

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting

June 21, 2023, 8:00am – 9:30am

Minute Taker: Dailey Brannin

The June 21 RAC meeting was held hybrid. The in-person component was at 147 Hampshire St, Cambridge.

Members Present: In person: Dailey Brannin, David Demme, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Debby Knight, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Scott MacGrath, Audrey Ng, Richard Nurse, Diane Roseman, Helen Snively, Stephanie Wasiuk

Virtually: Sakiko Isomichi, Carlie Peters, Dawn Quirk, Meera Singh, Alexandra Toupal, Siddarth Vedullapalli

Members Absent: Lee Elliot, Martha Henry, Quinten Steenhuis, Julia Tsang, Rob Vandanabeele

Public Present: Amy Waltz

Staff Present: Deb Albenberg, Mike Orr, Jalen Bernard

May minutes were approved.

City Updates

- Reduce/Reuse webpage is nearly complete. When it is complete the RAC Google Map will be live!
- UTEC tour recap:
 - Many programs (woodworking, mattress recycling) – social component (reducing violence, supporting young adults who have been incarcerated)
 - 20% of their mattresses come from Cambridge
- Casella grand reopening update from Mike: the new facility has all new equipment with more robotics and more optical sorters. One new process is that they can now recycle the glass for construction fill more directly (they've cut out the middle-person)
 - Will there be a virtual tour? hopefully one is coming but the facility looks similar to before
 - Is there now a heat/air-controlled room for workers? Yes!
- Zero Waste Master Plan update—refreshing the Plan starting in late-summer
 - DPW is exploring putting out an RFP for consultants
 - Previous consultant was HDR (Canadian)
 - Question asked about what the internal priorities are for the plan
 - Mike's would be mandatory composting, but there are different priorities for different stakeholders.
 - City council would have to approve regulatory changes
 - Other places that have it: West Coast, Colorado, NYC, Hamilton MA and Vermont!

- South Korea – 97% composting
- Question about enforcement: enforcement = encouragement (not punitive)
- Many new trash carts already have rodent holes
- Deb – 200 13+ buildings now with composting; 420 units is largest building; pausing rollout during the summer.
- At tabling events, we're frequently approached by residents in large buildings
- Possibility of adding drop-off bins to area where residents are asking?
- Sharing compost bins is encouraged - fewer need to be emptied
- Having it in building is better than drop-offs for longevity
- RAC is one of the groups that will be engaged in the process. The vendor will have a meeting with RAC and with public
- Current plan is online
- RAC Google webpage sneak peak
 - Google site coming, to keep calendar, minutes, mission statement/charter, etc. in one place
 - It will also be a place to share interesting articles/information, but we will keep policy decisions/conversations out of it
 - A few options to manage adding events to calendar - TBD

Discussion of members' goals and interests

- Results of survey to RAC members

Curbside Compost outreach: 14

Encourage people to recycle textiles: 12

Bulky items & move-out waste: 11

Compile stats on Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance: 9

Encourage people to use Recycle Center: 6

Drop-off Compost Outreach: 3

Compile stats from Buy Nothing: 2

Work with businesses to reduce single-use items: 2

Explore how to restart carton/tetrapak recycling: 1

Next steps:

- BYOB survey over summer
- Hit the ground running on curbside compost in Sept

- Focus on textiles/move-out during Winter
- BYOB research
 - surveying grocery store exits to count how many people use reusable or disposable bags or nothing (an update to when it was last done before and when the ordinance first took effect)
 - each type of bag is counted; not tallied for each person leaving but as a whole
 - Good to do in pairs/groups
 - Other possible ways to measure: if grocery stores are ordering fewer bags?
- Compost kitchen bin bag question (suggested by Sakiko)
- Sakiko: when we first started with anaerobic digestion, we might have moved back to traditional composting so it made sense to keep using the compostable bags. But now?
 - Mike: anaerobic digestion still has its opponents despite the lack of hard research against it (and the LCA in favor of it). Nearest composting facility Cambridge could use is in Manchester, MA (not close)
- Expense of compostable bags is a barrier
- Move-out waste/Buy Nothing
- Potentially could do observational surveys of what people are throwing out, for move-out research
- Buy Nothing is worth looking at to see what people are diverting
- Tracie working on connecting Buy Nothing users/groups
- Possibility of mobile recycling centers for electronics, textiles, metal, etc. (not furniture – BN is best for that)

Closing

- Public Comment – none
- Mike to send information on:
- Summer social— Doodle forthcoming
- Upcoming volunteer opportunities
- Summer festivals
- Jazz Festival
- Movie nights
- Fall Festivals:
- Cambridge Science Festival, Danehy Park Day, Oktoberfest, Election Day
- Action Plan/Decisions

- Sub-committees/projects
- Composting bags
- Bag tallies
- Tracie – Buy Nothing
- how other districts/municipalities deal with mandatory composting
- Announcements: none

Zoom chat:

08:02:37 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Hi everyone!

08:11:05 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

CNC machine

08:13:21 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

did they talk about the fire?

08:32:58 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

great job!!

08:40:58 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

any way to share screen?

08:52:05 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

And people carried things in their backpacks

08:52:17 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

Reacted to "And people carried t..." with 👍

08:56:30 From carlie to Everyone:

I love that quesriob

08:56:44 From carlie to Everyone:

Especially since they separate everything based on temp so it requires more bags

08:57:13 From carlie to Everyone:

& grocery delivery is probably a lot more popular than when this survey was last done

08:57:24 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

Reacted to "& grocery delivery i..." with 👍

08:58:51 From carlie to Everyone:

Grocery delivery is def a big habit. My sister lives three blocks from a grocery store and prefers delivery for convenience...

09:03:18 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Sakiko, v good point - I agree we need to think of that ASAP

09:13:23 From carlie to Everyone:

Reacted to "And people carried t..." with 👍

09:20:52 From Siddharth's iPhone to Everyone:

I realized I was on mute and I was driving. I can support with composting as well.

09:21:07 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to "I realized I was on ..." with ❤️

09:30:46 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Sorry, I have to go. See you all next time!

09:31:02 From Siddharth's iPhone to Everyone:

Me too!

09:32:41 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Furnishing Hope will pick up furniture if it is at least 5 substantial items furnishinghopema.org

09:35:01 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

Same here.. hopping off. Great meeting !

09:35:24 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Thank you! Bye all!