

City of Cambridge – Recycling Advisory Committee

September 27, 2007 – Minutes taken by Cornelia Herzfeld

Members Attending: Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Cornelia Herzfeld, Cambridge citizen; Judy Nathans, Cambridge citizen; Paul Schlaver, Cambridge Consumer's Council; Kevin Douglas, F.W. Russell

Guests Present: Jim Ardolino, Solid Waste Superintendent; Kelly Dunn, Recycling Program Manager; Randi Mail, Recycling Director

More Recycling at 7-12 Unit Multi-family Buildings

Paper revenues were very high in FY07, peaking at \$89/ton to the City in March. The City typically earns \$30-\$40/ton. \$50,000 of this excess recycling revenue was appropriated to fund 1000 additional totes. This will encourage increased recycling in 7+ unit multi-family buildings and reduce sidewalk clutter of blue bins in front of apartment buildings. In the past, only 13+ unit residential buildings were eligible for free totes.

The Recycling Division sent an email announcement to property managers and owners of large apartment buildings, which currently goes about to 120 people managing 14,460 households. A letter was also sent to 9-12 unit buildings in mid August, generating many requests. Letters to 7 and 8 unit buildings will be sent in October. Also, 6 unit buildings can get totes, but this will not be publicized. There are 382 6-unit buildings.

Now, there are 372 13+unit buildings, representing 19,096 households and 246 7-12 unit buildings, representing 2142 households. With 7-12 unit buildings added to the large apartment building recycling program, 21,238 households in 618 buildings will have access to increased recycling capacity. These buildings house 46% of the total Cambridge population, or 46,269 households.

About 40% of 13+ unit buildings are condos and roughly 58% of 7-12 unit buildings are condos.

Currently, only 10 large apartment buildings receive private recycling service and DPW is working with Inspectional Services to update its records as to which receive city trash collection. Some do and some do not. Currently, buildings may receive city trash collection if 50-gallon barrels or smaller are used, barrels do not block the sidewalk and once a week service is sufficient.

Kevin said it was rare in MA for a city to service multi-family buildings. Randi said that this was the biggest expansion of the recycling program in the past five years –adding nearly 100,000 more gallons of collection capacity.

Lastly, Randi explained that the City Council is currently considering changes to the Refuse and Litter Ordinance that DPW, which:

1. Strengthen enforcement by adding Inspection Services Department personnel as enforcement agents;
2. Allow fines to be increased up to \$300, if necessary;
3. Clarify private property owners and occupants duties, including the provision of contact information for an owner's agent, which will facilitate education on and enforcement of ordinance;
4. **Strengthen the recycling program and creates less clutter on sidewalks by making more dwelling units eligible for recycling collection using large totes;** and clarifies language in the ordinance on recycling and rubbish collection.

National Recycling Conference

Randi reported that it had been extremely useful for her to attend the NRC in Denver in mid-September. She was able to meet with people from California, Washington, Colorado, and other states directing programs that Cambridge can learn from. The major trends include:

- Making the connection between recycling/composting and climate change
- Adopting a Zero Waste goal (Policy framework for operational decisions. Visit <http://www.zwia.org/zwc.html>. Increasingly, the emphasis is less on increasing the recycling rate but rather reducing tons of waste disposed.)
- Curbside collection of food waste (Huge climate protection potential since organics separation reduces methane emissions from landfills.)
- Single stream recycling collection (Bigger curbside containers and less sorting.)
- Product stewardship (Visit <http://www.productstewardship.us>)

Eco-Cycle is a nonprofit recycler doing collection and processing for Boulder County, CO. Ecocycle's 20 acre Zero Waste Park includes a single stream recycling facility, a Center for Hard-

to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM), a reuse/exchange center, and a small place for "residuals" or trash.

In Toronto, which has a climate similar to Cambridge, co-collection trucks pick up organics weekly and alternate collection of single stream recycling and trash. In other words, trash and recycling are picked up twice a month. This model is common in other Canadian communities.

Rob Gogan, who also attended the conference, reported that the NRC would launch a major rebranding campaign on November 15, America Recycles Day, called Brand Earth.

The new platform was the product of consumer research NRC conducted examining the drivers of consumer recycling behavior, with a focus on the differences and similarities between "Sometimes" and "Always" recyclers.

The project began with a comprehensive review of current qualitative and quantitative research on the subject of consumer recycling behavior. The research team reviewed 95 studies and articles garnered from members, academia and government. Review of the existing research revealed that many of the positive rational drivers of consumer behavior all benefited society as a whole rather than the individual, hence recycling is considered to be primarily a moral activity - more a matter of right and wrong rather than cost and benefit.

Since recycling is perceived as an ethical activity, NRC focused its primary research on the in-depth exploration of emotional and aspirational drivers for "Sometimes" recyclers and how they differ from "Always" recyclers.

NRC's analysis identified four main behavioral drivers: the sense of accomplishment; the desire to be seen as a role model; the need for control; and the hope for belief. In order for these drivers to be motivating, NRC determined that they needed to have the underpinnings of optimism - that campaigns and messages of negativity, cynicism and shame, were not strong, lasting motivators.

With this information, NRC developed a brand platform designed to make the act of recycling an act of optimism for "Sometimes" recyclers

to connect them to their community and feel accomplished when the behavior is practiced.

NRC will be giving the presentation and one-on-one briefings to groups throughout the country. NRC will also host a series of webinars, announced to the membership via email. The research portion of the presentation is also available in the "members-only" section of the website.

Composting Update

Randi reported that the grant project had been completed and handed out the report. The BioCycle article featuring the program displayed in the exhibit hall at the NRC conference in Denver.

To read the report:

http://www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/departments/recycle/pdffiles/FY07_final_compost_report.pdf

To view the attachments:

http://www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/departments/recycle/pdffiles/final_compost_report_attachments.pdf

To read the August 2007 article in BioCycle:

http://www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/departments/recycle/pdffiles/biocytle_aug_2007.pdf

To view the PowerPoint presentation:

http://www.swana.org/sections/communicate/chapter_info.aspx?pageID=0&chapterId=8.

There are 28 Cambridge customers and another 30 in Boston and Newton producing 12-17 tons each day.

RAC members asked about the local response to the project and Randi reported that City Departments were very supportive and the City Council recently had passed resolutions thanking Adam and her.

Next meeting

It was decided that the next meeting would be on the previously scheduled date of October 11th with a focus on determining FY08 goals for the committee.