

DRAFT

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes January 10, 8:00am – 9:30am

Virtual - Zoom

Minute Taker: Debby Knight

Members present: Dailey Brannin, Debby Galef, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Audrey Ng, Dawn Quirk, Diane Roseman, Helen Snively, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Rob Vandenabeele, Stephanie Wasiuk

Members absent: Dave Demme, Lee Elliot, Tracie Gordon, Scott MacGrath, Laura Nichols, Richard Nurse, Carlie Peters, Alex Toupal, Julia Tsang.

Staff Present: Mike Orr

Public present: Daisy Brown, Amy Waltz.

1. Housekeeping

- Vote on December Minutes - Approved

2. City Updates

- Want to join the Fix-It Clinic Planning team? It's pretty straightforward, email Mike if interested
- Community-wide webinar on how waste processing works on to be held Jan. 18 – good number signed up already, probably info people on the RAC know, but we might want to listen in- if so, register
- ZWMP consultant has been publicly announced:
 - Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) - have good experience in bigger cities such as Nashville) - main consultants will be working out of Arlington, MA. Amy Perlmutter, Cambridge resident, will be involved as a subcontractor.
 - Main goal is to have an outside person come and look with a fresh pair of eyes at what we're doing to meet our goals. They'll also be looking at our yard waste collection contract, as well as helping optimize/bring better value to our whole program.
 - How to handle issue of single use products - via ordinance?
 - We'll also get community feedback – they can help facilitate community dialogue.
- How the DPW handles different types of collection – discussion and questions:
 - How does metal pick-up and TV collection work? - People sign up for a permit, a truck goes out once a week for metal pick-up (goes to Scrap-It Everett) and once for TVs. Ewaste hauler is Good Point Recycling in Brockton - very thoughtful

organization in terms of processing/reusing as many materials as possible (run by Robin Ingenthron, based in Middlebury, VT).

- Scrap metal separated between ferrous and non-ferrous metals (we get in the range of \$100-\$120 dollars a ton)
- Curbside Recycling and Yard Waste collection - 5 trucks for recycling, 1 for yard waste each day, one smaller truck for smaller streets, missed collections, etc.
- Public Area waste collection – trash currently collected by street cleaning division at DPW – go to all the major squares every day, parks every 2 or 3 days; public recycling collected by Save That Stuff
- If public bins are overflowing, is there a way to report that? Yes - Cambridge MA DPW 311. Or SeeClickFix. It's not on the bin, you have to know it. Could there be a QR code on the bins?
- Pushing to get more Big Bellies since they have sensors and report, but technology isn't perfect – want to move away from open-top trash bins
- Retrofitting bins with sensors is tough - In the summer you can empty a bin in the morning and it's full again by 3pm and the shift just ended. There are also other shifts, like the overnight business compost shift. Not a huge part of our tonnage, but a big part of operations. Trying to figure out whether to go all Big Belly, but it's part of a larger city piece. RAC members could write a letter to the commissioner if they wanted, talking about public bins, concerns about rats and other issues and the need to address the problem.
- Is there data available about public area pick-ups? Don't really have good data – there are more than 700 bins in the city. Weather, foot traffic affect rate of trash. Big Belly sensors don't give reliable data about fullness – they do a good job on containment.
- What about Big Bellies for recycling (ones at Harvard are very contaminated, lots of liquids)? Save That Stuff picks them up along with the business recycling, so when mixed together overall contamination is lower. People sometimes put trash in recycling when trash is full or jam big items into the containers.
- Can we do a better job communicating with the neighborhoods about the way trash and recycling are put out? There are lots of overflowing bins, loose items. How does that impact street cleaning and stuff going into the rivers?
- How to engage all the people in the community?
- Interest in metal/electronics recycling tours
- Is there any thought to putting compost bins in places like public parks and high-volume areas? Current issue is contamination, since recycling bins are so contaminated - as well as rats. Maybe community isn't quite ready yet.

3. Discussion of Move-Out and Textiles waste

- Is there some way of listing what people have? General query notes, available to everyone (unlike Buy Nothing), rather than putting it on the curb
- How would we actually do this? No staff on the weekend, where can stuff go, who would pick it up? It would have to be in one week, out the next.

- Comments about starting small. For example, focus on a pilot with particular kinds of things – lamps, fans, small appliances, utensils, then expand to larger stuff if it works. What about several small collection areas on (a) certain day(s)?
- Two methods – they come to us, we come to them – putting out on the street is weather-dependent, people bringing stuff to us means we have to store it, takes them more effort. Are we trying to target items that need to be disposed of properly and/or getting items to people who need them?
- What are we targeting, what are the pros and cons of different models?
- If the date were August 31, people would be more able to bring stuff someplace since they need a vehicle to move anyway, makes it easier for nonprofits to just go to one place. How to keep it simple for the user while safe and good for the nonprofit
- If we choose a date, would an organization(s) drive around in a truck and pick up what they need?
- Furnishing Hope needs to hire movers and prefers weekdays – might not want to drive a truck around on spec
- Need to think about a move-out day event – maybe it's small or for one type of item, but we expand on that in the future; make it a destination, maybe a food truck
- Trash to Treasure at Northeastern – moved everything to an area like the student center, other students could pick things up
- Maybe collection areas organized by materials
- Problem of timing and problem of transportation – maybe a contracted service that goes around to pick up things like plates, utensils, things that won't be affected by weather
- Historical context (Mike) – we had Mass Coalition for the Homeless in 2015-16 who would do curbside collection. Like idea of connecting individuals with non-profits – helping people know they can save up stuff for donations on a particular date, not pack that up, then just drop it off or have it picked up
- Issue: Collection of good materials, storage until given to a non-profit
- Poll of people who would be interested in helping on August 1st
- Do we have a list of all the places in the community that need things? Keeps changing – would be easier to find partners who will take certain items on a more regular basis
- Household Hazardous Waste August 24 – Mike will explore that as something to link to move-out waste

5. Closing

- Public Comment - no comment
- Action Plan/Decisions

- Announcements – Mike may or may not be joining us in February

5. Action Items:

- Want to join Fix-It Clinic Planning team? Email Mike if interested
- Community-wide webinar on how waste processing works on Jan. 18
- Follow up on public area waste discussion
- Planning group to think about organizations we might partner with for move-out waste

Zoom Chat:

08:21:12 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

could we tour the scrap metal facility 😊?

08:21:12 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Mike, does Save that Stuff do the residential trash pick up also, or DPW?

08:21:45 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "could we tour the sc..." with 🙌

08:24:50 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

What is included in metal collection? ie. Can residential scrap metal be set curbside for special metal collection or is the metal collection just for things like electronics & washing machines etc.?

08:26:27 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

I think Robin also has an operation in VT!

08:27:47 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

oh yeah.. can we tour these facilities? where they sort metal and electronics? 😊

08:28:09 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Ingenthron

08:29:18 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

I am curious for a breif list of what is not included in ZWMP or municipal trash.

08:30:15 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

ie construction, University?, appartments, businesses

08:32:51 From Elka to Everyone:

what's the difference between metal and appliances... like blender...

08:40:05 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Is there a big belly composter? or compost option for public space? This is of public education value as well as need.

08:42:54 From Audrey Ng (she/her) to Everyone:

I believe Big Belly has versions of their products with/without sensors and compactors. They're much cheaper!

08:49:00 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Composting could potentially reduce contaminants in other bins, as well as reducing rodents. Perhaps require after composting is mandated.

08:50:14 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

good point Amy... great thing to do AFTER composting is mandated and more people understand it well.

08:58:11 From Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone:

Who are the potential companies or groups for collection?

09:00:14 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

Maybe like hazardous waste collection day

09:00:30 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "Maybe like hazardous..." with 

09:01:44 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Furnishing Hope also has to hire movers which means they prefer weekdays because it's cheaper, and they probably don't have the luxury of driving around for long periods of time with no guarantee of volume of salvageable goods.

09:08:08 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

A loosely coordinated city wide yard sale/swap weekend avoids transport/storage of large items. Perhaps combined with either smaller locations Cambridge community center, or park locations. Curbside collection of furniture seems essential. There is always the challenge of bridging the time gap between move out & move in.

09:09:33 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Most orgs that accept donations to help people set up their homes have a WISHLIST - I wonder if we could share a list of such orgs to encourage people to give their unwanted stuff to them. But, practically, people who are moving out are too busy to GROIR...

09:12:20 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

I wonder what happens in big cities like NYC with univs like NYU and Columbia - overwhelming to even think of that.....!

09:12:38 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

does Coalitin for Homeless still fetch stuff? I think a big issue is finding anyone willing to drive around!

09:13:25 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

meera.. I bet they have a big version of Allston Christmas.. when loads of students leave stuff on curbs and others come "shop."

09:14:21 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

@Meera Singh I can speak to NYU's handling of move-out waste. They do something similar to what Harvard does where they collected move-out waste in the basements of their dorms and rerouted it to local charities.

09:15:44 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Replying to "@Meera Singh I can s..."

Thanks, I think it will be interesting to learn how they handle this issue

09:16:45 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

and maybe we offer to volunteer with the non profit so it's not a huge load on them?

09:16:54 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Reacted to "and maybe we offer t..." with ❤️

09:17:05 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "and maybe we offer t..." with 👍

09:17:21 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

For major changes in moveout waste (much of it quite useable) we need DPW cooperation in refusing items. In Watertown, large items are not collected with weekly trash. A separate company handles it, or it has a separate fee attached for collection.

09:17:42 From Diane Roseman (she/hers) to Everyone:

Sadly I'm away but happy to help before

09:17:53 From Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone:



09:18:05 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Mike if I am in Cambridge I will help for sure


09:18:43 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Sorry, I meant to do thumbs up

09:19:06 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

elka.. I think that might be an intermediate project for us over the next fe months.. Let's do survey of who could use stuff!

09:19:29 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to "elka.. I think that ..." with 

09:19:31 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:



09:19:46 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

yes, the nonprofits are always a moving target.. what do they need in a given period? It's about their needs too!

09:20:28 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

maybe restoation project in Belmont? Or Household Goods in Acton? We need to do research!

09:21:17 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

There's Fresh Start Furniture Bank in Hudson and The Great Exchange (more like office supplies) in Devens

09:22:04 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:



09:22:04 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

There are communities like Lowell and Lawrence that have lots of needs to help with household stuff. I can try and find out names of some - to get options for a partner org.

09:22:42 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

I'm happy to start a list of orgs in the Greater Boston Area

09:23:30 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

happy to work with you Meera, and whoever else.. I want to know it anyway, for freinds who are moving

09:24:40 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

i think first we make a really good list and then we see who will work with us :)

09:25:31 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Helen I'll email you on this!

09:25:46 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

so.. stephanie, Elka, Meera, Emily, who else..?

09:26:31 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

meera and I can start on this.. anyone who wants to join us, we love it!

09:27:58 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

I have an ongoing concern about aligning ZWMP goals with swift reduction in trash since it is a huge contributor to methane / climate warming - in light of last year being the hottest by far. It seems since a reduction of 70-95% reduction is possible from our baseline, we need better aligned goals.

09:27:59 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

I think one big hurdle is not knowing what will be given away by the people who are moving out.

09:28:16 From Dawn Quirk to Everyone:

take care!

09:28:25 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Thanks!