

Cities unite to solve solid waste problem

By Keith Postler
staff writer

The Southwest Oakland County Solid Waste Consortium (SOCOWC) is considering the creation of a solid waste authority to deal with related issues in member communities.

Members of the consortium that met in Southfield May 17 besides that city were Farmington, Farmington Hills, Novi, South Lyon, Walled Lake.

The authority would operate like a utility, recovering its costs through user fees charged to municipal solid waste generators located within the authority's boundaries.

The goal of the authority is to reduce the volume of solid waste disposed of through landfill and incineration facilities by relying on source reduction and reuse, composting and recycling, and waste-to-energy and landfilling techniques. The authority hopes to achieve the following goals

- by the year 2010:
- Source reduction and reuse — 10 percent.
- Composting — 5 percent.
- Recycling — 35 percent.
- Waste-to-energy and landfilling — 50 percent.

Robert Deadman, chairman of the consortium and Farmington city manager, described the solid waste problem as being one of rising costs and dwindling available space for landfill facilities in Southwest Oakland County.

The costs of disposing of solid waste have increased dramatically since 1978, Deadman said. Between that time, disposal costs have increased from \$1.80 per ton in 1978 to \$17.40 per ton in 1988.

"Ninety-five percent of the solid waste generated in Oakland County is destined for landfills," Deadman said.

ROGER SMITH, Southfield's di-

rector of public services and secretary treasurer of SOCOWC, noted that Oakland County produces 3,650 tons per day of solid waste and could generate as much as 4,750 tons per day in 2010.

"You have to deal with this problem of solid waste aggressively and intensify," Smith said. "The soft approach" of burying solid waste in landfills "isn't going to do the trick. This is going to be a long and arduous task," he said.

To deal with the problem of solid waste disposal, SOCOWC has proposed that the authority build and manage a materials recovery and transfer facility in Southwest Oakland County for disposal. All of the solid waste produced in the authority's boundaries would be routed directly to this facility, with the authority providing tight management and control of the waste stream.

The cost to build the facility would be approximately \$25 million to \$30

million, said Thomas Biasell, director of Farmington Hills' Department of Public Services. The facility would be constructed with funds derived from the sale of revenue bonds, and the necessary expenditures, including maintenance, operating and tipping fees, would be recovered through user charges.

ONE OF the stumbling blocks in building the materials recovery and transfer facility is that the solid waste authority has not been created yet, Biasell said.

"The idea is that the authority would build the facility, but it hasn't been established yet," he said.

"We've only introduced the idea of establishing the authority, and now it is a question of having the communities involved decide if they want to be a part of the authority."

As of May 10, SOCOWC had set a three-month timetable for creating the solid waste authority, beginning June 1 with the legislative body of each community approving and

adopting the articles of incorporation of the authority, and ending August 25 with the creation of the authority.

To help offset the cost of building the facility, each community has sent a joint application to the Department of Natural Resources to request a \$5 million materials recovery facility grant. Biasell has said that the DNR will decide sometime this summer whether to approve the grant or not.

"It would be ideal for construction to begin in early 1990" with the project in operation by 1992, Biasell said.

Once the materials recovery and transfer facility is completed, it would occupy 20 to 25 acres within the six consortium communities' boundaries. The facility will be able to handle such waste products as newspaper, old corrugated cardboard, office paper, mixed paper, plastics, glass, metal, bulky wood and yard waste, and hazardous household waste materials.

Recycling

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THOUGH PLANS are still preliminary, the goal is to have the recycling centers up and working by early July. Plans include having at least two centers, one each at the Farmington and Farmington Hills public works yards. A third, and perhaps fourth, center is also being considered.

"We're negotiating with the buyers of the product and negotiating with the people who will provide us with the dumpster-like containers," Deadman said.

Residents would have to take their garbage to the centers and put specific items in specially designated containers for recycling. The city managers are hoping to use containers that cannot be misused. For example, a container designed for the recycling of glass would have a small opening to prevent other types of garbage entering the container.

Cost estimates and hours of operation for the centers are still in the planning stages.

Seniors visit kindergarten at Gill school

As part of a year-long exchange program, residents of the Williamsburg Care Center visited Nancy Berkesh's kindergarten students at Gill Elementary School in Farmington Hills May 18.

Working on the theme that "children are one of the best therapies that a senior can have," students involved their new friends in Grandparents Day, Easter arts and crafts sharing and a Halloween party during this school year.

The children and residents are acquiring a special closeness, as with student Lauren Haapala and resident Lillian Stark who have formed a special friendship. Besides visits back and forth, there is an exchange of cards, pictures and letters, said the center's activities director Sandi Chadek.

During the recent visit, Williamsburg resident Shirley Stone, explained to students her active involvement in the Salvation Army, tying in with Career Awareness Week which the students are studying this spring.



Kindergartener Lauren Haapala visits with Lillian Stark from Williamsburg Convalescent Center at Gill Elementary School in Farmington Hills. Residents of the Farmington Hills center visited Gill as part of an ongoing friendship project between the students and seniors.

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