



“LANDFILLED” DISCUSSION SERIES

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Date: April 21, 2008

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Riverfront Community Center (Leavenworth)

Facilitator: Bettse Folsom

Recorder: Stephanie Williams

Other observers: none

Number of participants: 3

As we watch landfill space disappear and consider the possibility of trash costs rising, what are your concerns?

- Poor land use
- Landfill space
- Clean environment, especially as it concern household hazardous waste (HHW)
- Costs of recycling programs (or closing/opening new landfills)
- What is the best way to recycle? If it's comingled, more manpower is needed.
- When is the best time to start recycling? Should it be optional or mandatory?
- Increasing premiums for landfill space
- Concerns about environmental impact in areas surrounding landfills
- Concern about *non*-concern. "I recycle, but others don't." We're wasteful.
- Too much packaging. For example, the hard plastic containers at Costco.

What should we be doing now?

- There's an immediate need for recycling and an examination of what can be reused
- Landfill space
- Clean environment, especially as it concern household hazardous waste (HHW)
- We should be recycling.
- Educating our kids.
- Making incentives for people to recycle — people need an immediate reward, such as a bottle deposit or reduced trash costs.

How much do you pay for trash disposal?

- Not sure. \$13?

Where does your trash go?

- Deffenbaugh.

What is the most equitable way to pay for shrinking landfill space?

- Manufacturers are a large part of the problem. They could be stakeholders/bear part of the cost. There are ways to market products as "green" that could compensate for changes in current process.
- In Germany, they get one trash can that's 4 feet tall.

How would you feel about having a landfill located near your home?

- Not good, but it has to go somewhere.
- If it had to go near my home, I'd let them and then sell my house.
- Pollutants still seep from old landfills. Some of that stuff doesn't go away.
- We need to be more creative with what can be recycled. What other alternative do we have?
- Trash can be turned into new products rather than using new synthetic materials.

Would you recycle more if it would prevent a landfill from being placed near your home?

- No. The average person has no idea how much trash they really generate.
- People are more conscious now; you've got to start somewhere. Start with education: this is where we're headed. Give them a vision; tell them, "this is reality." Mock-up what a year's worth of trash would look like for one person. You need to shock people.
- If it disappears each week, how do people know? "Magic."
- Just because we don't see it doesn't mean it's not there.
- In my house (three people), we don't use plastic bags. We fill up two regular-sized grocery bags each week. Everything else is recycled.

Would you recycle more if it lowered your trash costs?

- Yes. But right now it's a flat amount. Everything can be thrown away.
- People are lazy. We need to move to prevention rather than treatment (for example, focus on reducing waste rather than recycling).

Imagine there is no operating landfill left in the Kansas City area. What issues would arise?

- We would have to ship it like the East Coast.
- [The increasing trash costs] would widen the gap between rich and poor. Drive people to poverty.
- Let locals know that trash is being shipped to them. That would upset them; possibly drive them to take action.

What is your main motivation for recycling?

- You've got to start from the top (federal government)
- Trying to do something.
- Trying to lead by example.
- Want to reduce my and my family's impact.
- We have a duty to try and reduce and reuse to lessen our impact on the environment.
- In Germany, they have "junken" nights two times per year. Every person puts out useful but unneeded or unwanted items on their curb, and then everyone goes around to see what's available and picks up whatever they want. You can find interesting things; kind of like a garage sale. Someone's trash can be treasure to someone else.
- Not sure. Learned to recycle as a child. Minimalist by nature.
- A lot of people are scavenging/stealing metal.

Who or what organizations should be responsible for reducing landfill use?

- Government.
- MARC could help.
- You need leadership, vision and education — all three.
- It should be mandated. We have to stop at stop signs whether there's a police officer present or not.
- We have to do it cold turkey, with a specified date and corresponding education about the program.
- In Leavenworth, you can throw anything away. There's no incentive.
- Mandating recycling could result in more illegal dumping.

What other "green" habits have you adopted and why?

- Wear 100 percent natural cotton clothes — they're minimal impact, natural and not manmade.

- Installed an in-house water purification system. The city water doesn't taste good, but bottled water is out of control.
- Reuse paper.

What incentive do communities have to reduce trash?

- None. There's only personal incentives.

Do you feel you know enough about what can be kept out of the trash?

- Numbers on plastic are confusing.
- I know what should *not* be put in trash: batteries, paints, etc.
- We recycle aluminum, paper of all kinds, cardboard, bottles, etc.
- Catholic Services will reuse tennis shoes.

Think about all of the items you drop in the trash and the things you buy on an average day. What is the most inconvenient thing about recycling?

- You have to drive to the site; there's no curbside.
- Organizing the materials: containers, shapes, sizes, etc.
- We should have "master bins" on every block. People would be able to identify them by shape, size and color. It would give people the option to walk to the end of the block, rather than having curbside. It could be done at the neighborhood level.
- Convenience first, mandate second.
- I don't find it inconvenient; it's just something we do. Our teen takes it to the recycling center.
- Neighborhood peer pressure. Could it be enforced?
- KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid)
- We need to eliminate low-end plastics.
- It's easier at work. I recycle more there than I do at home.

Is there a difference between curbside and drop-off centers in terms of how you participate?

- We need to generally attack the problem — shorter trips are necessary.
- I don't use curbside because of the trucks. They drive too fast down the street. Luckily it's usually when the kids are in school.
- Lansing uses curbside, but do they have enough participation?

What is your obligation to your children?

- To make things better — or at least try.

What are your children learning in school?

- Lansing used to teach kids about recycling, but I don't think they do now. They would get money for recycling.
- We do tours and lessons in Leavenworth.
- [Solid waste] professionals should go talk to schools. But they would be limited by school curriculums. Classroom time is tight, and it's hard to bring something in that's not "just the basics."
- At Hy-Vee, you can get 10 cents per bag.
- They should give coloring books to kids to teach them about recycling.
- Recycling is going to become more important in the future.

What prevents you from taking action?

- Nothing at my house.

Design your ideal recycling system. What would the system look like for your home or office?

- A room dedicated to recycling!
- It should be mandated and federally funded.
- It should have neighborhood drop-off containers.

- You could put containers in the garage.
- My parents used to have to ration during the war.
- Need to turn people into “sheeple;” make it easy for them.
- Start small.
- The Grand Canyon could be filled with bottles in three years if everyone put there trash in there. We’re so wasteful. Help people visualize it.
- We need to fine-tune how we spend money. There has to be funds that the government could open up. These services should be free to citizens.
- The crying Indian was a really effective campaign. We need to come up with something like that again.

Who should be taking a leadership role on these issues?

- Local government. It needs to come from the top down.
- The mayor of Leavenworth.
- MARC.
- Citizens.

Other comments:

- People think they can’t do anything. One person can make a difference. It’s the little things: turning down the thermostat, using fewer bags, reducing your “footprint.”
- I’m even more concerned and will be more vigilant after participating today.