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San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Citizens' Advisory Committee
Wastewater Subcommittee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 13, 2021
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

PARTICIPATE VIA BLUEJEANS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE SOFTWARE

Meeting URL
https://bluejeans.com/107491946/4441

Phone Dial-in
408.317.9253

Meeting ID
107 491 946

Participant Passcode
4441

This meeting is being held by Teleconference Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 and the Sixteenth Supplement to Mayoral Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency Dated February 25,2020

During the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) emergency, the San Francisco Public Utilities Citizens Advisory Committee's (SFPUC CAC) regular meeting room, 525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room, is closed. CAC Members and SFPUC staff will convene CAC meetings remotely by teleconference. Members of the public are encouraged to submit their public comment on agenda items in advance of the teleconference meeting by emailing comments to cac@sfwater.org. Comments submitted no later than 12 PM Tuesday the day of the meeting will be read into the record by SFPUC CAC Staffing Team members during the teleconference meeting and will be treated as a substitute to providing public comment during the meeting. Persons who submit written public comment in advance on an agenda item or items will not be permitted to also provide public comment on the same agenda item(s) during the meeting.

Mission: The Wastewater Subcommittee shall review sewage and stormwater collection, treatment, and disposal system replacement, recycling, and other relevant plans, programs, and policies (Admin. Code Article XV, Sections 5.140 - 5.142).

Members

Amy Nagengast, Chair (D8)	Amy Zock (D6)	Michelle Pierce (B-Enviro. Justice)
Marria Evbuoma (D1)	Anietie Ekanem (D10)	

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayoral appointed, B = Board President appointed

Staff Liaisons: Mayara Ruski Augusto Sa
Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. **Call to order and roll call at 5:38 pm**

   Members present at roll call: (3) Nagengast, Evbuoma, Pierce

   Members Absent: (2) Ekanem, Zock

   Staff presenters: Ryan Batjiaka; Kristen Webb; Carolyn Chiu

   Public Members: Steve Lawrence; Tracy Stigers

2. **Approve May 11, 2021 Minutes**

   Motion was made (Pierce) and seconded (Evbuoma) to approve the May 11, 2021 Minutes.

   AYES: (3) Nagengast, Evbuoma, Pierce

   NOES: (0)

   ABSENT: (2) Ekanem, Zock

   Public Comment: None

3. **Report from the Chair**

   - Welcome members, staff, and the public

   Public Comment: None

4. **Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the Committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda

   Public Comment: None

5. **Presentation and Discussion: Biosolids Program Update**, Ryan Batjiaka, Resource Recovery Specialist, Wastewater Enterprise.

   Presentation:
   - Agenda
     - Biosolids are a nutrient rich solid produced at treatment plants

    - SFPUC separates solids and liquids at the treatment plant and send the solids to large anaerobic digesters where the solids are fed to beneficial bacteria20/30 days: microbial biomass break down compounds and pathogens. After dewatering it, the resulting material has organic matter and nutrients
    - Moving to Resource Recovery: initially, raw sewage was sent to the bay and ocean. Wastewater started being treated, solids were sent to landfill and gas was burned. Currently, valuable resources are being used. biogas can be utilized for heat and electricity, the water can be recycled, and the biosolids can be used as a fertilizer
- Soil Fertility – The Reason We Ate Yesterday: finite amount of nutrients in the soil that need to be replenished to ensure soil productivity. It is reasonable to take advantage of the byproducts
- Benefit of SFPUC Biosolids as a Fertilizer – fields with biosolids grow better as pictured in the slides. Biosolids have the ability to improve degraded and marginalized soils
- Benefit of Biosolids as a Fertilizer –fields with biosolids as a fertilizer grew better
- How Were Biosolids Used in 2020? – slide shows amounts and uses
- Continuing to Transition Away from Landfill: compliance with SB 1383 because sending biosolids to landfills produces methane gases. Avoids the waste of sending biosolids to a landfill
- Regulatory Updates
- PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances): graphics show the concentration of different types of PFAS in our blood
- PFAS – Presence in Human Blood Serum
- PFAS in Soil: PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) now found in virtually all soils of the US. Biosolids contain PFAS but most soils have PFAS.
- PFAS Study with UC Davis: PFAS does not seep into groundwater where there was use of biosolids
- PFAS
- Mine Reclamation with Biosolids
- Biosolids Do Amazing Things: improve the environment if used correctly

Discussion:

- **Chair Nagengast** commented that the biosolids that are being brought to the fields are all Class B. There has been a lot of movement to do Class A, but then there were issues with the digesters that halted that effort. Chair then asked staff to explain the difference between Class A and Class B.

  Staff Batjiaka answered that federal requirements demand reducing pathogens from Class B biosolids. Class B Biosolids are only allowed in fields with no public access and certain crops cannot be planted. Pathogen reduction continues in the soil. There is additional regulation for Class B Biosolids. Class A biosolids have been sterilized, have no pathogens in them, and can be used for a wide variety of uses. The Oceanside Treatment Plants digesters were modified to produce Class A biosolids, that have more uses than Class B biosolids. The Oceanside digesters needed to be relined and that is a lengthy process. Without all digesters, the SFPUC does not have the ability to

hold the biosolids long enough to meet EPA's requirements for Class A biosolids. The SFPUC is currently not producing Class A biosolids. Class A were meant to diversify the distribution of biosolids. In the future, a portion of biosolids might go to diversified uses due to Class A, but SFPUC will always have a core part of the program be the ranch partners in Solano County and Sacramento County. The SFPUC had to change direction, but will revisit this option when digesters at Oceanside allow SFPUC to do Class A again.

- **Chair Nagengast** commented that it has been more than two years to fix the digesters and asked if there was a funding problem.

  Staff Batjiaka responded that it is not part of SSIP (sewer system improvement program). The issue is that the treatment plant needs to keep running while the digesters are repaired. The issue first happened and the digesters were taken offline for inspections and then the digesters were back online, but a digester was taken offline due to repair work. Two of the digesters are relined, but it is a slow moving process, as it requires a competitive bid process.

  Staff Chiu added that it was not the SFPUC's intention to have Oceanside take this long to get Class A, but there was an engineering problem with the liner used in the digester. It was a quality control problem. The process prevented SFPUC from providing Class A treatment. Repairs are not finalized. The SFPUC wants to provide a pathogen free product with more diverse opportunities to use the biosolids. It is a long haul to convert all digesters to provide a pathogen free product.

  Staff Batjiaka commented that SFPUC will go slowly once it is back on to use Class A as a program. The SFPUC wants to get everything right and not rush.

- **Chair Nagengast** commented that Class A biosolids can be used locally in the City. Would like to understand the path forward, and understand the barriers to get Class A biosolids, and make sure SFPUC van be accountable for the process.

  Staff Batjiaka responded that SFPUC had a great product that worked really well until the work had to be paused.

- **Chair Nagengast** commented that pausing the program for four years is too long and SFPUC should learn from it.

Public Comment:

- **Steve Lawrence** submitted the following questions in writing:
  1) We are told that PFAS are health hazards that accumulate in the body, increasing over time, capable of causing serious disease such as cancer, and that these substances are found in biosolids. Yet biosolids are to be used as fertilizer. PFAS is found in soil. Is there not health hazard in this planned use? How are we to understand and reconcile a) planned use of biosolids as fertilizer, and b) report that an ingredient of biosolids is harmful?
  2) The schedule for the biosolids digesters is hard to follow and accept. In 2018 they were to be started up August 2023 to May 2024; final

completion May 2024. Ok, that I can understand; construction is done (perhaps but for some punch list) by August 2023, then startup occurs, with final completion months on.
But that schedule has slipped. What are the dates now? I have found that according to some info construction is: August 2019 - Summer of 2026. Now in materials for the CAC July meeting, the biosolids digesters are to be completed 2025. Quite different. No info about startup. "Completion" is generally when the work is all done and accepted. "Construction" is generally followed by startup. Sometimes "substantial completion" refers to when construction is done but for punch list; at this point the work is useful and generally used by the owner (a bridge would have traffic; digesters would get some input, and start up).

Staff Batjiaka commented that the presentation addressed some of the questions.

Staff Chiu responded that according to the 2020 SSIP baseline scope schedule and budget report that was adopted by the Commission, the key milestone for the biosolids project include substantial completion of construction in March 2026; final construction is anticipated to be done in August 2026; full close out of the project is estimated to take place a year after that previous date - August 2027. These dates might change. Two construction bids came in much higher than expected for the biosolids project and bid procurement activities were suspended. The overall impacts to what was originally envisioned are unknown. This reevaluation was presented to the Commission today. The biosolids project was being delivered through a CMGC (Construction Management General Contractor) approach. Basically, unlike traditional design, bid, build, the contractor comes on board during the design phase and gathers comments from the company that will build it. Instead of a giant bid, there are different packages over time to build the project. The pandemic affected the cost of materials and that may have affected the bids which were higher than expected.

- **Steve Lawrence** asked how to keep up with the schedule.

  Staff Chiu responded that the best way to keep up with the schedule is through the quarterly reports. One report was issued for January through March and the next one will cover April through June.

6. **Staff report**
   - Dennis Herrera has been confirmed as next the General Manager
   - Reminder about empty seats
   - CAC Survey will be shared with members soon
   - Customer Affordability Initiatives – New pilot program being launched in August. There is still time to provide additional input

   Public Comment: None.

7. **Future Agenda Items and Resolutions**
   - 1550 Evans Update and Education Center Funding
   - Update on plans for the current Southeast Community Center
   - SFPUC Education Outreach – SFUSD

- Nano plastics in the Bay – Monitoring
- Environmental Justice Analysis briefing
- Environmental Justice in Capital Projects
- Watershed Stewardship Grants
- Next Generation Green Infrastructure
- Racial Equity Plan – Funding to Support the Plan
- Job Creation at the Plant – City Works and Apprenticeship Program
- Wastewater – Train and Training
- Wastewater CAC staff
- Asset Management Integration – Wastewater policy and capital projects
- Green Infrastructure Program and Resolution Update
- Wastewater Communications Update
- Stormwater Management Ordinance and the Southeast Treatment Plant
- Upcoming Construction
- Workforce Programs and Qualifications
- Treasure Island Field Trip

Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up

- Resolution in Support of SFPUC Class A Biosolids Local Distribution Program **adopted August 21, 2018**
- Resolution in Support of Cityworks Interns Recommendations **adopted in November 21, 2017**
- Resolution in Support of Equitable Green Infrastructure Implementation throughout the Southeast Sector of San Francisco and throughout the City **adopted June 20, 2017**
- Resolution Urging SFPUC Commission to Initiate Planning and Environmental Review for Building a New Community Center at Third and Evans and to Direct Staff to Develop an Interim Greenhouse Environmental and Workforce Development Program **adopted on October 18, 2016**
- Resolution Supporting the SFPUC to Conduct Robust Community Engagement to Determine the Community's Preference for Remodeling Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale or Building a New Community Center at 1550 Evans **adopted on January 19, 2016**

Public Comment: None

8. **Announcements/Comments** The next scheduled meeting of the Wastewater Subcommittee will take place on September 14, 2021. Visit www.sfwater.org/cac for final confirmation of the next meeting date.

   Public Comment: None.

9. **Adjournment**

   Motion was made (Pierce) and seconded (Evbuoma) to adjourn the meeting.

   Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.