



## Environmental and Energy Stewardship Subcommittee

200 College Street, Room 310

October 21, 2022

### Meeting Minutes

#### Subcommittee Members Present

Chairman Newman, Commissioner Sloan, Commissioner Wells, Maggie Ullman

#### Staff Members Present

Sybil Tate, Jeremiah LeRoy, Jennifer Harrison, Ashley Featherstone, Dane Pederson, Kristy Smith, Casi Lohmeyer, Jessica Silver, Jackie Hamstead, Max Taintor, Rafael Baptista, Michael Frue, Kiera Bulan (City of Asheville)

Commissioner Sloan called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

#### Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Commissioner Wells made a motion to approve the October 21, 2022, agenda with amendment for Green Bank discussion if time allowed. The motion passes with vote. Minutes from the September meeting will be sent out for review, along with October minutes, prior to the next subcommittee meeting.

#### Public Comment

Mandy Helwig attended as a member of public at the invitation of Commissioner Wells. She is an Environmental Attorney with an interest in water quality.

#### Waste Audit Outcomes

- Goal is to ID opportunities to divert waste to extend life of landfill and divert GHGs
- Partnered with SCS consulting firm
- Methods:
  - Sorted items that were landfill bound. Not recycling or compost.
  - Manual sort with exception of bulky item sort which was done visually.
  - 45 samples, 214 lbs. per sample on average
  - Waste grouped into four source categories: Buncombe County residential, Buncombe County commercial, City of Asheville residential, and City of Asheville commercial
- Organics made up the highest percentage of the waste stream across all four source categories
  - Commercial compost hauling services are limited to the city, likely accounts for higher amounts of organics in unincorporated areas
  - The majority of compostable waste comes from food scraps
- About 20% of residential waste is recyclable with current programs
- When benchmarked against Orange County, NC and Boulder County, CO:
  - Recyclables is similar across the board
  - Boulder leads the way in compostable diversion- have robust programs in place

#### Waste Diversion Result

- Current programs: curbside pickup, drop-off center, special waste collection, compost drop off



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- Buncombe County landfilled 321,917 tons of waste last year, 88,567 tons of that was C&D
  - About 1/3 of county waste goes out of County
  - 48K tons of estimated food waste annually in landfill
- 16,840 tons of waste (7%) was diverted through recycling and composting programs
- Waste diversion initiative focus areas:
  - Organics management
  - Construction and Demolition debris management
  - Multifamily and commercial diversion
  - Data collection & enforcement
  - Convenience center services
- Next steps:
  - Expand community compost drop off program
  - Investigate aerated static pile compost pilot at landfill
  - Encourage C&D load delivery to landfill instead of dumping at transfer station
  - Enforce existing ordinances. Stricter enforcement will ramp up in Feb 2023.
  - Multifamily/ commercial diversion: Work with planners to ensure space for recycling infrastructure in new developments
  - Consider convenience centers
- Organics diversion discussion:
  - Idea to partner with local hauler(s) to provide public investment to serve “non-profitable” areas of the county
  - City takes yard waste to riverside stump dump
  - Aiming for a 4:1 ration of yard waste to food waste
  - County operated compost facility would keep materials in the enterprise fund

### Compost Collection

- New locations coming to South Buncombe Library
- Compost promotion event Nov 5.
- Assessment of 1-2 drop off sites in north and eastern sections of the county
- Current participants: 1600 households, 3800 people
- Solid Waste is on the hook for hauling costs, not covered by grants
  - Need to start charging people and developing more formalized agreement with the city

### Septic System Impacts to Water Quality

- Septic System failure results in increased exposure to E. coli and fecal coliform, exposing people and animals to disease
- No maintenance inspections required for system owners
- A variety of potential points of failures and causes of failure
- What educational resources are currently available: Don't flush materials, Septic Smart week campaign, educational materials provided with the permit
- Costs, supply chain issues, contractor availability and lengthy legal processes are impediments to septic system repair



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- Increase over last 5 years in complaints received, NOVs issued, repair applications and completion.
  - Attributed to more people being at home during COVID
- Programs to reduce septic failures
  - Septic System Repair Program: \$75K included in FY23, first time program
    - Start accepting applications Nov 1. Start evaluating in Jan 23.
  - Mountain True will be administering \$400K of grant funding for similar programs across 13 WNC counties including Buncombe

### Water Quality Goal Setting Discussion

- Sample goal: reduce fecal coliform by x% by x year
  - Accompanied by actions
- Set one broad goal or multiple goals? Set separate goals for water quantity vs quality?
- How do we engage partner agencies: RiverLink, Mountain True, Greenworks?
- Is there an opportunity to improve monitoring of erosion control and stormwater permits through increased staffing?
- How to separate Buncombe County's goals from water coming in from other counties?
- One strategy could be focusing on one sub watershed at a time: this would allow for focused monitoring and measuring progress.
- Alternative approach would be to pick a pollutant (like septic) and focus on that county-wide but that will be more difficult to monitor.
- Suggestion to create a "menu" of action items with associated costs and impact potential
- Are there other people/ groups the subcommittee wants to hear from regarding this goal?
  - Planning to discuss stormwater and erosion permits? Who is doing something innovative here?
  - Asheville stormwater taskforce
  - Division of Water Resources modeling

### Floating Solar Update

- Feasibility assessment is moving forward
- Formal proposal from D3 Energy. Only quoted components on the water.
- Duke suggested a pre-interconnection application to determine what is exactly needed to interconnect. The application is in-progress.

### Future Meetings:

Due to conflicts in November, it was suggested to combine Nov and Dec meetings on Dec. 2 with an extended meeting time of 4 hours (10am-2pm). Commissioner Wells made a motion which passed unanimously.

### Adjournment

Motion made by Maggie Ullman at 12:08, approved unanimously.