

CITY OF SHORELINE
SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES OF WORKSHOP DINNER MEETING

Monday, February 12, 2007
6:00 p.m.

Shoreline Conference Center
Highlander Room

PRESENT: Mayor Ransom, Deputy Mayor Fimia, and Councilmembers Gustafson, Hansen, McGlashan, Ryu, and Way

ABSENT: none

STAFF: Bob Olander, City Manager; Julie Modrzejewski, Assistant City Manager; Joyce Nichols, Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Director; Mark Relph, Public Works Director; Jesus Sanchez, Public Works Operations Manager; Rika Cecil, Environmental Coordinator

GUEST: King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert; Shari Tracy, Operations Director for KC Councilmember Bob Ferguson; Carolyn Armanini, former Councilmember, City of Lake Forest Park

Mayor Ransom called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He introduced King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert, this evening's presenter on solid waste management technology. Everyone provided self introductions.

Councilmember Lambert described how she first became interested in "garbage" issues (solid waste). She said that in the United States, garbage is just waste. However, in Europe, waste is a resource. She described her travels in Europe over the past few years and how impressed she was with the way the European Union (EU) countries are dealing with garbage – they have a multi-nation process for handling waste. They have a 65% recycling rate, which is much higher than the U.S. When you make a purchase, approximately 95% of the packaging material is left at the store. People carry their own cloth shopping bags. Europeans recycle in many more categories that we do and on balance, have fewer disposable products that we do (e.g. plastic pens and utensils).

In Copenhagen, Denmark, she noted that one-third of the country's electricity is produced from waste products. They don't hide the power generating plants; they put them in the center of town. Also, they are no longer burying or landfilling garbage. In fact, they are removing some of the garbage out of the old landfills and are burning it for fuel (about 10% of each load).

Councilmember Lambert showed slides from various cities in Europe illustrating how the power plants look and how they are situated in the town/city. The plants she toured create less air pollution than power plants in the U.S. The garbage is burned at a temperature of 800 degrees Celsius – that's the temperature at which the molecules break down. This process is monitored closely due to health and pollution concerns. She also said there is no bad odor from the garbage because of the zero oxygen level in the bunker.

When the process is complete, there is fly ash left over that contains metals which are reclaimed, recycled and sold. There are a few waste-to-energy facilities in the U.S., including one on Spokane, but most are using 1984 technology, not the newer technology used in Europe. Some of the bottom ash left over from the process is reclaimed and used as the base for roadbeds and has good weight-bearing capabilities. Bottom ash is "cured" for three months before it's used for other purposes.

Mr. Olander asked about the plastics and other similar products that emit possibly toxic gases, which was a big concern in the earlier technology.

Councilmember Lambert said they do a better job of not using as much plastic as we do, and they do a better job of recycling to keep plastics out of the waste system. These types of materials become part of the fly ash and bottom ash to be reclaimed or disposed.

Councilmember McGlashan asked if they had trouble siting the plants due to "nimby-ism."

Councilmember Lambert said the way the whole systems works in these European countries, this is just not a big issue because the technology is so clean and people are used to it and it's not seen as a big deal.

She said that she has votes on the King County Council, but no decisions have been made. There is a study underway now by R.W. Beck that should be done in the fall. She said some people in the County don't want to implement this technology because they are not open to looking at the new technology – but we're 30 years behind the Europeans in this area.

Several Councilmembers asked questions about how the King County Council's process would work for choosing a technology. Councilmember Lambert said once the study is complete, it will be reviewed and voted on by the Council. She also said she is speaking with Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels to encourage him to support this technology because it will be difficult to meet the goals set by the Kyoto Protocols without addressing waste-to-energy technology.

Councilmember Gustafson asked if there are any "down sides" to this process. Councilmember Lambert said that figuring out what to do with the remaining 1% of fly ash would be a down side.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Fimia about new energy savings, Councilmember Lambert said that the power produced goes back into the power grid.

Councilmember McGlashan noted that Shoreline's solid waste transfer station is currently under renovation; he wondered if there are any plans to incorporate this technology. Councilmember Lambert said County staff should be directed to consider the possibilities.

Councilmember Lambert concluded her remarks by saying that she is traveling to Germany in March with another study group.

Deputy Mayor Fimia asked how the waste companies feel about this approach to waste management. Councilmember Lambert said the companies are quite familiar with the technology due to the Spokane plant, but Rabanco doesn't necessarily agree with this approach.

Councilmembers thanked Councilmember Lambert for her presentation.

At 7:25 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

Joyce Nichols, Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Director

This page intentionally left blank