

The First FORUM

TO ADDRESS ILLEGAL DUMPING & LITTERING IN ISLAND COUNTY

Sponsored by: **The Island County Environmental Health Assessment Team (EHAT)**

Date: Tuesday, July 20, 2004

Time: 8:00am – 10:00am

Location: Coupeville Recreation Hall, Coupeville, WA

Present: Terri Arnold (Island County Parks), Michael Barenburg (Environmental Health Dept), Steve Bebee (City of Oak Harbor), Dave Bonvouloir (Island County Solid Waste, Solid Waste Advisory Bd), Phyllis Brett (EHAT, Island Transit), Sheilagh Byler (EHAT), Commissioner Bill Byrd, Dave and Jill Campbell (Island Recycling), Roger Case M.D. (ICHD Health Officer), Lisa Clark (EHAT, Opportunity Council), Lori Clark (Environmental Health Dept), Nancy Conard (Mayor of Coupeville), Joline DeVos (EHAT), Nancy Farnsworth (EHAT Staff), Janet Hall (WSU Waste Wise), Sheriff Mike Hawley (City of Langley), Keith Higman (Environmental Health Director), Bob Jarski (City of Oak Harbor), Matt Kukuk (Island County Planning Dept), Commissioner Mac McDowell, Marshall Lenny Marlborough (Coupeville Marshall, Meth Action Team), Cheryl May (Community Litter Clean-up Program Coordinator), Jerry Mingo (Island County Solid Waste), Laurie Mosolino (EHAT), Jim Patton (EHAT), Reece Rose (EHAT), WGH Commissioner Barbara Saugen, Celine Servatius (EHAT Staff), Commissioner Mike Shelton, Don Souza (District Mgr- Island County Recycling), Judge Peter Strow (District Court), Matt Sullivan (EHAT, Naval Hospital, Oak Harbor), Nathan Whalen (Whidbey News-Times)

Excused: Steve Almon (Chief of Police-OH), Paul Brewer (Navy Recycling)

Call to Order: Commissioner Mike Shelton called the scheduled meeting on Illegal Dumping in Island County to order at 8:07am.

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Remarks and Review of Packet Contents

- a) Commissioner Shelton chaired the meeting. Everyone was welcomed and thanked for taking time to attend.

b) Celine Servatius reviewed contents of the folders provided.

2. Introductions

a) Attendees introduced themselves, including their name, organization they represented, and what they hoped to gain from the forum. Organizations represented were written on a turn chart as attendees introduced themselves.

3. Purpose of Forum

a) Commissioner Shelton explained that the Environmental Health Assessment Team (EHAT) sponsored this forum. The group of volunteers on EHAT identified illegal dumping and littering as an environmental health issue of concern for our community.

b) Commissioner Shelton noted that each person and organization attending the forum was invited to participate because they had been identified as an advocate for actively addressing the illegal dumping issue and explained that all of us were brought together to establish what is being done about illegal dumping in the community, and the roles that everyone is playing.

c) Commissioner summarized some of the concerns about illegal dumping and littering saying that illegal disposal of waste affects everyone not only because of the obvious unattractiveness, but also because illegal dumping and littering results in potential hazards: soil contamination, air contamination, water contamination, safety issue, highly combustibles, breeding grounds for vectors, impact on property owners.

d) Commissioner Shelton described the purpose of the forum: To facilitate communication and cooperation around the issue of illegal dumping and littering in our communities. Identify various roles of agencies, communities, and businesses. Identify gaps or concerns in addressing this issue. Discuss how gaps could be filled. Identify potential solutions and partnerships.

4. Problem Statement: EHAT presentation

a) Commissioner Shelton reviewed the background and establishment of EHAT. The Board of Health appointed 26 citizen members of the EHAT almost two years ago. They have been meeting monthly or more frequently to complete the 13 tasks of the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE-EH) model.

b) PowerPoint presentation given by EHAT member LT Matt Sullivan. Handouts provided.

c) EHAT focused on four environmental health issues affecting Island County (Dumping, Walkable Island County, Drinking Water: Arsenic, West Nile Virus).

d) Four subcommittee groups researched and developed issue profiles, and presented to

EHAT as a whole. EHAT members ranked and prioritized the four issues and agreed to narrow their focus and selected illegal dumping in Island County as their first issue to address.

5. Identify various roles of agencies, communities and businesses

- a) Attendees asked to describe their organization's role in addressing the issue of illegal dumping and littering.
- b) ICHD EH Dept- enforcement, permitting, responds to complaints. Opportunity Council- provides solid waste vouchers for low income. Marshall Coupeville- investigates complaints of people using other's dumpsters, solid waste violations, and junk cars. Thrift Stores in Coupeville- able to take usable items but have to take some unusable items to the dump. Mayor of Coupeville- Town has a voluntary solid waste pick-up within the city limits, offers clean-up day, recycling, education, provides opportunity for residents to dispose of waste through the legal waste stream. Oak Harbor Solid Waste- provides a legal disposal process, enforcement, and clean-up day. Oak Harbor Public Works- provides a legal disposal process, waste accepted. EHAT- community members seeking solutions, hoping to facilitate cooperation between organizations to address illegal dumping. WSU Waste Wise- volunteers assist in clean-up. Lighthouse Environmental- organizes volunteers to do clean-up. Island County Solid Waste- provides legal solid waste stream, offers recycling. Island County Recycling and Hazardous Waste- home hazardous chemicals accepted free, recycling, provides legal solid waste stream. City of Langley PW- city pick-up not mandatory, active citizen volunteers, yard waste program.

6. Identify gaps/concerns in addressing this issue

- a) Attendees asked to write down what they think is the biggest problem they see in effectively addressing illegal dumping and littering in Island County.
- b) Participants wrote on paper provided and ideas were posted on a wall display.
- c) Ideas were grouped and sorted by similar topics. Three main headings identified: Education, Cost, and Enforcement.
- d) Education- Education on options for disposal, penalties; Currently a lack of education on disposal costs; Need education on dealing with the mentally ill and providing free waste removal: Decrease multi-packaging of products because it contributes to waste; Dumping and litter increases the harborage for vectors; Need to create a social climate where it is "uncool" to litter or dump through education of public; Community awareness and education; Need more education on why and how to deal with solid waste; Let county residents know about fines; Address our disposable culture; Use education to change behavior.
- e) Cost- Illegal disposal of solid waste results in costs to individuals and government; Cost and convenience of legally disposing of waste can be an issue; Impact of disposal costs

on low income and elderly persons without the ability to pay or resources to remove large items.

- f) Enforcement- Identify, report, and consistently enforce on illegal dumpers; Publicize fines and then follow-thru with enforcement; Need uniform enforcement of anti-dumping laws at judicial level; Tougher enforcement will decrease cost to state/county for managing solid waste issues; Current lack of easily administered penalty; Enforce the current laws.

7. Identify potential solutions and partnerships

- a) Brainstorming activity to ask attendees to give ideas and suggested solutions.
- b) Started off with identifying some of the current activities taking place. IC Health Dept- permits facilities, inspects, responds to complaints by the public, and adopts regulations consistent with the state. Mayor Conard: Coupeville has an annual free dump day. People helping their neighbor's dispose of solid waste properly. Encourage recycling. Education and promotion of recycling. Increase trash receptacles available. Clean up the town, removed the non-working cars parked on streets. (Ordinance passed to remove the cars.) Jerry Mingo IC Recycling and Haz Waste: accepts household chemicals/hazardous waste free of charge. Pamphlets promoting it.
- c) Need to consider other factors: Mental health issues and how it plays a role in residential dumping; Hazards of Meth labs; Public doesn't know that dumping is unlawful.
- d) Education on dog waste from Waste Wise: "Scoop on poop."
- e) Possible Solutions given: Offer training on impact of illegal dumping and proper disposal in the jail system; Implement "Litter and it will hurt" program; signs on buses; Work on creating behavior change/culture shift; Offer training on impact of illegal dumping/littering and proper disposal in Driver's Ed. Classes; Pass out information at the DMV; Coordinate neighborhood "dump watch"; Establish a hotline to call and report dumping (a separate agency not dispatch, have a volunteer base to answer calls); Vehicle litter (encourage proper disposal at filling stations); Make trash cans more available (maybe use signs on trash cans that say "litter here"); Establish a specific definition of dumping. Currently it is broadly defined as dumping in the woods, littering casually throwing things out the window, own property and dumping on it; Complete a windshield survey of the status of illegal dumping in Island County: Train and utilize volunteer groups. Have them drive by and note the scope of the problem and complete a survey. Use this to establish a baseline and then follow-up with another survey the same time every year to track the trend. Dumping questionnaire- in front of WalMart, Fair, etc. determine dumping habits and the cause and reason; Educate public about dumping; Education on what is considered dumping and that it is illegal; Community members pick up litter as they walk; WSU has a grant, which will remove some of the litter and pay the fees; Can't pickup on private property; IC trying to keep fees as low as possible; Suggested to have a citywide cleanup day; Educate on disposal costs versus penalties/fines for improper disposal;

Educate on what resources are available for solid waste pickup (options for having stuff hauled away and disposed of properly); Increase education of the importance of recycling; Encourage teachers to take fieldtrips to the recycling center, landfill, etc.

- f) Summary: Identify common theme: Economic forces play role in illegal dumping; Can impact this issue through prevention efforts; Illegal Dumping/littering has a broad scope (county-wide problem). Commit to make a difference. Addressing compliance with laws, stress prevention of dumping. Review the enforcement procedure. Want to work with citizens rather against them. Determine how the litter got there.

8. Closing & Adjourn

Commissioner Shelton thanked the participants for their time and input. EHAT plans to work to facilitate development and implementation of solutions. Suggested meeting again to work on solutions and a plan to address this issue; attendees agreed. Good first step! The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.