



Albemarle County Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee

TO: ALBEMARLE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: ANNE JOHNSON, TEDDY HAMILTON, JESSE WARREN - SWAAC
DATE: 02.08.2021
RE: 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The last report from the SWAAC was in March 2020. In August 2020, Anne Johnson was reappointed the chair position, Christine Hirsh-Putnam was reappointed as Vice Chair, and Peggy Gilges was reappointed as secretary. The work of the SWAAC Committee has been significantly impacted by Covid-19, primarily by not being able to convene subcommittee meetings due to the requirement to schedule public meetings through the County Zoom account. SWAAC subcommittees have lost momentum since 2019 but have made progress on several objectives.

- In January 2020, the SWAAC passed an amendment to its charge to allow for 10-12 committee members, providing more detail on policy areas of focus, and identifying the Committee availability for review and input on proposed actions that contain a solid waste/SMM component. The SWAAC committee currently has nine members and is actively seeking new members.
- In August 2020, the SWAAC invited Scott DeFife from the Glass Packaging Institute to speak to the SWAAC about efforts to improve glass recycling in Virginia. The Operation Subcommittee and RSWA has followed up with a plan to expand glass recycling in Albemarle and surrounding counties.
- In November 2020, the SWAAC invited Sonoco Recycling to speak to the group about what happens to Albemarle County recyclables that they process and their position on the proper recycling instructions for bottles and pizza boxes.
- In January 2021, the SWAAC invited Mike Baum from Keep Virginia Beautiful to speak to the group about their litter clean up initiatives and resources that could support a litter clean up event in the County.
- Covid-19 required a pause for some SWAAC initiatives including the following:
 - Chapter 13 amendments which were finalized in January 2020 are still pending review and approval.
 - Efforts to creating equitable access to waste and recycling services to the rural citizens of Albemarle, achieving a comparable standard to other Virginia communities has been on hold
 - International Composting Week activities scheduled for May 2020 were cancelled.

The SWAAC subcommittees:

- 1) **Outreach, Communication, and Education Subcommittee** - led by Christine Putnam-Hirsch. The work of this committee is to - *Focus on developing Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) and related outreach and educational resources to improve the level of understanding in the Albemarle County Community and increase access to resources on solid waste reduction and diversion, reuse, and recycling as well as litter abatement.*
- 2) **Operations Subcommittee** - led by Jesse Warren. The work of this committee is to - *Focus on near term activities related to improving SW and recycling infrastructure, operations and ability to measure performance. Includes City/University coordination, measurement and reporting.*

- 3) **Planning and Vision Subcommittee** - led by Teddy Hamilton. The work of this committee is to - *Focus on long term planning and related activities needed to improve and prepare Sustainable Materials Management for the future in Albemarle County. Includes planning, permitting, infrastructure, and policy.*

This following activities are organized by each subcommittee and present work done over the year as well as plan for the next six months. Key issues of each subcommittee represent the opinion of the SWAAC as a whole.

Outreach, Communication, and Education Subcommittee

- Transitioned leadership of subcommittee to Christine Putnam-Hirsh
- Conducted three outreach events on education about recycling and composting to local civic organization including: Piedmont Master Gardener's, Jefferson Madison Regional Library, and The Master Naturalists
- Updated content on composting and recycling tips in coordination with FES for new Albemarle County website.
- The recycling Ambassadors program to work on "Recycling Right" with leadership from RSWA was suspended until January 2021. This program identified volunteer leader for Ambassador's program and have met with RSWA to work on the training program for volunteers.

Focus for the next 6 months/year:

1. Coordinating with the County Communication Team and RSWA to develop a County wide recycling survey
2. Developing a social media strategy in coordination with FES and Albemarle County Communications to work on a Tip of the Month to raise awareness of composting and recycling.
3. Continue to develop and refine solid waste and recycling content for the outreach program and the Albemarle County Website
4. Currently working on coordinating with local partners on a litter clean up event in spring 2021

County and RSWA Operations Subcommittee

- Presented at Virginia Recycling Association Annual Members Meeting 10/30/2019: "Solid Waste and Climate Change". Panelists included Craig Coker, Susan Elliot, Liz Palmer and Narissa Turner; moderated by Jesse Warren.
- Hosted for the general public (about 30 attendees) for two Climate Monday sessions related to Sustainable Materials Management (SMM). First there was a listening session to discuss SMM at large and possible goals for the community (6/3/2019) as well as a recap to discuss our progress (7/22/2019). These were moderated by Jesse Warren, and featured many SWAAC members as Albemarle County participants & subject matter experts.
- The Operations Subcommittee convened a meeting with local vineyard operators in October 2020 to discuss a plan to grow glass recycling in the County. This initiative remains a focus for the committee.

Focus for the next 6 months/year:

1. The Operations Subcommittee has laid the preliminary groundwork for establishing an Ambassadors Program at McIntire Recycling Center in 2019. After engaging with the public on America Recycles Day 2019, it became apparent that there was demand for this service and volunteers to help improve knowledge and reduce contamination at McIntire Recycling Center. The Communications Subcommittee currently has responsibility for supporting RSWA to rollout the Ambassadors Committee.
2. Continue to develop the program for glass recycling in Albemarle County and within the TJPDC.

3. Put together model reporting on available solid waste metrics for the website.

Planning and Vision Subcommittee

- Researched and prepared revisions to Albemarle County Ordinance, “Recommended Amendment to Albemarle County Code Chapter 13, *Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling*”, voted out of the SWAAC to County Legal staff at January 2020 meeting.
- Researched and prepared letter to BOS recommended budgeting for convenience centers starting FY21 and continuing annually until up to 6 centers have been constructed in the County. Voted out of SWAAC to County staff at January 2020 meeting for inclusion in an upcoming BOS meeting packet.
- Submitted revisions of SWAAC Charter to SWAAC. After discussion and further revision by Committee, Charter revision was approved and voted out of Committee by SWAAC to County staff at January 2020 meeting for inclusion in an upcoming BOS meeting packet.

Focus for the next 6 months/year:

1. Evaluating relevant legislation emanating from 2020 General Assembly Session and reporting back to SWAAC at monthly meetings with noted action items for County implementation; assessing future legislative requests.

2. Continuing to develop convenience center implementation strategy.

3. Review and recommend updates to objectives for Goal 3 of the County’s Environmental Stewardship Sustainability Plan 2013 – 2020: Promote and pursue the reduction of waste that goes to landfill.

Objective 3.1: Decrease the volume of materials generated by the County and sent to landfill by 2% each year for 10 years by adopting the “reduce, reuse and recycle” practice; adopt environmentally preferable purchasing policies as allowed by the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

Objective 3.2: Increase awareness of and opportunities for business and residents to recycle their used goods.

Objective 3.3: Communicate awareness of cost savings opportunities associated with renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings versus new construction.

4. Evaluate possible residential curbside composting program pilot program for a selected neighborhood.
5. Evaluate Chapter 13 of County Ordinances for further modification re: recycling.