

## **Waste Equity Advisory Group**

Tuesday February 11, 2020

9:30 – noon

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

### **Waste Equity Advisory Group Members in Attendance:**

AJ Simpson	City of Roses Disposal and Recycling
Alex Witter	Chetco Construction
Carl Peters	Recology
Brian Heiberg	Heiberg Garbage and Recycling
Val Solorzano	Chick of All Trades
Laura Tokarski	Trash for Peace
Dom DeWeese	ORTOP

### **Waste Equity Community Consultants in Attendance:**

Liz Start  
Rob Nathan

**Meeting Facilitators:** Try Excellence – Dr Steven Holt, Ericka Warren

**BPS Staff in Attendance:** Arianne Sperry, Josephine Davis

**Community Member in Attendance:** Beth Vargas Duncan, Regional Director at Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association.

### **Introductions/Ice Breaker**

All attendees shared their name and a brief history of how they came to be involved with the advisory group. Attendees also participated in an ice breaker activity to learn more about each other and to set the tone for safe, inviting and genuine conversations throughout the course of the project.

### **WEAG Structure**

Arianne explained the structure and dynamic of community consultants attending and participating at the Advisory Group meetings. BPS has hired 5 community consultants who will help guide the Waste Equity work in a variety of ways including participation in workgroups, developing and refining proposals and advising on implementation strategies. BPS will use their expertise and guidance as needed. Consultants that attend advisory committee meetings will participate in discussions but are not committee members with full voting rights. Liz Start and Rob Nathan were present at this meeting, Nate McCoy may join future meetings.

Ericka added that the goal is to create a safe place for discussion and collaboration. She acknowledged that the group is made up of people with different agendas and cultural perspectives and that the hope is that everyone feels like they have a voice.

## **Ground Rules**

Dr Holt shared the following guidelines for participant engagement and participation -

### BPS Ground Rules

*Listen to understand, not to respond* – Listen for learning opportunities. Do not prepare a response; just listen.

*W.A.I.T.* – Use self-awareness by asking yourself “Why Am I Talking?” Remember that everyone has the right to share their ideas, but not everyone always has the opportunity.

*Assume good intentions but attend to impact* – We are all good people looking to collaborate for better outcomes. Not all good intentions lead to good outcomes: If someone is hurt, focus on listening and understanding the impact, not on the intent.

*Be willing to make mistakes and be forgiving of those who do* – Forgiveness fosters safety so we can all take risks. We make mistakes, even with good intentions. By making mistakes, we ultimately learn how to do things better.

*Allow for, and appreciate, disagreement of opinions, ideas, methods – respectfully* – Don’t interrupt someone just because you disagree with them. Listen to understand their thoughts, you may find you have something in common. Critique ideas, not people.

*Personal stories stay, lessons can be shared* – After the meeting, comments, ideas and thoughts will not be attributed to any individual – this is a group learning process. If you share a personal story, let people know if or how your story can be shared.

### Try Excellence Ground Rules

*Everyone’s Voice Matters* – what you bring to the table is significant, we want to hear from you. Dr Holt shared that during discussions, he might call on people to ask for their input to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to weigh in.

*Respectful Atmosphere* – Because everyone’s voice matters, we need to give space for all to share. You may not agree with what is being said but we must all give everyone the opportunity for others to share.

*Experience Discomfort* – Given the nature of this work and the variety of stakeholders, inevitably someone will say something that you may not agree with. We rarely grow when we’re comfortable, we grow most in spaces of discomfort. If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable, it’s ok because it’s part of the process.

*Expect Non-closure* – The challenges we are hoping to solve will not be solved in one meeting, the work will take time. Some of the things that come up will be uncomfortable and may stay uncomfortable – know that this will happen and that it’s important to be patient.

*Stay in the Process* – Continue to bring 100% of yourself into to the project. If we are uncomfortable people can have tendency to check out.

### Other

Rob suggested an additional ground rule - *Accept Paradoxes* – Experiences vary from person to person, if you experience something one way it doesn't make someone else's experience not true.

Dr Holt requested that participants use their nameplate to indicate if they would like to speak by turning it on its side; to keep discussions orderly, Dr Holt will call on participants.

Brian suggested that participants write the name of their organization/business on their name plates.

### **What Does Equity Mean?**

Dr Holt shared the following definitions of the term Equity –

#### BPS Definition

Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. Equity is achieved when outcomes, such as economic status, educational attainment, access to health care and other social determinants for success cannot be predicted by your identity (e.g. race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender).

#### Try Excellence Definition

Equity is the specific, intentional act or actions that offer access, opportunity and support to underrepresented groups, without causing further harm and with measurable results.

Dr Holt led the group in further discussion about what equity means and what equity results would look like for this process.

#### *Comments and questions from the group –*

*Ericka:* We need to see the results of equity. If we are going to do equity work, we need to see the lasting impacts. It could be that we end up drafting our own definition through this process.

*Alex:* How can we make sure that this will work, and what's the accountability plan going to look like?

*Arianne:* The group will be participating in visioning, goal setting and setting performance measures. We will track success over time. City council is invested in this work as demonstrated by their approval of the Waste Equity Plan and special procurement exceptions and they have requested that we report back. The community and this group help keep us (the City) accountable as well as our need to be accountable to City council and City leadership.

*AJ:* Will we be reviewing full and accurate data? It is hard to set the goal and develop a strategy if you don't know where we are starting from.

*Arianne:* We don't know what that looks like yet. We have some baseline information, but it is limited mostly to the residential franchise workforce and residential franchise ownership. There is a plan to begin a new demographic study this spring and we should have the data by this summer.

*Laura:* Would like to also see where the money is going within the franchise system. The money gives us a good picture of what the challenges and opportunities are.

*Alex:* Beyond workforce demographic and company ownership, would like to know which companies are local compared to out of state.

*Rob:* One of the goals of the group should be to address any data gaps that we identify.

*Val:* What if Waste Management doesn't want to give data?

*Carl:* Without knowing where we are currently at, it's hard to know where to go and how to get there. Are we measuring ownership, employment, impact? Maybe one is more important or maybe one has more impact than others.

*Liz:* We should make sure we are not just measuring employment diversity but also measure who is in leadership positions. A company may demonstrate diversity but if it is only among the lowest wage jobs, this doesn't show that overall an organization is structured to be equitable – there should be paths for people from underrepresented communities to advance their careers beyond entry level jobs.

*Brian:* We need to keep in mind the challenges and unique structure of small, family owned companies and how they fit into the COBID vs non COBID discussions.

*Laura:* Need to understand the relationships between who is making decisions and how decisions are made. What does the system look like currently (could we maybe get a visual representation?) What are the gaps, challenges, who are the players, are there intermediary parties?

### **Waste Equity Background and Overview**

Arianne gave a brief history of waste collection industry in Portland. (Highlights below)

*Early 1900s* – Industry was not regulated, but informal scavenging jobs and routes were formed to provide waste pick-up service to the community. At the time, it was a good opportunity for anyone (including immigrants) to make a modest investment to start their own business. Family businesses emerged and started a long legacy of businesses being passed down to future generations.

*1920s* – Waste businesses formed a Union, Local 220. The union played a critical role in bringing more organization, stability, general business assistance, and financing to the industry. The union worked with the City of Portland on establishing routes and set rates which resulted in limiting competition and created a system where waste collection routes became a valuable and reliable source of income and thus could be bought and sold like other kinds of property.

*1955* – City Club of Portland investigative report on the waste collection system was released. The report exposed claims of discrimination against Black haulers as part of an overall strategy by the Union to limit and control competition in the industry. The Union controlled rates and made it difficult for customers to have choices on changing collectors. The report also found evidence of the City's role in excluding new entrants to the hauling industry through their strict licensing, reporting and inspection practices.

*1980s* – By the late 1980s, a significant amount of consolidation had occurred in the waste collection industry; the number of haulers had dropped from 250 in the 1950s to around 100. The Opportunity to Recycle Act brought more change to the industry and required haulers to invest in additional equipment to pick up multiple material streams. The franchise system emerged where the City agreed to offer 10-year contracts for residential collection. Additional consolidation continued and ultimately 69 companies were initially issued franchises.

The current franchise system (now down to 11 haulers covering the residential sector) has offered many positive outcomes including efficiencies, reduced traffic and requirements that help the City make sure that the waste collecting companies are providing excellent service and meeting the needs of the community. However, the franchise system has also increased barriers for new entrants to the industry and those that already had a franchise benefitted disproportionately because they had the resources to invest and grow as the industry expanded.

Today, 3 large companies control 50% of the available routes in the franchise system. The City did not implement a franchise system for the commercial/multifamily sector because there was strong business opposition (who preferred the ability to select and negotiate their own service providers). There are haulers that service both the residential and commercial/multifamily sectors.

*Comments and questions from the group –*

*Laura:* Important to note that we still have an informal “scavenging” sector (e.g. Ground Score Association) that mobilizes community members to collect and sort trash.

*Rob –* Raised the topic of illegal dumping, how does it play into this history, what are people’s barriers to disposal? People can’t get rid of large items and hazardous materials because of access issues.

*Brian –* Shared that he remembers 70 years ago observing the power and influence of the union on his family’s hauling business. He also reflected on the consolidation that has occurred in the industry – retirement prompted sales causing the reduction. Price of equipment is a lot of more Capital intensive.

*Alex:* Do we know the extent of Native American participation in the waste collection industry?

### **City Advisory Bodies and Public Meetings**

Maja Haium from City Attorney’s office presented material to the group regarding serving on an Advisory Board. (Highlights below)

As an advisory committee member, your service is done as a public official and is a public trust. Compliance with all applicable laws is required to safeguard that trust. Laws dictate how deliberations, decisions and how information is communicated to the public including where and when meetings occur, how the public is notified of meetings, how voting occurs during meetings, how advisory committee members are to keep track of documentation that could be considered public records, etc.

Also covered legal ethics involved with advisory committee service including on disclosing potential and actual conflicts of interest, policy on accepting gifts and the potential repercussions of violating the laws. Additional questions regarding the responsibilities of City Advisory Bodies and Public Meetings can be routed to the City Attorney’s office but must be done through Arianne (no direct outreach permitted). More information available from the Oregon Government Ethics Commission ([www.Oregon.gov/OGEC](http://www.Oregon.gov/OGEC)) and Oregon Attorney General Public Records and Meetings Manual ([https://www.doj.state.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/public\\_records\\_and\\_meetings\\_manual.pdf](https://www.doj.state.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/public_records_and_meetings_manual.pdf)).

*Arianne:* Acknowledged that the advisory group has various financial interests represented. Potential conflict of interest will be at play for many of our discussions. We will need to announce potential conflicts but there won’t be much actual conflict of interest because the committee will not be taking direct action, they are advising City staff. The City is here to help and will be proactively managing the

risks related to conflicts of interest but ultimately it is important for each committee member to be aware and comply with the laws.

### **Media Guidance**

Christine Llobregat from the BPS Communications team presented to the group on how to interact with the media if you are approached about your work on the advisory group. If you are contacted by a reporter, remember that anything you say will be “on record” and to immediately connect them Christine at BPS and she will work with you to handle the inquire from there.

### **Next Steps and Wrap Up**

Arianne proposed a potential change to March, April and May meetings. The change would be to third Tuesdays of the month, with a new meeting time of 11:30am – 2:00pm (lunch provided). Based on availability, group decided:

- Keep March 10 meeting, but push meeting time to 11:30am – 2:00pm
- April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting 11:30am – 2:00pm
- May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting 11:30am – 2:00pm

All meetings will be at the Historic Kenton Firehouse, 8105 N Brandon Ave, Portland, OR 97217.

During this onboarding phase, group will meet monthly then will move to less frequent meetings, likely on a quarterly basis. In subsequent meetings, group will define framework together for clear guidelines and accountability and that framework will largely inform meeting frequency based on the goals and objectives that are agreed upon.