

# WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

## COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

**MINUTES: January 26, 2009**

MEMBERS (E&E): Chair: Abinanti; Legislators: Harckham, Kaplowitz, Maisano, Myers, Nonna, Oros, Rogowsky

IN ATTENDANCE: STAFF: C. Crane, K. Delgado; GUESTS: B. Randolph, S. Gerry (CEO); T. Lauro, M. Parise (WCDEF); J. Crell, R. Zipf (Ref. Dist. Adv. Bd.); M. Wallach (CCE); S. Porcino (Ardsley EAC); A. Jaffe Holmes (GNC) [list of other attendees is on file]

Meeting called to order at 3:25 pm.

Item(s) Discussed: **Organic Yard Waste Transfer Program**

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Chair Abinanti opened the meeting with a discussion of proposed legislation to continue the county's organic yard waste transfer program. Commissioner Lauro provided a brief presentation on the county's recycling and organic waste programs. Leg. Harckham inquired on the feasibility of non-member Refuse Disposal District municipalities to enter the District. Ms. Gerry stated that the Administration is presently looking at the costs for non-members to enter the District, and Chair Abinanti suggested a future Committee meeting on this topic. Mr. Lauro stated that WCDEF is looking at feasibility of adding new equipment to allow recycling of No. 3-7 plastics at the county's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). He noted that recycling revenues have recently dropped substantially (annual revenue drop from about \$9 million to \$3.5 - 4 million).

In reviewing the organic yard waste transfer program, Chair Abinanti noted that non-district, non-host municipalities might be able to transfer yard waste to a district host municipality and thereby pay lower tipping rates. Commissioner Lauro stated that such activity would be identified by a spike in yard waste volumes. Chair Abinanti suggested that the IMA be revised to consider such situations. Upon Chair Abinanti's query, Mr. Jesse Crell replied that the Refuse Disposal District (RDD) Advisory Board had not reviewed the proposed inter-municipal agreements. Commissioner Lauro countered that WCDEF had requested comments from the advisory board and did receive comments by e-mail on the tipping fee.

Leg. Rogowsky noted that the county is significantly subsidizing the municipalities because the tipping fee is about \$40/ton but the district municipalities only pay about \$15/ton. Commissioner Lauro confirmed this. He explained that City Carting is the county's contractor for transporting the yard waste to compost facilities, and their contract exists until 2014. In response to Leg. Myers' query, Commissioner Lauro stated that the disposal fee at the Charles Point incinerator will be \$71.50/ton, and the the present fee is about \$25/ton. Mr. Parise stated that most of the yard waste is transported to a facility at Goshen, NY.

Chair Abinanti asked that the RDD advisory board consider the legislation at its next meeting and inform the Committee of any further comments on the legislation. Chair Abinanti also asked that the RDD advisory board meet with the Committee in the future to generally discuss solid waste and recycling matters.

Mr. Ed Campbell expressed interest in developing a compost facility for yard waste within Westchester County. He described the feasibility of conducting yard waste composting locally, and he stated his understanding that local municipalities are interested in this. He identified Vassar College as an example of volume reduction through composting (biological activity, Greenway Environmental Services). He also suggested a longer term project to utilize wood waste to generate power. Ms. Gerry noted that the Administration is evaluating food waste composting pilot projects at the county jail and at the Glen Island Casino. Ms. Jaffee Holmes and Ms. Porcino noted the interest and challenges in improving recyclables collection by municipalities.

Upon the motion of Leg. Harckham, seconded by Leg. Myers, the Committee approved the organic yard waste transfer legislation (all in favor).

Upon the motion of Leg. Myers, seconded by Leg. Rogowsky, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting (all in favor).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:50 pm.

[audio recording of the meeting is on file]