

*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  
May 1, 2014**

The Zero Waste Task Force met on Thursday, May 1, 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, John Emerson, Connie Handel, Mike Hey, Marc Johnson, Ken Koch, Greg Maurice, Jerry Smith, Christel Springmire and Steve Wolf. Task Force members absent: Deirdre Davis, Brian Gregory and Roy Plote. DeKalb County Health Department staff present: Cindy Capek and Jane Lux. Guests: Matt Hernandez, Waste Management.

**Approval of Agenda**

Marc Johnson moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Ken Koch. The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Marc Johnson moved to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2014 meeting, seconded by John Emerson. The motion carried unanimously.

**Correspondence**

A report on Southern DeKalb County Waste Services prepared by Task Force Member Steve Wolf was distributed to the membership. Steve highlighted the report to include the primary provider and their services noting that Community Disposal and Complete Sanitation had no interest in home compositing due to the expense.

Jerry Smith asked if a matrix could be developed identifying each of the communities in DeKalb County, who was providing trash removal, a detail of what the service included as well as the cost. He felt this would be beneficial as the Task Force begins to craft their recommendations. Christel Springmire indicated that she could prepare most of this information for the next meeting; however obtaining costs might be challenging. Ken Koch noted that it would be interesting to see how cost varied between communities that had franchise agreements versus those that do not and speculated that those with agreements would be more economical.

The Task Force thanked Steve for preparing the report.

**Old Business**

1. Residential Organics: Matt Hernandez provided an overview of the residential organic recycling program that is being tested in Oak Park. He explained the program is

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voluntary and initially began as a pilot program with approximately 150 to 200 households participating in 2012. In 2013 the number has grown to 700 households. He estimated that Oak Park had approximately 11,000 total units. He said there were two ways of implementing the program: voluntary participation or mandatory participation.

Matt distributed material detailing the pilot program, timeline, budget, material on the Kitchen Collector unit, and the promotional piece that was made available to the residents. He highlighted the need to start with a pilot program utilizing a diverse neighborhood. It was important to have a community member or staff champion for the program in the beginning and into the future for sustainability. He explained that the Oak Park Program was in its infancy and would not have been successful without the initiative generated by the Environmental Director from Oak Park. He highlighted various educational meetings held with the community as well as programs in the school cafeteria to educate youth on how to properly dispose of food waste. He also explained that they have developed a relationship with grocery stores to increase volume throughout the year and in particular in the winter months to strengthen the ability to process food waste during periods when grass clippings were not being composted.

The Committee asked about public support or resistance as well as challenges for organic waste recycling. Matt explained that the success of the pilot was driven by the commitment of staff, securing grant funding to provide incentives, education, and addressing winter concerns relative to the absence of yard waste. He noted that addressing the end product (compost), was key, and trying to find ways to introduce compost as a “marketable” product in the community. Various fundraising and community projects were presented.

Mike Hey explained that the major problem with residential organic recycling was making sure the public was disposing this material into compostable plastic bags which meet the correct standards and which are relatively expensive. The other option is to just collect the waste in a household container which requires regular cleaning. He has found that the public often purchases “biodegradable” bags that are not the same as compostable bags and they contaminate the landfill.

There was discussion about the history of recycling and increased success when the public no longer had to separate or clean materials. When asked where the waste industry was regarding organics, Mike said that the industry continues to work on this and realizes that there is a need to make it easy for the public as well as cost neutral to be successful.

Other barriers included interior and exterior space for containers in commercial facilities, education of employees, as well as corporate philosophy regarding recycling.

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**New Business**

1. 2013 Solid Waste Annual Report: Christel Springmire provided a power point overview of the 2013 Solid Waste Annual Report which was previously presented to the DeKalb County Board. She commented on the 51% Recycling Rate for 2013 noting the rate was consistent with the past few years when construction debris was removed from the calculation. Christel explained the standard industry formula utilized for calculating these rates, as well as the new measurement of landfill rate of 4.26 pounds per person per day. The percentage of various waste materials was reviewed as well as a historical perspective from 2005 to present. She reviewed the final disposal location of DeKalb County waste noting that approximately 20% was deposited outside of the county landfill resulting in lost tipping fees. This was due to where haulers were choosing to deposit their waste. Christel said that she would email the report to the Task Force.

2. Prioritization of Goals and Objectives: The members were asked to select five items from a list of twenty-eight priority concepts to move forward as recommendations. A rank order of these concepts will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.

**Persons to Be Heard from the Floor**

None.

**Adjournment**

Christel Springmire moved to adjourn, second by Greg Maurice at 2:45 pm. The next meeting will be held on July 1, 2014, 1:15 pm, in the Conference Room West of the County Outreach Building, 2550 N. Annie Glidden Road. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cindy Capek  
Zero Task Force Facilitator