

LITTER ABATEMENT TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 25, 2017 – 2 p.m., Lord Nelson Room, Monterey City Hall
Prepared by Lewis Leader

In Attendance: Libby Downey, LATF chair and Monterey Regional Waste Management District (MRWMD) Board member; Jeff Lindenthal, Lewis Leader, MRWMD; Ted Terrasas, City of Monterey; Nijesh Sthapit, Pebble Beach Community Services District (PBCSD); Jenny Mitchell, Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA); Michael Coleman.

Attendees introduced themselves.

Libby and Jeff provided a brief history of the LATF including Libby's early work to call attention to the problem of roadside litter while she was a member of the Monterey City Council (2004-2016). At the time, Dan Albert, Sr. represented Monterey on the MRWMD Board and at Libby's request he brought concerns about litter in the region to the Board which resulted in the establishment of the LATF. Her initial concerns were that highway off-ramps locally were not being properly cleaned of trash. Ted Terrasas reported that this problem remains an issue and that even when the ramps are cleaned, garbage returns fairly quickly.

Libby said that she has contacted Dennis DeGroodt at Caltrans several times when she observes major litter spills and he dispatches crews to clean up the mess.

Jeff reminded the committee that litter violations from motor vehicles can be reported via the KeepMontereyCountyClean.com website. When the district receives reports of such litter it sends the information to the CHP who follows up with the registered owner of the vehicle in the form of a letter.

1. Tarp Your Load Advertising

Jeff reported that the District ran bi-lingual ads in the Auto Shopper publication last summer and Fall reminding owners of pick-up trucks to "tarp your load". The campaign will resume this Spring. Ted reported that the Central Coast Recycling Media Coalition (CCRMC) has addressed litter in their regional advertising campaign which included a "TARP IT" campaign in 2016:

- Radio PSAs including - Spanish 15-second "tarp your load" radio spot (100% of rotation) July 11 through August 7th on KLOK and KSES Spanish radio.
- English radio with local traffic sponsorships on KCDU, KHIP, KWAV, KKHK KDON, KOCN, KTOM, KION and KPRC (Spanish), plus the regular schedule of 15's on KBOQ all had the tarp your load 15-second spot in rotation with the other 4 15-second litter messages (20% of all spots) ran June, July, through the middle of August.

Jenny Mitchel, who serves as treasurer of the CCRMC, described how CalRecycle has increased oversight of advertising paid for with CalRecycle grant funds.

Ted commented that the CCRMC is looking at expanding use of social media and alternative

advertising platforms such as Pandora in the tri-county area (Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz) to get the word out. Jenny added that they were trying to use any funds that they had to address the litter issues.

Michael Coleman suggested seeking free Public Service Announcement advertising for future litter related advertising campaigns.

Libby noted the anti-litter “Don’t Mess With Texas” campaign had been successful in enlisting support from celebrities to lend their voice to anti-litter messaging. This campaign began in 1986 and has continued since. From its website:

“For thirty years, the Don’t mess with Texas campaign (along with a lot of our very famous friends) has taught Texans the real cost of littering. Whether the message appears on a billboard, TV, or a screen, we’re proud of our advertising and the impact it has had on helping reduce litter in Texas.”

Lewis has offered to set-up a meeting with local PR professional David Armanasco to enlist his support in developing creative outreach strategies the committee could employ locally.

Ted noted that many beverage container redemption centers – including all but 2 on the Monterey Peninsula, have been closed due to declining market value for recyclable commodities and insufficient payments to recyclers in the State system. Locally, sites still open are at the MRWMD behind the Last Chance Mercantile and behind Costco in Sand City. In many cases consumers can return beverage containers to the stores where purchased to receive their CRV refund. Ted offered to provide a list of stores offering this service locally.

2. State Plastic Bag Ban in Force

Thanks to passage by California voters in the November 2016 election this bag ban is now the law. “It was a great victory,” Jeff said. Now cities state-wide have to comply. Libby called this vote “so heartwarming” and Jeff thanked the City of Monterey for their leadership in being the first city in the county to pass a plastic bag ban.

Proposition 67, the statewide ban, was passed by margin of 53.27 to 46.73 percent.

From an article (excerpted) in the Sacramento Bee: “The ban takes effect immediately, which means grocery stores, retail stores with a pharmacy, convenience stores, food marts and liquor stores will no longer provide single-use plastic carry-out bags to customers. So, if you forget to bring your own bag to the store, be prepared to pay at least 10 cents for a recycled paper bag or reusable alternative.”

3. Lapis Road RV Parking in Monterey County

Jeff described the problem of litter and illegal dumping associated with the large number of campers and RVs parking along Lapis Road adjacent to Highway 1 and Del Monte Blvd just North of the Marina city limits. Jeff said that the MRWMD staff has routinely patrolled this area for years to remove illegally dumped material but with the campers parked and occupants apparently living along the roadside the problem as gotten much worse and has attracted the attention of Monterey County supervisors and staff.

The following article (excerpted) appeared in the Monterey Herald on January 13, 2017:

“Monterey -- A county road just outside of Marina has seen a marked increase in the amount of recreational vehicles, cars and trucks parked there for extended periods, prompting complaints from citizens and now action from the Sheriff's Office. For those living and working in the area, the string of vehicles parked on the road, along with the refuse and waste left behind, has fostered a growing concern. It's been mostly complaints from the community that prompted enforcement' of the existing ordinance, said John Thornburg of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office. According to the agency's Facebook page, the Sheriff's Office has received numerous complaints about hazardous waste, unsafe vehicles and other public nuisance crimes related to vehicles parked on Lapis Road in the unincorporated area of Marina. On Jan. 3, the Monterey County Department of Public Works installed six 'No Overnight Parking or Camping' signs along Lapis Road. Sheriff's vehicle abatement enforcement officers and deputies continue to patrol the area, enforcing the law.”

4. Member Agency Updates

Jenny said that the SVSWA has adopted a couple of Highway 101 areas where they utilize CalRecycle funding to pay for litter clean-up. The agency has been actively promoting and conducting cleanup events in the south county area in partnership with Tri-Cities Disposal & Recycling Services in Soledad, Greenfield and Gonzales. In the City of Salinas, the public work department is responsible for collecting illegal dumped trash, Jenny said.

Nijesh Sthapit said that the PBCSD has an annual program for residents to drop off household hazardous waste including medicines and batteries at the district's fire station. The 2016 event brought in 350 vehicles.

The MRWMD and the SVSWA have been working together on a California Product Stewardship Council grant to locate additional secure locations for residents to drop-off unwanted medications and prescription drugs. The grant is funding two pharmaceutical collection kiosks in Salinas and several on the Peninsula including at CHOMP and the Marina police station.

Michael noted that the Monterey Harbor seems pretty clean this Winter. He thanked the City of Monterey for their efforts to place lids on top of trash receptacles in the parking area adjacent to the wharf, and to ban smoking on the municipal wharfs.

Jeff noted that the MRWMD will be celebrating its 65th anniversary with a community open house on Saturday, March 18. The event will feature a ribbon cutting for the opening of the new Community Franchise Collection Facility and CNG fueling station. The district will begin work on the \$20 million Materials Recovery Facility improvement project in the middle of February with completion expected in mid-October of this year.

5. Action Items, Future Initiatives

Libby requested that Jeff reach out to CalTrans to ensure we can have Dennis and/or staff attend our next meeting. Lewis will set up a meeting with David Armanasco. Ted will provide info to the Committee on CRV recycling opportunities locally.

The next meeting of the LATF was set for April 5, 2 PM at the Lord Nelson Room, Monterey City Hall

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