



**Benton  
County**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

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**4500 SW Research Way  
Corvallis, OR 97333-1192  
(541) 766-6819**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Disposal Site Advisory Committee (DSAC)**

**March 12, 2025**

Benton County DSAC Chair Rachel Purcell called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. The meeting was open to the public virtually via a published Zoom link.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ATTENDING**

Rachel Purcell, Chair (present)  
David Hackleman, Vice-Chair (virtual)  
Jennifer Field (present)  
Chuck Gilbert (absent)  
Brent Pawlowski (absent)  
Charlene Carroll (virtual)  
David Livesay (present)  
Paul Koster, Republic Services (present)

#### **STAFF**

Petra Schuetz, Interim Community  
Development Director and Planning Official  
Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator

#### **GUESTS**

Camille (no last name; from Zoom report)  
Ken Eklund (from Zoom chat)  
Debbie Palmer  
Kate Harris (from Zoom chat)  
Kevin Kenaga  
Paul Nietfeld  
Jason Schindler (from Zoom chat)

### **Agenda Item #1: Call to Order**

#### **No roll called.**

Sean McGuire provided an update on the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee's (ENRAC) role in evaluating the landfill expansion application process. Since the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) is currently inactive, ENRAC was tasked with making a recommendation to the Planning Commission (PC), though ENRAC has no formal checklist and are expected to form their own criteria. Three county staff will help with this process and develop an overview of procedure, boundaries to the process, and appropriate recommendations. The process involves multiple levels of review, starting with the PC,

21 followed by potential appeals to the Board of Commissioners, and ultimately the Land Use  
22 Board of Appeals (LUBA). McGuire mentioned there is no formal checklist to evaluate  
23 criteria; ENRAC will develop templates and questions what should be considered, and to  
24 accomplish it as quickly as possible. ENRAC has but four or five weeks to consider factors  
25 including, but not limited to, the environment, natural resources, water pollution toxins,  
26 and leachate. No calendar dates have been determined as of this point, but possibly mid-  
27 April for planning and a decision in early May, with multiple days for public comment.

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29 Chair Purcell asked if the PC requested specific input; McGuire replied no, ENRAC will  
30 provide an agency referral with a collective viewpoint as a County Advisory Committee.  
31 Purcell asked if the PC decisions have to be made based on the land use code; McGuire  
32 replied the three lines in the land use code are extremely vague as to what defines area and  
33 groundwater. Each agency can decide what specifics they would like the PC to consider.  
34 Livesay wondered about Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife or DEQ interacting with or  
35 affecting ENRAC; McGuire confirmed ENRAC is not beholden to any other agency or  
36 committee. Livesay wondered about weighted scores of ENRAC comments; McGuire  
37 stated there are no weighted metrics. The PC will receive unweighted comments from  
38 ENRAC as well as public comment to consider. Purcell asked about the legal basis for  
39 decision-making being grounded in the law, development code, and the county's overall  
40 2040 Goals. McGuire responded the PC will look at the information presented with their  
41 own thought process, as volunteers. An appeal process after the PC decision will involve  
42 the Board of Commissioners with their own legal interpretation, then possibly an appeal to  
43 LUBA, which makes the final legal call. Purcell noted those opposed to the expansion may  
44 want to consider submitting public comment based on development code rather than  
45 relying on strong feelings against expansion. Gilbert suggested reviewing the previous  
46 process from 2021 as there are insights which provide perspective to the process. Carroll  
47 wondered about LUBA's appeal process. McGuire was unsure as to LUBA's process but was  
48 willing to ask the county attorney for input. Gilbert mentioned district courts were used in  
49 the 1960s but the state transferred jurisdiction to a land use board predicated upon land  
50 use laws. Schindler, as Chair of ENRAC, commented that with Carroll's presence on  
51 ENRAC, there is better coordination between it and DSAC. ENRAC has a sense of mandate  
52 but a lack of templates to follow; Schindler appreciated the work already done by DSAC  
53 and wondered how to increase collaboration for ease of process. Purcell noted the  
54 presence of a representative from Republic Services on DSAC, as well as members with  
55 specific fields of professional and personal expertise and was open to the idea of beginning  
56 a collaboration.

57  
58 **Agenda Item #2: Public Comment @ 17:04**

Debbie Palmer from the Valley Neighbors for Environmental Quality and Safety (VNEQS) addressed the group, requesting that her comments be passed along to ENRAC since they do not accept public comments and urged ENRAC to engage with VNEQS as community members with facts and documents to share going back as far as 2021. Palmer stated the PC's decision is quasi-judicial and subjective, and LUBA is reluctant to overturn county commissioner decisions unless there is a legal technicality. She felt indicating conditions of approval for the Coffin Butte Landfill expansion would effectively signify agreement to the expansion, warning that never before in the history of the landfill have conditions of approval been enforced. Palmer stated the SWAC was dissolved by county commissioners

Paul Nietfeld provided an update on his previous question from February 2025's DSAC meeting regarding intake volume reconciliation used as the basis for the host fee calculation, which is important to the county as revenue. Nietfeld explained he is working with Bailey Payne and Ginger Richardson of Republic Services to get a definitive answer and present it to DSAC via Payne. The county needs a way to cross check information against the publicly reported information to DEQ. He hoped for transparency regarding the size of the host fee check paid out in the middle of January in the year following the calendar year of the intake. Nietfeld asked Koster for his input; Koster replied the information reported was vetted to be accurate; Brett Davis was working with to verify with the financial arm. Payne confirmed he will be speaking with Brett on this topic in the upcoming week.

### **Agenda Item #3: Approval of Meeting Minutes and Action Items from February 12, 2025**

The committee reviewed the previous meeting's minutes and noted a minor correction regarding the last name of a committee member. No further corrections or clarifications were offered.

Field made a motion to approve the Minutes; Carroll seconded the motion. The **motion passed with 5 ayes, 0 nays**, and abstentions from Livesay and Koster.

For February action items, the group briefly discussed ongoing priorities but deferred detailed discussions to the second half of the meeting during the goal discussion. One specific action item mentioned was arranging for retired hydrologist Eric Tuppen to present to DSAC at a future meeting, possibly in May 2025. Livesay had questions about the monitoring network with regard to valid data collection and heavy metal sampling from wells after reviewing graphs and plots from 2023, specifically well 26 and seasonal variability and nested wells installed in the 1970s. He would like to reach out to DEQ for their opinion on those being used as compliance wells. Koster and Livesay discussed the types of wells used in Oregon previously and currently versus wells used in other states.

Purcell restated there would be an opportunity to discuss in the second half of the meeting regarding 2025 priorities.

Carroll reported on her outreach efforts to Senator Merkley's office and an additional special contact but has received no response as of yet. She flagged evidence of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigation included in the meeting packet and noted that the Title V Air Quality Permit for Coffin Butte Landfill, originally issued in 2015, has not been updated for the amount on the air quality permit despite increased landfill intake and external waste sources. The early January 2025 DEQ hearing for the air quality permit has been postponed again. Purcell wished to discuss the air quality topic further in the meeting as it relates to DSAC's questions about methane.

#### **Agenda Item #4: Approval of 2024 Coffin Butte Landfill Community Concerns Annual Report**

The meeting focused on the approval of the 2024 Community Concerns Annual Report (CCAR), which marks the final one to be reviewed before all outstanding concerns are addressed. Purcell was surprised over the number of odor complaints. Carroll like the color wheel but suggested displaying complaint numbers as digits for better clarity when county commissioners review the report. The discussion covered how complaints are tracked and investigated, especially those related to odors, with some challenges noted due to missing details like location or type of odor. Complaints come through various channels, including RS and DEQ, and are investigated by RS reviewing weather data and visiting locations when possible. Koster is obtaining an anemometer to determine wind direction. A concern was raised about the difficulty accessing the odor complaint form on the Coffin Butte website. Koster acknowledged this issue and agreed to work on website accessibility for submitting complaints and to enable more immediate responses to investigating complaints; he also said odor complaints can be made via the DEQ website. It was also noted that providing an immediate response to complaints is challenging, particularly when complaints come in after hours or are delayed by as much as ten days. Efforts are being made to streamline the process for quicker responses.

Carroll moved to approve the CCAR report, with the agreed-upon change to display complaint numbers as digits, for submission to Oregon DEQ; **Field seconded the motion, which passed with 7 ayes.**

#### **Agenda Item #5: DSAC Scope and Goals Expressed as 2025 Priorities\***

Purcell focused on setting priorities for 2025 to narrow down key focus areas given limited resources and the desire to provide actionable and meaningful input to the county

commissioners. A review was made of the DSAC Committees shared by Payne with committee members via email (\*Exhibit 1 – DSAC Committees).

Purcell read out the chart's column titles for brevity; the committee was asked to vote on their top four priorities, with members providing feedback on various topics. Some members emphasized the importance of focusing on PFAS, methane, and odor issues, suggesting that these could be grouped together as air and water-related concerns. Others agreed that the expansion application and the Title 5 permit should also be top priorities. The group discussed the timeline for addressing these priorities, especially the upcoming decision on the expansion application, which would likely take precedence due to its timing. A final decision on the top priorities was set to be made, with the goal of ensuring manageable deliverables for the year. The discussion revolves around the top priorities for waste management and environmental issues, with several participants offering their input. Hackleman prioritizes addressing fire and methane issues, along with concerns regarding PFAS contamination, litter, and road damage. Pawlowski focuses on air quality, leachate, and expansion concerns. Chuck highlights methane, PFAS, water quality, and road damage as key issues. Paul expresses interest in methane and odors, groundwater, and leakage management. The group also discusses the potential for community education, outreach efforts, and better understanding of waste management's impact on methane production. They aim to develop a collective knowledge base to address these complex issues, considering potential actions like writing letters to the planning commission or liaising with agencies like ENRAC. They plan to share information publicly for transparency and future educational purposes. Additionally, the group acknowledges that while some issues are operational and easier to address, others, such as methane, PFAS, and groundwater, are more complex with long-term consequences. The discussion focuses on the logistics of collaborating on a white paper regarding landfill expansion and related environmental issues. The group is considering using Google Docs for efficient collaboration, though there are concerns about public accessibility and privacy. A member volunteers to provide a short overview of PFAS and its environmental impact, hoping to contribute valuable information to the ongoing work. The conversation turns to the urgency of providing feedback on the expansion proposal, as the deadline for public comments is fast approaching. Some members express concerns about environmental risks such as PFAS contamination and methane leaks at the Coffin Butte site, emphasizing the need for comprehensive input to guide decision-making. The committee plans to work on their comments in a timely manner, considering both the current landfill situation and the potential expansion. Members acknowledge the diversity of views within the group and stress the importance of weighing the scientific and environmental factors carefully before making a decision. The conversation revolves around organizing a response to a document

request from the EPA regarding environmental concerns at a landfill site. Benton County Community Development clarifies that the request is not an investigation but rather a document request aimed at understanding emissions and environmental impacts across various sites. The team discusses the need to submit comments by the end of April and strategizes on how to address this in the planning process. They propose creating a Google Doc to track questions and concerns related to the site, particularly those that would be important for the planning commission to know before the public comment period closes. The goal is to compile the most relevant information and refine it in future meetings. The group agrees to focus initially on top priority questions, acknowledging that some issues, such as groundwater contamination, may require further context for a complete understanding. Benton County Community Development emphasizes the need for spatial context in addressing these concerns and suggests gathering information from broader sources. The plan is to create a working document where all questions and details can be added and refined over time. During a meeting about environmental concerns related to a landfill site, discussions focused on clarifying the timeline for submitting comments and responses. Benton County Community Development highlighted the importance of submitting a letter to the planning commission by the end of April, after which they would engage in public comment. Charli Carroll clarified that the matter at hand was a document request, not an investigation, emphasizing the EPA's goal of understanding emissions from landfills nationwide. Various technologies are being explored to address issues like PFAS contamination, but challenges remain regarding the capacity to handle the scale of the problem.

The team proposed starting a Google Doc to collect questions and concerns, with the goal of addressing them before the planning commission's public comment period closes. The document would serve as a working draft, allowing everyone to add relevant topics. The importance of prioritizing key questions was emphasized to ensure that responses are coherent. Benton County Community Development stressed the need for context when addressing environmental issues, especially groundwater contamination. The conversation concluded with plans to move forward with the document and a focus on refining the questions for further action.

#### **\*Exhibit 1 – DSAC Committees**

DSAC Committees	Fire Safety In collaboration with Republic Services, the Fire Safety Committee will explore additional safety measures to prevent fires at the site.	Methane / Odors In collaboration with Republic Services, the Methane / Odors Committee will explore landfill gas monitoring technologies and odor mitigation strategies in an effort to better understand and mitigate the emissions.	CUP Expansion Application The CUP Expansion Application Committee will monitor the expansion process and will provide informational updates to the DSAC. The Committee may propose that the DSAC provide public comment (in person or in writing) to the Planning Commission.	Title V Air Permit The Title V Air Permit Committee will monitor the application process and update the DSAC.	Coffin Butte Reports The Coffin Butte Reports Committee will provide input on the Republic Services annual Coffin Butte report and environmental report (typically in the late spring).	Litter Abatement The Litter Abatement Committee will collaborate with Republic Services to address roadside litter on roads surrounding the landfill.	PFAS & Leachate Management	Traffic and Road Damage	Wildlife Stewardship	Community Education about DSAC	Service Issues at Landfill (wait times, billing)	Hydrology and Groundwater
Brent Pawlowski			1	1			1				1	
Chuck Gilbert		1					1	1				1
Jennifer Field		1	1				1					1
David Hackleman		1				1	1	1				
Rachel Purcell		1	1				1			1		
Paul Koster												
Charlene Carroll		1	1				1					1
David Livesay		1		1			1					1
	0	6	4	2	0	1	7	2	0	1	1	4

## Agenda Item #6: Agenda Items and Staff Requests for Next Meeting

The meeting focused on several key topics, including the potential involvement of a hydrologist, Eric, or a new consultant to analyze groundwater data in the area. There was discussion about the complexities of local hydrology, particularly regarding the division of flow between Soap Creek and other geological features, which could complicate well data interpretation. Kate Harris suggested that Republic offer free well tests to homeowners to demonstrate goodwill, while David Hackleman proposed the county could handle this instead. The group also emphasized the importance of not attributing nutrient contamination solely to the landfill, as other sources like septic systems could be contributing factors. Additionally, materials on EPA measurements and leachate movement into the Willamette River were shared, along with a clarification email. The meeting ended with a reminder to review the shared documents before adjourning.

**Adjourned at 7:58 P.M. after** Carroll moved to adjourn; David Livesay seconded.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025, in the Holmes & Shipley Meeting Room, First Floor, Kalapuya Building, 4500 SW Research Way, Corvallis, Oregon, at 6:00 P.M.

Action Items	Lead	Status
1. Chair Purcell to start a Google Doc for committee members to add questions and details about the site related to responding to the expansion proposal.	Purcell	Completed
2. Field to prepare a short overview presentation on PFAS in leachate, air, and landfills for the next meeting.	Field	Postponed to next meeting
3. Koster to reach out to the new hydrology consultant to potentially review groundwater data and present findings to the committee.	Koster	

4. Committee members to review the EPA measurements document and VMAX flyer included in the meeting packet.	Committee	
5. Koster to compile answers to the committee's priority questions about the expansion proposal once they are finalized.	Koster	
6. Committee to decide at the next meeting how to proceed with providing input on the expansion proposal to the Planning Commission.	Committee	

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