
Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: 03 March 2010

Time: 7.00pm – 8.45pm

Location: Mt Annan Community Cottage, 351 Welling Drive, Mt Annan

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>A number of residents from Garden Gates attending for the first time were introduced and welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>The council officers from Camden and Campbelltown Councils outlined the history of the current facility for the benefit of community representatives.</p> <p>Jacks Gully separates waste. There is a transfer facility for residential waste which is then sorted and unrecyclable waste is sent to Eastern Creek. The Alternative Waste Treatment (AWT) Site takes red bin refuse and sorts recyclables. Foodstuffs go to the biological treatment plant where they are dissolved and bio gas is produced and used to generate electricity. There is a gardens organics plant and Camden Soil Mix produces compost and garden mixes. The combination of recycling activities diverts as much as possible from landfill.</p> <p>WSN was to cease taking putrescible waste several years ago. As all nearby local councils take waste to Jacks Gully this would have resulted in transporting waste long distances at increased costs. As well, the State Government has a target to reduce waste going to landfill by 67% by 2014. Councils' Waste Managers went to tender for a contractor to build, own and operate a facility to take all waste streams and WSN won a 15 year contract.</p> <p><u>Questions and discussion</u></p> <p>MT raised issues with garbage trucks negotiating narrow roads in Mt Annan with median strips down the centre. If other trucks are on the street, garbage trucks can't get through. There was a lack of foresight with the design of roads in the area.</p> <p>GG noted that waste collection was a council issue separate from the operation of WSN facilities and councils had lodged objections to the State Government regarding the narrowness of roads created with the formation of median strips. Design flaws dated back to the 1980s. He noted a trend for smaller blocks and narrower streets.</p> <p>PM suggested that although councils have objected, developers are deemed to have met State Government requirements.</p> <p>Council officers and community members noted the dangers posed to safety with garbage trucks needing to reverse out of narrow areas.</p>		

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	<p>AB suggested the newsletter she produces could be used to ask people not to park vehicles where they would inhibit access by garbage trucks and that it could help the community work together on the issue.</p> <p>MP asked whether fines would prevent people blocking access for garbage trucks.</p> <p>PM noted most residents tried to do the right thing but it only takes one car to block access in some areas.</p> <p>JR noted bad planning for vehicles, as everyone in the area uses cars as transport.</p>		
1.	<p>Minutes</p> <p>As there were no community members present who attended the previous meeting, confirmation of the minutes was held over.</p>		
2.	<p>Business arising</p> <p>There was no business arising from the previous minutes.</p>		
3.	<p>Community Feedback on Odours</p> <p>MP asked why housing developments had been allowed so close to the Waste Management Facility. Regardless of developments in technology, pollution, including odour, would always be there.</p> <p>HB reported that odour had been particularly bad over the last two weeks, especially every morning and evening and that the smell remains in the house even when it has cleared outside. There have been odours on Sunday. Impacts of odours have forced her to cancel functions at home and made her consider selling her house. There are problems with phoning in complaints due to the level of detail the EPA requests such as which direction the wind is blowing and what does it smell like. People are fed up. She noted that people who have lived in the area for 10 or 15 years have said the smell has always been here. She asked whether residents would always have the problem of the smell.</p> <p>AB reported that builders in Garden Gates have said the smell is particularly bad at 7.00am.</p> <p>BT reported that, due to health problems, he had difficulties walking back from the shops as the odour forced him to take shallow breaths. He has been particularly breathless lately. The smell seems to come through the gap, but is blocked to some extent by houses further up the hill.</p> <p>BB reiterated the importance of phoning complaints in. Odour is a personal thing and hard to describe but the EPA asks the questions in order to try and isolate the likely source eg the sewage treatment plant may smell differently to the waste facility or a poultry farm.</p> <p>PM noted that there were a number of different industries in close proximity.</p> <p>GG suggested that, as the EPA (DECCW) is the regulatory authority, there is a need to ring the EPA pollution line for every incident to let them know there is an ongoing problem. There was a garbage tip</p>		

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	<p>(landfill) in Jacks Gully in 1970. When the State Government wanted to expand housing in the Gully, Camden Council opposed it till the issue of odour was overcome. The approval of the contract for construction of an alternative waste treatment facility was on the premise that odour issues would be overcome. The State Government needs to hear if it is not resolved. There are also some topographical and climate issues with flat ground to the south and south east the wind comes over the hill and down to Garden Gates. In summer hot air rises and odours tend to disperse but in cooler weather the warm air gets trapped below the cooler air. The facility came on line in June last year and it is early days. If there are odour issues associated with the plant they should be able to be controlled. AM responded that WSN doesn't take odour complaints lightly. Each complaint is investigated and WSN tries to find the source. Phoning in complaints helps WSN improve and close any gaps. SB distributed her direct phone contact for community members to call directly to enable a swift review of potential odour sources on site.</p>		
4.	<p>Update on Operational and Environmental Matters</p> <p>The November to February Operations and Environmental Update was distributed to the meeting.</p> <p>AM reported that gas collection and electricity generation had been fairly constant over the last 6 months.</p> <p>There were 5 odour complaints in November 2009, 17 in December, 4 in January and 9 in February.</p> <p>Current controls are contained within the report.</p> <p><u>Questions and discussion</u></p> <p>AB sought to clarify what gas was being talked about in the report. GG replied that when organic waste is buried it decomposes in absence of oxygen and produces methane. Methane is a global warming gas but is combustible so is collected and burnt. At the old landfill site WSN has installed methane gas extractors and it is burnt to produce electricity. The new plant decomposes organic waste in enclosed tanks and the gas is extracted.</p> <p>PM reported this will lead to less expensive waste collection especially with the new state tax on landfill able to be reduced. The new facility takes over 75% out of landfill. The new facility decomposes waste in sealed chambers with micro organisms. Currently the plant is run from power produced, but eventually will be able to sell power back to the grid.</p> <p>MP asked where the gas was collected from.</p> <p>Response – it is collected from both the old landfill and the new facility.</p>		

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	<p>AM reported that methane gas is odourless but odours may be due to other components. The graph in the report shows some natural fluctuations in production of methane, but it has been fairly stable over 6 months.</p> <p>HB asked whether the sources of odours have been able to be identified from complaints.</p> <p>AM replied that in some cases the source was identified. There was a structural well leak which was rectified. Environmental monitoring parameters include hydrogen sulphide, methane and odour.</p> <p>SB suggested that part of the issue is when calls are made to the EPA there is a delay in the issue getting to WSN. She is happy for people to ring her directly so that the complaint can be investigated and acted on immediately.</p> <p>HB suggested that from listening to others the smell has always been here. No one is going to put their hand up and own the smell completely.</p> <p>SB reported that operational changes were based on complaints. In March there would be no grinding. Odourous activities are delayed.</p> <p>PM vouched for swift action tasking place when WSN is contacted directly.</p> <p>BH sought to clarify whether a complaint made directly to WSN is also forwarded to the EPA</p> <p>SB noted that if it goes to WSN it then goes to into the Odour Report which is forwarded to the EPA.</p> <p>BH summarised that complaints could be rung through to WSN 24 hours a day, and that EPA should also be phoned in order for it to be recorded by EPA.</p> <p>AB suggested that some people may feel too intimidated to identify themselves and say where they are ringing from.</p> <p>AM reported that the majority of people do provide names and addresses.</p> <p>GG said that private details are suppressed in information released to protect privacy.</p> <p>AB suggested it would be helpful if a tour of the facility could be arranged for residents.</p> <p>MP reported that Landcom advertising had said when the new plant was opened there would be no odour. But the odour problem has not been solved and has been worse in the last 6 months. She didn't think it true that everything was going to the new plant as ibises are going to the landfill site.</p> <p>BH indicated the issue of advertising was with Landcom and needed to be taken up with them. WSN were holding these meetings to work towards a better outcome.</p> <p>MT suggested that perhaps the new technology needed to be given</p>	<p>A visual presentation to be complied for the next meeting to be followed by a site tour in Spring.</p>	<p>WSN</p>

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	<p>a chance to work.</p> <p>HB indicated it would be tolerable if odours were just occasionally, but every morning and night and on Sunday is not acceptable.</p> <p>PM noted the facility did not operate on Sunday, with the last deliveries Friday night. Perhaps odours are coming from sealed up landfill.</p> <p>BB noted that the facility is not processing on Sunday, but as people are at the plant they can be contacted if someone rings with a complaint. Maintenance cleaning takes place every day.</p> <p>SB reiterated that residents are welcome to call her number or the facility directly to report odour complaints.</p>		
5.	<p>Camden Soil Mix Update</p> <p>SB reported that some complaints have been received. Operations have improved over time, but problems do occur from time to time. There was a fire over the Christmas/New Year period caused by composting.</p> <p>GG explained the relation between WSN and the Soil Mix plant. Garden Waste is trucked to the Jacks Gully site and sorted and mulched, then placed in an enclosed tunnel and exposed to moisture and heat for 3 weeks where it breaks down quickly. When stabilised it goes to Camden Soil Mix for use in potting mixes.</p> <p>SB noted it is stabilised with little odour but has a mulch smell. Odour mitigation measures are in place.</p>		
6.	<p>Actions</p> <p>Review of actions from last meeting</p> <p>Action 3.0 regarding including Current Controls on the agenda is closed, as this is included in the Operational and Environmental Update.</p> <p>Regarding Action 7.0 it was reported that the 1800 number goes directly to WSN customer service staff during business hours and to an answering service after hours which then forwards the comments to WSN for attention first thing in the morning. There had been comments previously that the number wasn't widely advertised. It is now on the website on every page for every facility. In addition WSN was looking at the possibility of signage, but there were issues with RTA. Action closed.</p> <p>AB asked which number she should include in the Garden Gates newsletter.</p>	<p>The odour hotline number 1800 062 086 to be included in the Garden Gates newsletter</p>	AB
7.	<p>General Business</p> <p>AB sought clarification from council regarding a rumour that the road</p>	Id Planning	Id

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	<p>to Jacks Gully would be closed. GG reported on road closures and re-routing which would occur during the construction of new subdivisions.</p> <p>AB indicated she was happy to distribute minutes to Garden Gates residents who had attended.</p> <p>Councils thanked WSN for moving meetings to Wednesday nights which enables Council representatives to attend meetings.</p>	to provide minutes of this meeting to AB for distribution to community members from Garden Gates	Planning
8.	<p>Meeting Closure The meeting closed at 8.45pm. The community members agreed that the next meeting date is to be June 2 2010.</p>		

Agenda Item	Action summary		
4.0	A site tour be organised for the Spring meeting	GJ	September
4.0	A visual presentation be compiled for the next meeting	GJ	Next meeting
6.0	The odour hotline number, 1800 062 086 to be included in the Garden Gates newsletter.	AB	
7.0	Id Planning to provide minutes of this meeting to AB for distribution to community members from Garden Gates.	Id Planning	

Next meeting: 2 June 2010 , 7- 9pm

Venue : Mt Annan Community Cottage, 351 Welling Drive, Mt Annan