

**Charleston County  
Green Ribbon Committee  
October 31, 2008**

**Members Present:** Jeff Baxter, Laura Cabiness, Alec Cooley, David Crutchfield, Scott Fennell, Herb Fraser-Rahim, Rahim Karriem, Louis Mintz, Renee Patey, Sue Schweikart, Linda Lovvorn Tucker, Art von Lehe, John Votaw

**Members Absent:** Jody Peele, Carl Voelker

**Welcome:** Charleston County Council Members Joe McKeown and Colleen Condon welcomed the new committee members, expressed their appreciation for their service and offered their support to the members as they tackle the solid waste issues of our county.

**Introductions**

Jennifer Miller, Deputy County Administrator Operations introduced the County staff that will be working with the committee. Cathy Ruff, Director of the Greenbelt Programs will be coordinating the work of the committee and facilitating the work with the consultant; Gregg Varner, Director of Solid Waste; Benjamin Blanks, Deputy Director; John Foster, Manager of the Recycling Center as well as Teresa Martin and Jenny Bloom.

Ms. Miller explained a committee was formed to review the proposals submitted for the solid waste consulting services. The committee unanimously recommended Kessler Consulting, Inc. from Florida. Ms. Miller introduced Mitch Kessler, President of Kessler Consulting, who will be serving as the Project Officer for the County's project.

Mr. Kessler expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work on this project. Since this was the inaugural meeting, Mr. Kessler requested the members introduce themselves and give input on what are the most important solids waste needs in our area and any barriers needing to be addressed.

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Solid Waste Issues</b>
Jeff Baxter, Director of Development with the Noisette Project	Interest in sustainability and how it ties into the real estate business; would like to see waste reduced and increased opportunities for organic waste and compost programs; reuse of construction and demolition (C&D) waste; need to involve citizens and business in recycling
Laura Cabiness – Director of Public Services for city of Charleston	Interest in effective waste collections; sustainability; building inspections; improving business recycling especially downtown since storage space is limited;
Alec Cooley, Project Manager for the National Recycling Coalition	Would like to see the development of an integrated and efficient approach to waste management; divert as much waste as possible; obstacles include making public aware if there is a change in overall service and to get their buy-in
David Crutchfield, Mechanical Engineer and LEED Certified	Sustainable buildings; separating waste streams during construction so as to not waste resources; largest obstacle will be the costs involved and how to address the resistance to any increased costs

Scott Fennell – President and Owner of Carolina Waste Services	Opportunities exist for recycling, especially for C&D waste; obstacles include the litigious process involved in opening a land fill and the costs of recycling
Herb Fraser-Rahim, SC Environmental Engineer	Concerned about the effects on the community and the impacts on the environment; need to educate communities as well as gather their input so that the committee can work as an advocate for them; also need to address regional issues
Rahim Karriem, President of the Union Heights Community Council	Concerned about the incinerator's effects on surrounding communities; committee needs to understand the impacts on the citizens, especially the elderly who are facing health issues
Louis Mintz – Environmental and Safety Manager with CR Bard	Concerns include the environmental issues and how they effect the public and the future of the area; need a regional solution, especially regarding the user fees and how it impacts businesses in different counties
Renee Patey – Sustainability Institute	Interested in sustainability; economic development through building green industries; improving quality of life; lowering the environmental impact; need public education and policy development
Sue Schweikart – SC Registered Professional Engineer	Need to encourage reuse and place emphasis on public education to help them understand all aspects of recycling and user fees; need to understand needs of county in respect to the urban, suburban and rural areas
Linda Lovvorn Tucker – Administrator of city of Isle of Palms	Would like to see the creation of a system that is a model for others; obstacles will be cost and behavior modification; should not underestimate how much the citizens want to be a part of improving the system
Art von Lehe – Coastal Conservation League	Interested in energy issues; need to consider both the economic and human factors related to solid waste management; need to look at how other states are managing solid waste and think outside the box; need efficient inter-jurisdictional collaboration
John Votaw, Southeastern Plastics Recovery	Need to dispel the myth that recycling is free and educate the public to the actual costs of recycling; interested in Construction and Demolition Material Recycling Facilities (MRF) and waste-to-energy facilities

Ms. Miller explained that the county currently has three facilities: the Bees Ferry Landfill, the Incinerator and the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) as well as a piece of property in the southern part of the county that could be used as a future landfill. She further explained that one of the initial charges is to inform Council whether it will be possible to reduce the waste stream enough to close the incinerator. This recommendation must be provided to Council within 120 days. The timeline is necessary because the contract for the incinerator will end on December 31, 2009.

Initially the plan was to organize the Green Ribbon Committee during the second phase of the process, but Council decided to bring the committee together now so they could be involved from the beginning.

Ms. Miller explained that phase one of the consultant's scope of work includes an analysis of county's system and then present that to the committee.

Mr. Kessler then introduced Art Braswell, sub-consultant on the project. Mr. Braswell retired from DHEC where he supervised the writing of the State's Solid Waste Management Plan and reviewed the plans from all the counties in the state. He has extensive knowledge of the state's regulatory requirements and the necessary components of county plans.

Mr. Kessler provided background information on his career in solid waste. He explained that at the beginning of his career he was involved in the process of citing a Waste-to-Energy facility and though it never got cited he was exposed to all the issues that are being faced in our county. Mr. Kessler also worked with a company in Canada that began curb-side recycling and saw cutting-edge work with that organization. He then worked with a company involved in composting of organic waste. Now with Kessler Consulting, Inc. the company is focused on the planning side of solid waste management. The company is working with 18 counties and 7 cities in Florida. They have projects in Denver, Massachusetts and North Carolina.

Kessler Consulting Inc. consists of 15 people that only do waste reduction, recycling, and solid waste planning. They do not do engineering or permitting work. It's a team of planners that focus on sustainability, waste reduction, greening and the most economical and environmentally sound way to handle solid waste.

Mr. Kessler assured the committee members that the issues they have raised are common, such as C&D waste disposal and recycling, green buildings and sustainability. He then directed the committee members to submit written "votes" on what they think should happen in the county. They could either vote: "landfill", "waste-to-energy", "both", or "neither."

### **Review of Materials**

Ms. Ruff reviewed the materials contained in the binders provided for the committee members. She noted that the binder included draft Rules and Procedures for the committee and requested that the committee members review this information prior to the next meeting. She also instructed the members to submit any information, requests or suggestions for Mr. Kessler to her and she will insure that it is forwarded to him in a timely manner.

Committee members requested that they be notified of the time commitment for the meetings so they could schedule accordingly. Ms. Ruff ensured the members the information will be communicated for all future meetings.

At this time the committee took a 10 minute break.

### **Next Steps**

Following the break, the committee re-convened and held discussion on the next steps of the committee. The following list was compiled as a result of the discussion:

- Synopsis of the County' current solid waste system including:
  - An explanation of the user fees
  - Is the incinerator in compliance with federal and state regulations
  - List of community concerns
  - Transportation costs
- Overview of the Waste-to-Energy (incinerator) contract
- Regulatory overview
- What would a "cleaner" Waste-to-Energy (incinerator) look like

## **Public Comment**

Christine Cooley requested the committee consider the following:

- Reducing service because some households do not need bulk trash pick-up every week
- Recycling user fee for businesses – look at distribution of money
- Encourage composting, especially of food waste
- Need transfer facility
- Address leaking trucks and those trucks that dump liquids in ditches and areas outside of the solid waste facilities
- Diversion rate
- Bans on disposal
- C & D recycling facility
- Municipal cooperation

Wilbur Johnson addressed the committee as a representative of the area around the Shephard Tract where the County owns land that could be used for a future landfill. Mr. Johnson requested the committee consider the following:

- The Shephard tract is surrounded by wetlands that would be affected by the development of a landfill
- Investigate whether the property is being rezoned
- Encouraged at least one committee member to visit the site
- Address tri-county issues

Mr. Johnson also provided his phone number and that of Maggie Ridge if any committee members have questions.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:00 am – Noon on Friday, December 12, 2008.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.