

## May 27, 2008 – Recycling Workshop

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a workshop on May 27, 2008 at 2:38 p.m., at the Walton County Courthouse in DeFuniak Springs to discuss recycling options.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Larry Jones, Chair; Commissioner Sara Comander, Vice-Chair; Commissioner Cindy Meadows; and Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator; and Mr. Mike Burke, County Attorney, were also present.

Commissioner Meadows stated that a Recycling Task Force meets monthly at her office to discuss recycling options. It was found that the blue bags, when picked up with the regular garbage, were breaking open and contaminating the recyclable materials. She said that a survey was issued to the public to obtain input on a recycling program. The results showed that more than half of the people recycle, more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  would not pay \$4 - \$6 per month for curbside, and most of the people surveyed use the Blue Bag Program and would continue to do so. The county's cost for additional curbside pickup would be approximately \$2 million.

Mr. Aaron Warren, Assistant County Engineer, stated that one objective is to decide how to handle recyclables. PBS&J is currently designing a new transfer station which will be vital in handling and processing recyclable material. There is a legal obligation to provide citizens with convenient recycling options. He said that the Blue Bag Program has raised awareness among the citizens of Walton County. He presented three options that would aid in recycling transportation: increase number of recycling trailers through grant funding, door to door pickup which is convenient but not

economically feasible, and to continue the recycling trailers while allowing the public to supply the demand for curbside pick up. He gave a brief update on the transfer station and reported that the floor plans have been finalized.

Commissioner Meadows asked Mr. Warren to discuss how the new transfer station would handle recyclables. Mr. Warren stated that recycling trailers will be used to collect the material and inmate labor would be utilized during the sorting process. Kitchen garbage will not be sorted but instead taken to Jackson County.

Commissioner Meadows stated that even if the blue bags are made stronger, pick up with regular garbage would still cause contamination. Mr. Warren stated that the blue bags would need to be taken to one of the 16 drop off stations. Commissioner Meadows asked how many more trailers would be added as drop off stations. Mr. Warren stated that the number would depend upon the amount received through grant funding. Commissioner Comander asked how many trailers were located south of the bay. Mr. Warren stated nine. Commissioner Comander voiced concern with the costs of hauling the trailers to the transfer station for sorting and suggested transporting only full trailers. Mr. Warren reported that Mr. Rusty Floyd, Landfill Manager, had already instructed his crews to do so.

Commissioner Comander asked if there was a geographical breakdown of people participating in the survey. Commissioner Meadows stated that it was broken down by zip code and would make that information available.

Commissioner Comander said that trailers need to be added and placed in areas easily accessible to the public. She also suggested utilizing the school system to educate the public on recycling. She asked if a program was available for an individual to pay

someone to pick up their recyclables. Commissioner Meadows stated that there was not. She said that she was unsure whether the companies were able to contract with private individuals or if it was feasible under the present franchise agreement. Attorney Mike Burke, County Attorney, stated that he would have to review the contract.

Commissioner Comander asked where the public would be able to pick up blue bags and the location of the recycling trailers. She suggested having the trailers placed at grocery stores and retail stores. Mr. Warren stated that he had communicated with Wal-Mart and said that there have been past problems with individuals placing materials not suitable for recycling in the trailers. The blue bags were made available through county offices during the latter part of 2007.

Mr. Arix Zalace, Recycling Task Force member, briefly spoke in favor of the Blue Bag Program. He stated that 80% of garbage is recyclable and felt that a second day of garbage pickup should be used for the Blue Bag Program. He suggested working with developments to provide recycling areas for tourists.

Ms. Jennifer Kuntz, Recycling Task Force member, stated that as a food establishment owner she has had a number of people asking her about the Blue Bag Program. She said that there is a lot of community support for the programs. Since there are establishments with waste materials appropriate for composting, she suggested a commercial composting pile be implemented at the county landfill.

Commissioner Comander stated that both the County and the citizens should be responsible for recycling. She stated that she is planning a meeting with all department heads to discuss the county's responsibilities.

Ms. Christie Scally, Recycling Task Force member, spoke in favor of education programs for recycling and briefly discussed the statistics in favor of recycling.

Ms. Anita Page spoke in favor of the recycling program and felt that the weekly pick up of blue bags would be a more feasible program.

Discussion ensued regarding a weekly pick up and the costs. Commissioner Meadows suggested a pilot program for curbside pick up be initiated in the South Walton area for a specified number of months. Chairman Jones recommended that Commissioner Meadows proceed with the program. Mr. Rory Cassedy, Waste Management Governmental Affairs Manager, recommended waiting until after Labor Day to begin the pilot program. He said that Waste Management would be willing to assist in anyway possible.

Ms. Sherry McCall, rental agent, asked what the proportion of local garbage was to tourist garbage. Mr. Warren stated that the amount of garbage picked up during the summer months is doubled compared to the rest of the year.

Mr. Leroy "Bud" Day, DAYCO, distributed copies of newspaper articles and stated that some cities require their condominium developments to furnish a recycling area. He praised the Blue Bag Program and recommended stronger bags with pull strings.

Commissioner Comander commended Commissioner Meadows and the Recycling Task Force for all the hard work and dedication that went into organizing the recycling program. Commissioner Meadows also voiced her commendations to the Task Force and said that more information would be compiled and a proposal brought to the next meeting in South Walton.

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 3:44 p.m.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_  
Larry Jones, Chairman

ATTEST \_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts