

Waste Recovery Plant Deal OK'd in Berkeley County

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. — The Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority voted unanimously Wednesday to approve a 30-year deal worth \$3.66 million with a company that wants to produce a solid refuse fuel from household garbage.

The 3-0 vote authorized solid waste authority board Chairman Clint Hogbin to sign the ground lease and easement agreement with Entsorga West Virginia.

Board members Edgar Mason and Mark Barney were absent due to illness, Hogbin said.

John Decker of Apple Valley Waste said he hoped construction of the mixed waste resource recovery facility on an 11.8-acre site at the county's old landfill property off Grapevine Road could begin within three to four months.

The solid waste authority is to be paid \$1,000 upon the signing of the lease and \$70,000 for the first year of the deal when construction begins. The value of the lease is to gradually increase after the second year and could be renewed five years at a time after the initial 30-year period.

The solid waste authority also will receive 50 cents for each ton of garbage received at the facility, but could see losses in the same amount as a result of reduced landfill dumping, Hogbin said.

In order for construction to begin, the estimated \$19 million facility, which is backed by Apple Valley Waste and two other companies, still must obtain permits from the state Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Highways and the county, Decker said.

Last month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a "comfort" letter that approved the burning of Entsorga's fuel at Essroc's Martinsburg cement plant, Decker told solid waste authority board members.

When burned, the dry fuel, which has been deemed a "non-waste" fuel like gasoline, will generate lower pollution emissions than coal, Decker said.

Coal is currently used to operate the cement plant's kiln and Decker said Entsorga's fuel works well with the fossil fuel.

When operational, the facility will employ about a dozen workers and is expected to indirectly result in additional jobs, such as trucking, Decker said. The facility's construction is expected to create about 100 jobs, he said.

The lease agreement, which also provides an option for an additional lease of 5.65 acres, was reached after 10 or 11 months of discussion and negotiation, Hogbin said.

"I think it landed in a good place," Decker said.

The lease guarantees a “free day” each month for West Virginia residents to drop off their household garbage at the facility and provides assurances that there will be no off-site odors, litter, gas or noise.

The lease also provides a commitment to pick up any litter along Grapevine Road on a daily basis and that the facility will be limited to accepting 500 tons of garbage per day and 9,999 tons per month.

While the tonnage limits are also in state regulations, Hogbin said incorporating them into the lease provides an empowerment mechanism that further protects the interests of the community.

The free day should help discourage open dumping, said Hogbin, who lauded Entsorga for going “above and beyond” what is required.

Less than 30 percent of resident’s garbage placed on the curb to be picked up by Apple Valley Waste will be landfilled if the resource recovery facility is put into operation, Decker said.

Decker said a separate agreement would have to be reached with the City of Martinsburg to use the facility, which aims to primarily serve the Eastern Panhandle.

The plant also will have an on-site educational facility for the public to learn about the waste recovery process, which Hogbin said will be a first in the state.

The company told state regulators in 2012 the facility would screen trash with a large rotary drum that would tear open trash bags to aerate the garbage. Rapid composting would be caused by an air circulation system. Moisture in the waste would be reduced by a combination of fresh and re-circulated warm air and the result would be a dry paper-like product.

www.heraldmailmedia.com/news/tri_state/west_virginia/waste-recovery-plant-deal-ok-d-in-berkeley-county/article_c3205468-7e60-11e3-b3b9-001a4bcf6878.html?mode=jqm