

DRAFT
Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2023, 8:00am – 9:30am
Minute Taker: Meera Singh

Members Present: Dailey Brannin, David Demme, Lee Elliot, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Debby Knight, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Scott MacGrath, Audrey Ng, Richard Nurse, Carlie Peters, Dawn Quirk, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Helen Snively, Quinten Steenhuis, Alexandra Toupal, Rob Vandenabeele, Stephanie Wasiuk

Members Absent: Martha Henry, Sakiko Isomichi, Julia Tsang, Siddharth Vedullapalli

Staff Present: Mike Orr

Public Present: Amy Waltz

Minutes from March were approved.

Vote for chairs and secretary for the RAC:

Diane Roseman and Emily Lee will be co-chairs.

Debby Galef will continue as secretary.

City Updates:

April 3 de-brief of meet and greet

Helen and Elka advocated for more in person events as both found them valuable for making connections and finding opportunities to work with people.

Mike suggested we make either May or June's RAC meeting in-person. June was chosen and will be hybrid if at all possible.

April 11 Stories of Our Stuff webinar debrief:

180+ attendees – Adam Minter, Brooke Nash, Meera Singh. Great event! A recording is available for those who missed it. Contact Mike.

Earth Day event:

8-9 RAC members have signed up to volunteer at the Earth Day events to be held at the Main Library on April 22. (No more volunteers are required.)

- Finished compost give away 9 – 11 am
- Fix It Clinic 11 am to 1:00 pm
- Clothing swap organized by high school students

Camilla will be organizing the Fix It clinic repair folks

Volunteers will be matched to tasks

There'll be tabling as well, including handing out kitchen bins. Volunteers needed to help with outreach.

Finished compost giveaway was the most clicked on item in the recent recycling newsletter – 220 clicks. There are 20 cubic yards to give away – the compost will be dumped out on to the sidewalk to make it easier to shovel into individual containers.

Volunteer opportunities

Bin tagging – various dates in April

Tabling April 20 – Cambridge Crossing

Tabling at the Port Arts Festival - May 20 from 10 am to 6 pm

Setting Agenda and Goals for 2023:

Where does DPW need the most help? How can RAC align to meet these needs?

Needs are always evolving.

- Outreach component most important – e.g. bin tagging in April. Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) ordinance

Plan to take a tally similar to what was done in 2016 to observe BYOB behavior at supermarkets – how does the present compare to our data from 2016?

Does the .10 cent fee have the same impact as it did when it was first introduced in 2016?

What will the department do with the data gathered? If there is a huge drop in number of people bringing their reusable bags then more outreach will be needed. There is data from 2015, before the BYOB ordinance, and data in 2016 after the BYOB ordinance took effect.

Is there data from vendors, big grocery stores – about their ordering data?

Richard – can try and get data from the industry's perspective about plastic bag use if the group he knows of does region-wide research.

Mike has BYOB outreach stickers from 2016 which can be used to give to retail stores for them to display as was done in 2016.

- Outreach
- Spread the word on online forums such as Zero Waste Cambridge Facebook group – need to keep this up to date;
- Post on NextDoor
- Cambridge Fixing & Repair FB page. Not up to date – suggested a volunteer to keep this up to date
- More tabling in squares
- Handing out kitchen compost bins at city events – e.g. at City Hall Annex parking permit days – people in line for this were a captive and fairly interested audience. What other opportunities might there be?
- Being present with residents at similar events
- A group did tabling with compost bins in East Cambridge last June - not overly successful but could be tried again elsewhere
- School events might be an opportunity for outreach with parents present - only Cambridge residents, which is helpful
- E-waste recycling added to Fix-It clinic?

Mike – Textiles are among the top four clicked on items in the GROIR tool – number continues to go up.

What about periodic neighborhood-based collections for items that don't get picked up in the regular curbside pickup? Mobile recycling collection. Maybe even for hazardous waste? Collecting paint cans? Connecting with block parties would be good opportunities. We know about them because of permits required.

Can we use the DPW van for this purpose?

Mike – the DPW van doesn't have the capacity to hold a lot.

Hard to get to the recycling center without a car.

How long would people be willing to hold on to their recycling, esp metal and e-waste

May and Sept – move out/move in days

Post on social media

Can we involve children in repurposing projects like recycling flowers? As they do in India, per Meera's presentation.

Google Map of environmentally friendly stores

Emily explained the idea of her Google Map of stores/restaurants/cafes in Cambridge that accept

reusables –

Create a directory of retail stores and restaurants that support less packaging – stores that carry bulk foods, cleaning and body care products.

She wants to expand it to stores that let you bring your own container.

There are some online lists – e.g. Unpacked Living

Emily needs help with keeping this list up to date. Needs people to physically go to the stores to keep an eye out.

Leah and Meera created a database of repair stores some years ago which could be added to the map.

Share map on FB page and Next Door

Emily will share the document and anyone with a gmail account can edit it.

Dailey – Watertown has Recircable reusable container program for food establishments that use reusable take out containers.

Suggestion to create educational material for restaurants to advocate for why they should consider reusable containers and start composting. Give them incentives to do so.

List Arlington and Watertown retail stores that do reusable containers in the Map to encourage Cambridge businesses to start

Davis Square store that employs a \$10 deposit system for reusable cups

Reusable cups create more work for both patrons and stores due to health code requirements.

Mike – complicated issues - compost facilities do not want “compostable” items in the mix nor are they easily recyclable

Buy Nothing Google Sheet

Tracie explained the idea and how it would work

There are five Buy Nothing Groups in Cambridge, each with a maximum around 3000 members.

How do these groups know of other groups that offer items in bulk that their group does not?

How do people get to see what's out there in other Buy Nothing groups?

Tracie explained the BN Community wish list sheet she has created – the objective is to give people who need items in bulk, such as teachers or those seeking goods for refugees, a platform to share their wishlists.

Organizations can add their wishlists to the Buy Nothing Community sheets – this is only for bulk needs.

Has Tracie considered outsourcing the managing of this to a non-profit?

It's not big enough to consider that yet – she just wants to focus on Cambridge for now – currently 15,000 Buy Nothing Cambridge members.

Mike - communicate directly with Tracie

Mike – need to think about having smaller groups or sub-committees for members to discuss areas of interest and projects

Scott -

Create a google doc with goals and needs

Google group address is: Cambridge-rac@googlegroups.com?

Use this to send emails to the group – makes it easier to share with larger groups.

Use as a warehouse to store RAC documents and links.

Mike - google groups is a good way to stay connected.

Mike will continue to send meeting agendas by email so those who don't use google groups get them.

Mike – only use for programmatic items, not legislative.

Closing:

Reminder for April 22 Earth Day event at the main library compost giveaway and fix-it clinic

Reminder for volunteer opportunities

- Bin tagging – April 14 and April 28
- Tabling April 20
- Tabling at the Port Arts Festival - May 20 from 10 am to 6 pm

Action items:

Create a core document that shares information on and for members, goals, etc.
Digital outreach group coordinator or team?

Public Comments:

Amy W. – asked if there is a way to get people who want to work on outreach together before the next meeting? She would like to coordinate with others who are interested in upcoming outreach opportunities in April and May

Chat

08:10:07 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=534501692201240&set=a.241960514788694>

08:11:31 From carlie to Everyone:

Can you remind us the dates of the may and June meetings please?

08:11:55 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

May 10 and June 21

08:12:09 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

June is better

08:12:27 From Tracie Gordon to Everyone:

May 10th

08:12:43 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

I won't be here in June - or the rest of the year

08:12:44 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

June is better for me as well

08:12:46 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

I won't be able to make the June one

08:13:01 From Alex Toupal to Everyone:

I can't make June

08:13:01 From carlie to Everyone:

June is better for me

08:13:34 From carlie to Everyone:

Yes, I agree if it could be hybrid that would be great

08:13:43 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Reacted to "Yes, I agree if it c..." with 👍

08:15:25 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

yes, Mike, last night was great!

08:15:38 From Debby Knight to Everyone:

Looking forward to watching on YouTube - thanks!

08:16:10 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Thank you all!

08:19:29 From Audrey Ng (she/her) to Everyone:

Very curious about waste/ recycling logistics in the Bahamas. Soo many islands!

08:19:56 From Tracie Gordon to Everyone:

Over 700 islands but only 26 with infrastructure.

08:23:01 From Tracie Gordon to Everyone:

Replying to "Very curious about w..."

No real recycling. Many agencies "say" they are but they aren't just taking money, mostly Canadians and Ex=Pats, not accomplishing anything.

08:23:38 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Volunteers sought for:

- o April 14 (7:30-9:30am): Bin Tagging in Cambridgeport
- o April 28 (7:30-9:30am): Bin Tagging in Cambridgeport
- o April 20 (12-3pm): Tabling in Cambridge Crossing
- o May 20 (10a-6pm): Port Arts Festival, 119 Windsor St

08:42:24 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Additional potential goals: - Making it more convenient to recycle items collected at the recycle center esp. scrap metal. 24 hour access to bins in several locations throughout the city would be ideal. - Get cartons back in the recycling stream - Networking with towns, state, & other organizations to share best practices - Advocacy for manufacturing extended responsibility, bottle bill, banning food waste from landfill - Targeting solutions for specific items - Further development of "Get Rid of It Right" as an educative tool including swap tips (rags instead of paper towels) motivating information (trees used for paper towels in us)

08:51:14 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Outreach for move-out is so critical! What about a city sanctioned "curbside swap" event on Saturdays at high move out weekends.

08:52:52 From Audrey Ng (she/her) to Everyone:

I love the idea of pairing a Fix It Clinic with one of the Free Store type events at Cambridge Community Center

08:52:58 From Diane Roseman to Everyone:

Now wouldn't it be nice if Apple paid you for your old computer? Or when you bought it it came with a pre-paid envelope to send back for repair/recycling/reuse? Why is it on us to figure it out?

08:53:00 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Replying to "Outreach for move-ou..."

I like this idea! Especially if they're specific to neighborhoods.

08:54:13 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

oh, Amy, great idea!

08:54:42 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:


Can we get a RAC committee or group working on outreach which seems the highest priority?

08:54:55 From carlie to Everyone:

Replying to "Now wouldn't it be n..."

They used to give some sort of apple gift card for returning old laptops or phones. I don't know if they still do

08:55:36 From Tracie Gordon to Everyone:

Reacted to "Now wouldn't it be n..." with 


08:55:50 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

fix it clinic at the free stores.. I love that.. but the swap already takes up a LOT of space.. dunno how to add a fix it clinic.. We Thieves, high end second hand store in Inman Sq, did a huge swap at Camb Multicul Arts Ctr (CMAC) a couple weeks ago.. and they had people with sewing machines in a side room. Sounds like it went well. wonder how we could do more of that?

08:56:22 From carlie to Everyone:

apple.com/shop/trade-in

08:56:57 From carlie to Everyone:

Reacted to "Now wouldn't it be n..." with 

08:56:58 From carlie to Everyone:

Removed a 👍 reaction from "Now wouldn't it be n..."

08:58:35 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

this is amazing

08:58:36 From Audrey Ng (she/her) to Everyone:

This look amazing!

08:58:56 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

Replying to "This look amazing!"

jinx

08:59:51 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

This map is very exciting!

09:00:22 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

A move out time curbside swap could be organized into areas easily according to trash pick up days. Swap would be Sat. and items brought back inside by Monday. Is this possible?

09:01:21 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Great map and concept!

09:02:15 From Scott Macgrath to Everyone:

RAC Zero Waste Map Updaters:

09:02:16 From Scott Macgrath to Everyone:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VV2YR2Lrkl_GVOFyOyz9vr7eEJAeApsrZL1_OH5esSU/edit#gid=0

09:03:18 From Audrey Ng (she/her) to Everyone:

Is it over complicating to add an email or google form for users to fill out if they have a suggestion and update they want us to verify and add? Maybe this could help crowdsource some of the info in the larger categories (reusable cups)

09:03:37 From Scott Macgrath to Everyone:

Reacted to "Is it over complicat..." with 👍

09:09:55 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Replying to "Is it over complicat..."

In the description section of the map, I did put the RAC email address that people can send a suggestion to

09:19:47 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Anything we can do to further reuse is fabulous! Great initiatives! Buy nothing would be a great way to get out the word about a move out season "Curbside swap".

09:25:22 From Scott Macgrath to Everyone:

<https://groups.google.com/g/cambridge-rac/about>

09:26:02 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Is there anyone interested in working on outreach as a subgroup? Is it possible before next month to start networking on ideas?

09:26:24 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XLlOYzJ9Zkb8qjCILPgNh8n1juxc_Lph

09:28:17 From Scott Macgrath to Everyone:

Here is that group email address:

cambridge-rac@googlegroups.com

09:28:41 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

so amy... your outreach group consists of everyone who volunteers for an event and you get us all to talk afterwards?

09:29:31 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

is there a list somewhere of the volunteer opportunities? didn't have a chance to write them all

down

09:29:58 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

I'll email them out.

09:31:28 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

and the google doc could somehow include an ongoing calendar.. so we can all see the events,
AND others can add something like "my neighborhood is doing X, who wants to come share info?"

09:31:48 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

so digital outreach is part of the larger outreach committee

09:32:22 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Yes, some coordinated and more comprehensive digital messaging.

09:32:27 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

and that little question from Elka is exactly why we need a calendar! :)

09:32:34 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Replying to "and the google doc c..."

I'd like to revisit the proposal for a google calendar instead of a list so it's more user-friendly. I think there was concern with everyone having access