

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2023, 8:00am – 9:30am

147 Hampshire St. and virtual

Minute Taker: Audrey Ng

Members present: Dailey Brannin, Dave Demme, Lee Elliot, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Audrey Ng, Richard Nurse, Carlie Peters, Dawn Quirk, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Helen Snively, Quinten Steenhuis, Julia Tsang, Stephanie Wasiuk

Members absent: Scott MacGrath, Alex Toupal, Rob Vandanabeele, Siddharth Vedullapalli

Staff Present: Mike Orr

Public present: Amy Waltz

1. Housekeeping

- Vote on June Minutes - Approved

2. City Updates

- Reduce/Reuse webpage is active on City webpage. [RAC Google Map](#) is live!
 - 1500 visits to the page after 2 weeks
- Zero Waste Master Plan—RFP deadline of 9/7. City reviewing bidders. Expected start date for ZWMP is Nov. 1.
 - 3 bids received
- Oct. 25: City Council hearing to discuss Zero Waste Master Plan improvements since 2017, and what the next consultation may look like after a consultant is selected.
 - Wednesday October 25, 2023 at 3:00 PM
 - Hearing will be open to the public - virtual and maybe in-person.
 - RAC could dedicate an entire meeting to discuss priorities for ZWMP consultants
- Upcoming Fall festivals:
 - Volunteers needed for all events - Contact Mike directly to volunteer for any amount of time within event windows

Date	Official Event Time	Event	Location	Volunteer Arrival
Sat. September 23	11a.m. - 3:00 pm	Danehy Park Day	Danehy Park	10:45
Sat. September 30	11-2pm	Fixit Clinic	Cambridge Foundry, 101 Rogers St	10:30
Sunday, October 1	noon - 4pm	Science Carnival/ Robot Zoo	Kendall/MIT Open Space	noon
Sunday, October 8	11am-5pm	Octoberfest	Harvard Square	11am
Thursday, October 26	6-8pm	STEAM It Up	TBD	5:45

Saturday, November 4	10:30am- 2:30pm	Family Fun/Literacy Day (DHSP)	TBD - Probably City Hall	10:30am
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- Science Festival Lunch and Learn at DPW - 9/26 at 12:00 PM
 - Deep dive into anaerobic digestion
 - Make event hybrid?
- Other potential events:
 - Leaf bag giveaway?
 - Pumpkin toss? 11/4
 - Election day—11/7
- [RAC Google webpage](#) updated
- Cambridge textiles featured on WCVB's [The Chronicle](#)!
- City of Cambridge Zero Waste efforts featured on front page of [Waste Advantage](#)!
- DPW postcard mailed out
- SWANA Annual conference to be held in Boston this year
 - City of Cambridge is hosting a tour as part of conference

3. Discussion of RAC goals

- Request for more information on Helpsy operations
 - These details are proprietary
 - Hope to increase transparency for public education
 - Existing FAQ sheet on [textiles webpage](#)
- Any thoughts on waste, recycling, compost in the City over the summer?
 - Over 12 tons of food waste collected on Monday 9/11/23 - Highest ever!
 - Larger buildings and Harvard housing units interested in composting - Anyone inquiring should be put in touch with Dailey (only Harvard) via email. This could be addressed in the ZWMP.
 - Discussed how to approach recycling/ composting logistics with neighbors who are new to it
 - Emphasis on the most common materials that can be recycled/composted rather than minutiae of what can't be, to reduce intimidation
 - Demonstrate the practice itself alongside providing information to build the muscle memory in order to change behavior
 - Block parties - opportunity to demonstrate in person and connect
 - Composting helps prevent rodent issues! Important incentive.
- Review of goals for 2023:
 - BYOB tallying results - More than 8 tallying sessions
 - 2016 (pre-Ordinance): Approx 65% of bags used while grocery shopping were single-use bags.
 - 2017 (post-ordinance): Approx 34% of bags used were single-use bags.

- 2023: Approx 40% of bags used were single-use bags.
 - New plastic “single use bags” offered are now 3 mils and considered reusable
- Disclaimer about survey - this data collection is imperfect however it’s consistently imperfect which may be ok.
- RAC Considerations - Increase bag fee to 25 cents or mandate paper bags?
- Compost outreach in Fall 2023. More than 4,500 kitchen bins have been distributed in 2023 thus far. Thanks for everyone’s help! Brainstorm events and ways to get more out to community.
 - Dailey exploring composting at Harvard buildings.
- Compost sub-committee met over summer: questions for a dozen cities were drafted, perhaps to be posed to consultants.
- Focus on textiles/move-out during Winter.
- Interest in discussing single use bottled water
- September 23, 2023 - Cambridge Community Center hosting another clothing swap event
 - Volunteers needed for event clean up
- Household food waste reduction - [City of Boston video series](#)

4. Closing

- No public comment
- Announcements
 - Participatory budgeting just announced - Now includes operating costs
 - Martha Henry has resigned from the Recycling Advisory Committee

5. Action Items:

- Reach out to Mike to sign up to volunteer for upcoming events
- Determine which RAC meeting will be dedicated to ZWMP discussion
- Investigate making Lunch and Learn a hybrid event to increase attendance
- Compost/ Anaerobic Digestion 1 page info sheet
 - Resources for RAC members to prepare for public events
- Suggest proposals for Participatory Budgeting

6. Chat:

Emily Lee 8:07 AM

big thank you to Stephanie, Scott, Tracie, and Debbie Knight for contributing to the map!

Emily Lee to Everyone 8:10 AM

Sorry *and Elka!

Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone 8:14 AM



Dawn Quirk to Everyone 8:14 AM

What time is the hearing on 10/25?

Thank you!

Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone 8:18 AM

That sounds like a good plan!

Meera Singh to Everyone 8:24 AM

Maybe a talking points one page info sheet? To respond to Elka's comment

Elka great that you went to the MYND!

Elka to Everyone 8:28 AM

I was part of a group that hosted at Raymond Park. We had a lot of interest and discussions around composting

Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone 8:31 AM

But that does happen with textiles

Meera Singh to Everyone 8:42 AM

Though it would reach only a limited audience, would it be helpful to have a Reduce Reuse Recycle bulletin board in the public libraries with one pagers about what happens to textiles, what happens to our food waste, etc? Just had that thought.

Meera Singh to Everyone 8:48 AM

Also a lot of the bldgs. are not owner occupied but tenants and most owners won't care....

Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone 8:58 AM

Bye all! I need to sign off for a 9:00 meeting, but a great discussion

Meera Singh to Everyone 9:08 AM

paper bags also have a significant carbon footprint!

Meera Singh to Everyone 9:09 AM

I'm not a member but I think stores like Costco and BJ's don't give bags or at least didn't used to. So ppl must take their own, right?

Emily Lee 9:12 AM

Not sure about BJ's, but Costco offers the cardboard boxes that their products come in for people to use instead of bags. They also have the space to store those boxes...

Meera Singh to Everyone 9:18 AM

The point I wanted to make was that people know they won't get bags from those stores so hopefully carry their own. (Costco reusing produce cartons is good.) I wish stores would just stop carrying plastic bags!

carlie to Everyone 9:18 AM

They just released a food waste cookbook

It's a great book!

Elka to Everyone 9:19 AM

who are they?

Emily Lee to Everyone 9:19 AM

I agree with what Lee said about educating people about food storage. Clover has a veggie listserve and had a lot of helpful tips (that I didn't know about) on a recent email about how to store certain vegetables and spices.

Elka 9:20 AM

I also agree.

Meera Singh to Everyone 9:21 AM

Can someone post a link or let me know the name of these 2 sisters so I can find the article online?

You to Everyone 9:21 AM

https://youtu.be/ADP8hhMs0QE?si=nM9QyFFwWUuOS_1l

carlie to Everyone 9:21 AM

Irene and Margaret Li used to own and operate mei mei dumplings together (but now that's mostly Irene's work). They published a food waste cookbook

<https://foodwastefeast.com/perfectlygoodfood>

You to Everyone 9:21 AM

I am putting a link in the meeting minutes as well

Meera Singh to Everyone 9:21 AM

Thanks!

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 9:22 AM

I have to sign out a little early to travel to my next meeting. Great discussion this morning !

carlie to Everyone 9:22 AM

Margaret has a food waste blog too—foodwastefeast.com

Meera Singh 9:25 AM

For participatory budget - mobile recycling center/van to pick up e-waste periodically!