorporated prior to distribution. The Task Force agreed that any reaction to the column should be directed to the County Board Chair and then forwarded to the Task Force.

New Business

Christel Springmire reported her findings regarding the review of municipal rules, regulations and ordinances for recycling. She explained that municipalities do not have these rules and regulations on the books, and that trash pickup is defined by a number of ways to include contracts with municipalities or franchise agreements. In a contractual arrangement the municipalities negotiate the contract and determine the guidelines for the resident and in the second, the individual would work directly with the hauler. Generally most municipalities will have language in their ordinances requiring the removal of trash within a specified time frame, but they were generally on the books to control nuisance situations. If a contract or franchise agreement did not include recycling, the public still has the opportunity to independently recycle. The legality of imposing recycling on communities was also discussed with the Task Force favoring a voluntary approach to recycling. Ken Koch asked if any communities do their own waste collection. Mike Hey responded that Lake Forrest runs their own operations and that the residents had extremely high expectations regarding service.

The existing Task #4 of the Solid Waste Plan was reviewed by staff. Christel explained that oil recycling was occurring at businesses throughout the county and that several latex based

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recycling programs were held. She explained that due to lack of funding from the Illinois EPA, the ability to offer programs to recycle what is commonly known as “orphan waste” has been hampered. Very often, individuals will disguise the waste and place it in the trash. She commented on various recycling programs that were held over the years to include latex paint, tires, electronics and white goods.

Jerry Smith asked if recycling of these specialty items could occur in neighborhoods at specific times of the year. Mike Hey explained the process, to include specialized equipment and staff noting that this would be cost prohibitive.

One possible funding opportunity to expand programs would be to utilize funding designated in the new Waste Management host agreement. Mike Hey explained that you cannot host an event and then transport to an EPA designated collection site since these items are highly regulated by the EPA. Christel explained that for the last household waste recycling event the contractor submitted a \$70,000 claim to the EPA. She noted that a large number of the phone calls she receives are for disposal of orphan material. Mike Hey explained that this should not be an issue for business since they are regulated by the Illinois EPA, but not the individual residences.

Steve Challgren asked what kind of budget we have. Ms. Lux was in the audience and responded that the current agreement provides approximately \$90,000 in tipping fees to fund the entire program, and that this amount has continued to decline. He asked if we make recommendations, how programs will be funded. Steve said that the Task Force was generating great ideas, but in order to be successful the public would need to financially support the program through additional fees and charges or increased taxes. Mike Hey said that here were also educational opportunities that may be utilized that do not have large costs such as reducing consumption levels so there is not waste.

Christel highlighted the success of the electronics recycling program which transpired from single collections at the county to collections throughout the county on specific days and locations. It was approximately two years ago that the municipalities agreed to the concept and it has remained very successful. County residents can access any location; however having collections in their community has been beneficial.

The challenges of medication collection and disposal were reviewed and it was noted that there was a state-wide initiative underway to try to work with local pharmacies. Lastly, the concept of operating a recycling drop-off site had been discussed in Marc’s recommendations.

Cindy asked the Task Force if they would be willing to review the remaining tasks in the next two meetings in order that we can work on recommendations. She also recommended that individually they begin to prioritize those items to be included in the report from the Task Force.

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Marc said he would research costs for a county wide composting site as well as how these sites are funding. Ms. Lux said she could provide the budget information as well as the amount to be allocated to the department from the new host agreement with Waste Management.

The Recycle Banks program was briefly discussed noting that this was an excellent resource for education. It is currently being offered in DeKalb and is a rewards program that provides points based on neighborhood recycling rates. Points can be redeemed for a variety of coupons.

Persons to Be Heard from the Floor

None.

Adjournment

Mark Johnson moved to adjourn, second by Steve Wolf at 2:55 pm. The next meeting will be held on March 6, 2014, 1:15 pm, in Conference Room West of the County Outreach Building, 2550 N. Annie Glidden Road. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Capek
Zero Waste Task Force Facilitator