

## City of Cambridge - Recycling Advisory Committee

September 15, 2010, Minutes Taken by Rob Gogan

### Members Attending:

Mike, Cornelia Herzfeld, Cambridge resident; Judy Nathans, Cambridge resident; Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Corey Pilz, License Commission; Lisa McMenemy, Casella Recycling

**Guests Attending:** Michael Arnott, Cambridge resident; Meryl Brott, Recycling Program Manager; George Delegas, Cambridge resident; Ted Live, Cambridge resident; Randi Mail, Recycling Director; Helen Snively, Cambridge resident; Craig Watkins, Cambridge resident

### Market Update

Lisa gave a market update. Fibers have gone up slightly. Plastics, glass & metals are steady. Volume is up due partly to conversions from dual stream to Zero-Sort (aka single stream recycling) and the expansion of new materials, such as empty pizza boxes, rigid plastics, spiral cans and paper coffee cups.

Judy asked about whether specific chips bags were accepted with other plastic film at the Drop-off Center. Randi and Lisa explained that stretch plastic is accepted, as long as you can easily poke your finger through it, it's recyclable.

### Single Stream Recycling Starts Oct 25

Randi discussed the City's efforts for the new program. About 15,000 totes will be delivered to 1-5 unit residences between October 12-22. The City has mailed out 3 educational pieces. A postcard to 1-5 units in July announcing the recycling totes, a postcard to all residences announcing single stream starts Oct 25 with a list of what to recycle, and a full recycling and trash brochure to all residences. The City is also sending new stickers for existing recycling totes to buildings that have them. Randi showed a poster promoting the program. Staff have made many presentations to community groups, outreached to houses of worship, property management companies, city staff, schools, etc.

Discussion followed on specifics: caps and lids are OK to leave on as long as the container is empty, this ensure that the material is captured and doesn't end up falling off the conveyors and ending up as residue. Suggestion to point out that people should remove plastic liners in cereal boxes. Shredded paper will be accepted in clear plastic bags, or paper bags.

Randi reviewed the three tiers of quality control for single stream recycling: 1) Public education to help ensure that people recycle the right materials, 2) recycling drivers can reject contaminated recycling at the curb, and 3) Casella's cutting-edge sorting machinery at the Charlestown facility. Casella consistently reports that Cambridge has among the region's cleanest recyclables and we want to keep it up.

DPW organized tours of Casella recycling and all have been full. Some spots are open for November 18, email [recycle@cambridgema.gov](mailto:recycle@cambridgema.gov) to sign up. More will be offered in the spring. View the 6-minute videos at [www.zero-sort.com](http://www.zero-sort.com) to see how recycling gets sorted out, and what to recycle and what it gets made into.

Staff has handled over 1,500 calls and emails related to questions on the totes, nearly all residents are excited about the program. The office has been very busy updating and finalizing the delivery list and educating the public. Russell will purchase new compacting recycling trucks: 3 rear-loaders (with 2 workers), 2 side loaders (with one worker) and 1 small "Alley Cat" compactor truck for supervisor. The new vehicles and additional staffing will improve performance and service.

Randi shared some initial graphics for the recycling trucks. Lots of helpful feedback. This project is on hold for now. Other communities that have done this include [Philadelphia](#), [Yonkers](#) and [San Francisco](#).

### **Public Area Recycling**

A new vendor will begin servicing the 40+ [public area recycling bins](#) throughout the City starting November 1<sup>st</sup>: [Metro Pedal Power](#) (MPP). These bins accept bottles and cans. This will not change with the single stream recycling program. MBTA collects paper in the stations and contamination problems are important to avoid with public area programs. MPP did a 1 month pilot over the summer and provided excellent service. Many bins will be serviced more often, up to 3 times per week for some, particularly May-October. Historically, Russell has serviced the bins during the residential collection route. This is probably the first zero-emission public area collection in the nation. The City hopes to expand public area recycling to the parks.

### **Staff Update**

Tom Riordan, Compliance Officer and MaryAnn Wojakowski, Sanitation Inspector now report directly to John Fitzgerald, Environmental Services Manager. The City received 114 applications for the Recycling Drop-off Center Monitor position. DPW is still reviewing candidates and will make a recommendation to the City manager soon.

### **Recycling Advisory Committee Appointments**

The City received 20+ letters of interest from candidates interested in serving on the RAC. She and Meryl interviewed candidates in September and will make their recommendations to the Commissioner and City Manager. Appointments are expected to be complete by the November meeting. DPW would like to see more members be more involved at the meetings and in between on projects, with specific regard to public outreach, special events and businesses. The Committee will need to elect a Chair and co-Chair.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.