

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Zero Waste Task Force at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Zero Waste Task Force Minutes  
January 9, 2014**

The Zero Waste Task Force met on Thursday, January 9, 2014 at 1:15 pm in Conference Room West of the County Outreach Building. 2550 N. Annie Glidden Road. In attendance were Zero Task Force Members Steve Challgren, Deirdre Davis, John Emerson, Mike Hey, Marc Johnson, Ken Koch, Greg Maurice, Roy Plote, Christel Springmire and Steve Wolf. Task Force members absent: Connie Handel, John Laskowski and Jerry Smith. 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 John Emerson. Marc Johnson moved to amend the agenda and to add discussion of press release under New Business, seconded by John Emerson, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Christel Springmire moved to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2013 meeting, seconded by Roy Plote. The motion carried unanimously.

**Correspondence**

Cindy Capek noted that several email correspondence items were distributed at the last meeting. A new email was received from Ron Matekaitis requesting that the Task Force consider curbside recycling for unincorporated households.

All suggestions directed to the Zero Waste Task Force will be reviewed and considered as we move forward with recommendations.

**Old Business**

The committee was asked to review Tasks 13, 14 and 1 of the Existing Solid Waste Plan. Prior to discussion Christel Springmire provided an overview of the status of these tasks. Task #14 was no longer a discussion item. Task #13, items one through five involved tracking and reporting and that they are on-going or completed. Christel recommended that as part of her

annual reporting the Task Force incorporate a measurement to track the landfill rate and to set goals for achieving these rates. An example might be to establish a certain percentage to reduce the amount of waste each year, and to increase this amount thereafter. Task #15 was either on/going or complete with the exception of 1-5. Staff has not participated in public outreach efforts such as fairs or festivals; however they do work closely with the coordinators to encourage recycling at the events. This was due to the lack of available resources.

Cindy Capek distributed a summary of the concepts and discussion items that were generated by the Task Force at previous meetings. She explained that the concepts could help provide a framework for discussion and as the existing tasks were reviewed, Task Force discussions and recommendations would be incorporated into this working document. She noted that the Task Force was encouraged to add any additional items and or suggestions to the summary. Each topical area was reviewed.

The first concerned Measurement Tools and Evaluation Criteria. As previously discussed Christel Springmire suggested that a calculated annual landfill rate be include in the annual report. Mike Hey noted that this was easy to track since we know where waste is coming from and can compare this to the population being served. Marc Johnson suggested more frequent reporting of this rate and informing the public so they have a “scorecard” of where we are and where we need to be. Christel explained that the county does an annual survey and the feasibility of obtaining data on a monthly basis would need to be explored with all of the waste haulers. There was additional discussion on whether monthly reporting would have significant fluctuations, seasonal variations, and if individuals will remain incentivized to recycle should landfill rates decline. Finally, the public would need to understand how the rate was calculated.

Michael Haines asked if he could speak or if it was necessary to wait until the portion of meeting for comments from the floor. The Task Force was in agreement to allow him to address the group at this time. Michael asked how the amount of waste per person per day as reported in the media was calculated and if it included commercial waste? It was explained that it was the total tons of waste from DeKalb County to all landfills divided by the population divided by 365 days; and that this included commercial waste. He expressed his concern that the Task Force considers commercial waste in their discussions since this had a major impact on the amount of waste being generated.

Ken Koch commented that any waste reduction would be welcomed because it resulted in less volume at the landfill. Mike Hey explained that the current agreement guarantees 40 years before capacity is reached.

Cindy Capek explained that the commercial waste discussions would come up under Tasks 6 and 7 and will be addressed in depth at that time. It was also suggested that we may wish to look at our reporting regarding residents and commercial entities. Some communities choose to look at waste reduction as the “Total Community” and not separate these entities with the goal of everyone reducing waste. Lastly, rental properties were mentioned and whether or not landlords should be responsible for offering recycling.

The Task Force then moved to review the remaining concepts and discussion items. Several ideas were presented. With regard to opportunities to improve our “Scorecard”, Ken Koch

suggested working with retailers and businesses to evaluate packaging and other materials that contain contaminated products and to discourage use as well as looking at incineration or gasification. Styrofoam was brought up by the group; Ken explained that this is a product that can now be safely burned since the CFG's were no longer an additive in the product. DART, maker of Styrofoam products does provide recycling opportunities at their location however any food containers must be washed and peanut packaging is not accepted. The Recycle Bank Program which provides points for recycling by neighborhoods was reviewed. This is being introduced in select neighborhoods in DeKalb. It is similar to a rewards card and incentivizes recycling through gift cards and coupons. Cindy Capek suggested additional promotion of the program.

Ken Koch also commented that we educate retailers on avoiding the sale of certain materials such as PVC.

With regard to education, the Task Force talked about whom the target audience was and the process for changing behaviors so the recycling is adopted by the entire community. The difficulty of getting students to recycle was raised, having landlords be more responsible and provide recycling opportunities; business participation and the general public participation in recycling were discussed. Incentives as well as pay as you go and penalties for not recycling were brought up. The introduction of the large recycling bins in DeKalb was mentioned as an incentive since it made it easier to recycle with wheeled totes, one container, and concessions for those who may need assistance such as seniors or the disabled.

Cindy Capek asked if there were any other comments prior to moving to new business. Ken Koch asked that with long range opportunities, gas suppliers be added to the list.

### **New Business**

Tasks 2, 3, and 5 were addressed. Christel Springmire gave an overview of the status of the tasks. She explained that regarding Task 2, the county had no authority over private business but did offer "waste audits" at no cost. A waste audit is a review of the business by our staff to provide a fresh set of eyes regarding current practices. The last time this was done was seven years ago.

Steve Challgren talked about the audit and training program Waste Management provided Ideal Industries to improve their practices and ultimately reduce costs. Mike said that this program was free to business. They also had a Green Squad that could provide an evaluation.

Cindy Capek suggested that we could promote this program and similar programs provided by other companies to assist in our educational efforts.

Christel said that Task 3 may have opportunities for improvement. She suggested enhancing opportunities for material exchanges for items such as white goods as well as promoting freecycling which are electronic swap boards for the exchange of a variety of materials. She explained that she contacted school districts at the end of the year to encourage recycling of

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items vacated in school lockers. The NIU student population might also be attracted to freecycling.

Task 5 involved rural collections. It was explained that curbside recycling is currently not available in rural communities and residents must bring their items to drop-off centers. There are two rural locations, one in Kingston and the other in Somonauk Township. Operating hours are 8am-Noon, and they are supervised (volunteers or the by the site). Waste Management picks up at no cost.

The group talked about the barriers to adding rural recycling: finding sites, staffing, equipment needs (either two compartment trucks or a second truck on the route), number of individuals who might recycle, etc. Promoting the existing locations was also reviewed and it was suggested that this be expanded to include promotion on tax bills, the county website as well as the individual municipalities.

The Task Force was asked if they had any additional comments. The concept of promoting Greener Business was discussed utilizing audits, challenges, and recognition programs via local Chambers, the EDC or other opportunities.

Marc Johnson presented the group with the offer by County Board Chair Metzger to promote the activities of the Zero Waste Task Force in his monthly article which is featured in the Midweek, the Valley Life, and County Board website and distributed to the radio media. Mark volunteered to craft a news story that will include the goals and objectives of the Task Force, membership make up, timeline, what the public can do to contribute to Zero Waste as well as their opportunities to provide input. Marc will craft the message which will be distributed electronically to the entire group for review prior to publication.

### **Persons to Be Heard from the Floor**

Cindy Capek asked if there were any other comments from the floor. Michael Haines reiterated his concern regarding the amount of waste generated by commercial entities. He encouraged the Task Force to take a top down approach (industrial waste, municipal practices and policies) and not the bottom up (individual residents) explaining that this may be a more effective approach to recycling. He mentioned there are existing ordinances, policies etc. which may need to be reviewed at the community level as well as Northern Illinois University.

Mark Johnson reminded the Task Force that Gary Hanson, County Administer had informed the Task Force that we have authority over individual municipalities but we prefer a collaborative approach with units of government on policy issues.

The Task Force asked Christel Springmire to research the municipalities with regard to their existing policies.

**Adjournment**

John Emerson moved to adjourn, second by Steve Wolf at 2:55 pm. The next meeting will be held on February 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

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