

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee
February 8, 2007 Meeting – Minutes taken by Randi Mail

Members Attending:

Cathy McCormick, Cambridge resident; Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Shaunna Schiller, FCR-Boston

Guests Attending:

Randi Mail, Recycling Director; Jim Ardolino, Superintendent of Solid Waste; Ashley Waters, Northeastern journalism student

Jay Astle, Recycling Drop-off Center Monitor

As some may know, for the past 3 years, Jay was earning his graduate degree from Tufts in Urban & Environmental Policy. He has accepted an exciting job in Maine with the Georges River Land Trust as a result of studies and his last day with Public Works will be Thursday, 2/15/07. The job has been posted on the [City's website](#). Randi sent the posting to the RAC, local universities and MassRecycle. Please forward the job posting to interested folks!

Jay has been a terrific employee and tremendous asset for the recycling program. His friendly attitude and dedicated interest and research in recycling continued the tradition of the Drop-off Center as a place for the community to meet, recycle and learn. Jay did an excellent job operating the compactor for cardboard and baler for plastic film and helping to expand the scrap metal program. He planned public area recycling improvements in Porter and Central Square. He was instrumental in maintaining recycling statistics and planning for the eventual transition to using an online data management system, www.re-trac.com.

Hauler License Requirement on Recycling

Randi said that the Commissioner would like to move forward this. In 2005, the RAC sub-committee proposed that hauler licenses require that recycling services be offered to all of their customers, either directly or through a sub-contractor. This has been implemented in Boston, Marshfield, Northampton and Brookline.

This would require revised regulations promulgated by the License Commission. The City would also require haulers to report regularly as to which customers are recycling and which are not. Currently, the City does not have an efficient way to get a snapshot of how many businesses are in compliance with the [Mandatory Recycling Ordinance](#). By requiring haulers to report vs. the businesses themselves, it would simplify the process of getting this information. If you are interested in helping Randi draft the requirement, please contact her at 617-349-4866 or rmail@cambridgema.gov.

Market Update

Shaunna informed the Committee that the market for #8 news had "skyrocketed" in February to \$100/ton, cardboard is at \$90/ton and mixed paper at \$70/ton. As some may know, FCR pays the City the New England value for paper and cardboard as published in Official Board Markets minus a \$36/ton processing fee. In the current contract, the City pays \$30/ton commingles processing fee but splits the revenue if the 3-month average for all metal, plastic and glass containers is above \$65/ton. Shaunna said in December the market price for plastics dropped

significantly. In February, PET is at \$360/ton, HDPE is at \$360/ton. Rob suggested that plastic prices are affected by the mild winter with a lighter demand for heating oil.

The Committee discussed the news that the City of Everett was very interested in [RecycleBank](#), as was covered in the [Boston Globe](#). FCR has developed a partnership with RecycleBank, a PA-based company that works with the hauler to provide all households a toter with an embedded chip. Recycling is single-stream and the truck weighs each toter. The weight translates into coupons that can be redeemed at participating big box and local retailers.

Currently, RecycleBank charges municipalities \$3.50 per household per month to participate and guarantees that the town/city achieves a 50% recycling rate. Randi and Shaunna ran quick calculations to see if the program would save the City money. With ~45,000 households, the added cost would be \$1.9 mil. If the City hit a 50% recycling rate, of 30,500 total tons solid waste annually (City-served trash and fiber/commingles only), that would be 15,250 tons of recyclables. This would be an increase of 6,750 tons of recyclables since about 8500 tons of fibers/commingles are recycled annually, yard waste not included. Therefore, the City would save an additional \$635,000/year, based on avoided per ton disposal fees of \$94.

From this analysis, Shaunna suggested that the economics of RecycleBank do not always work out when cities have high recycling rates to begin with. Randi thought that the \$3.50 monthly household fee should be deducted from the amount earned by each household before the coupon rewards accrued. Shaunna said that the rewards were coupons, not cash so that would not work. Randi said that another difficulty to implementing the program in Cambridge would be at multi-family building and the lack of space needed if each household was given a toter.

Random Tidbits

- ✓ Recent MassDEP press release about waste bans enforced against MA businesses throwing recyclables out. MassDEP has significantly increased [enforcement](#) of the waste bans. Shaunna said this press release is a great tool for haulers when signing up generators for recycling service. Rob said that MassDEP would establish criteria for best practices for haulers, which if met, would earn haulers a "best practices" license.
- ✓ RECYCLEMANIA: Rob reported that this nationwide contest amongst colleges and universities is underway and 201 schools are participating. He said that the goal is to get all schools involved by 2011.