

IONIA COUNTY SOLID WASTE PLANNING COMMITTEE

August 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Vice Chairman Clare Cowell called the meeting to order at 10:03 am in the Board Room of the County Administration Building, 101 West Main Street, Ionia.

Roll call revealed the following committee members present:

Al Almy, representing the General Public
Clare Colwell, representing Township Governments
Melissa Eldridge, representing Environmental Interest Groups
Lynn Mason, representing the General Public
Mark Novak, representing the Solid Waste Industry
Gary Pitsch, representing the Solid Waste Industry
Rob Weick, representing the Solid Waste Industry

Also present was Jason Eppler, Interim County Administrator; Sarah Osburn, Cohl, Stoker, Toskey, County Counsel; and several members of the public

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Committee Vice Chairman Colwell reviewed the agenda with the Committee. After review, it was moved by Member Eldridge, seconded by Member Pitsch to approve the agenda for the August 9, 2022 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Vice Chairman Colwell reviewed the minutes of the July 19, 2022 Committee meeting and noted a couple of corrections to the spelling of the names of meeting attendees. After review, it was moved by Member Almy, seconded by Member Pitsch to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2022 meeting as corrected. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Committee Vice Chairman Colwell called for Public Comment.

Several members of the public offered comments regarding proposed amendments to the County's Solid Waste Plan concerning the possible expansion of the Pitsch Landfill in the northwest area of the County. Concerns were also shared regarding a proposal by a crop farmer in the vicinity of the landfill to install a large irrigation well and whether the well would "draw" water from below the landfill and thereby contaminate area drinking water wells. Comments were also offered regarding reports available on the State of Michigan website concerning on-going sampling/testing/monitoring at the Pitsch Landfill.

BUSINESS

1. Review Updated Materials Submitted by Pitsch Companies: Member Pitsch shared with the Committee an aerial/boundary map that he had prepared of the landfill property. He explained that currently waste is being disposed of in Cell #7 and that his company has approval to construct one additional cell (proposed Cell #8) which should accommodate waste until 2030. In reviewing the map with the Committee, he identified the proposed area of expansion (west of the current cells) and noted that the expansion does not cross township lines (expansion would be entirely within Orleans Township). He noted an existing wetland on the area of the property where the proposed expansion is to occur and the fact that the State will require the construction of a new wetland in another area of the property.

The Committee discussed what environmental studies/reports the State will require in determining whether to permit an expansion. The Committee also discussed the types of waste currently accepted at the Pitsch Landfill and the counties of origin. The Committee also discussed what Pitsch Companies can do to promote recycling/accept recyclables in the County. The grinding (rather than compacting) of construction debris was discussed as a possible option for increasing the amount of waste that the currently approved cells can accommodate.

2. Review of Expansion, Enforcement, Tipping Fees Sections of the Current Plan: The Committee discussed amendments that the County/Committee would like to see made to the plan. The items discussed included an increase in the tipping fees received by both the County and Orleans Township; options for enforcement of plan provisions/requirements (ordinance v. contract); and recycling options. Vice Chairman Colwell asked Committee members, between now and the next meeting, to develop their own list of items that they would like to have discussed and possibly included in an amended plan.
3. Set Next Meeting Date/Time: Vice Chairman Colwell announced that the next meeting of the Solid Waste Planning Committee will be Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 10:00 am in the Board Room of the County Administration Building.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Committee Vice Chairman Colwell called for Public Comment.

Christy Valentine shared with the Committee efforts on the part of the Montcalm County Solid Waste Committee to improve recycling options in Montcalm County. She also suggested that the Ionia County Solid Waste Planning Committee meet on a regular basis.

Kristy Wall stated that waste haulers need to make sure that recyclables get used as intended rather than be landfilled.

John Vriese referenced likely air quality violations from the existing Pitsch Landfill.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Member Mason, seconded by Member Eldridge to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 am.
MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jason Eppler
Recording Secretary