

DRAFT
City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee
October 12, 2011 – Minutes Taken by Jason Zogg

Members Attending: Michael Arnott, George Delegas, Debby Galef, Juliana Lyman, Lisa McMenemy, Adam Mitchell, Judy Nathans, Laura Nichols, Robert Winters, Jason Zogg

Staff Attending: Meryl Brott, Randi Mail

Guests Attending: Joel Dashnaw, Helen Snively

Public Comment

None.

Approve Minutes

Minutes were approved for the September 14 meeting.

Market Update

Randi gave an update on curbside recycling and trash stats. **Tons recycled increased** 19% month to month for Sept: 836 average tons, up from 706 tons in 2010. **Tons disposed decreased** 4% month to month for Sept: 1521 tons, down from 1575 tons in Sept 2010. **Tons disposed does not include multi-family buildings served by private haulers, businesses or the universities.

Trash Sort Results

Randi reported on the recent trash sorts completed on Thursday 9/29/11 and Tuesday 10/4/11. In the 2010 trash sorts recyclables comprised 25% of the trash. In this year's sorts, recyclables in the trash was only 13%. However, if we annualize this data for 10,160 households in residential buildings with 1-6 units, this equals at least 300 more pounds of recycling per household per year, or at least 1500 more tons per year.

Note that the paper weight was reduced by 20% due to moisture, and the sample did not include buildings with 7+ units that get city trash collection. Randi hopes to schedule another sort that focuses on this sector.

From our observations, recyclables noticed a lot of during the trash sorts included junk mail (you can opt out for free at www.catalogchoice.org), frozen food boxes, aseptic containers (juice / soup boxes), paper cups, plastic takeout clamshells, and aluminum foil. These findings will help inform the City's outreach efforts.

Outreach Strategies – Brainstorm

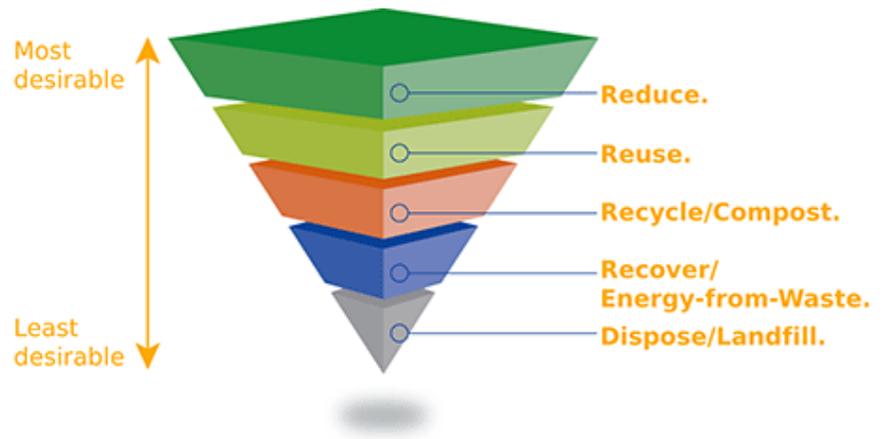
Randi said that the City is trying to move away from direct mail to residents so there will not be a citywide mailing this fiscal year on recycling. Staff will be re-thinking outreach strategies and how to use available funds. Randi asked for ideas that are a blanket approach similar to a mailing that targets all or nearly all households. Randi reviewed a publicity checklist that recycling staff use for getting the word out to the public. This is summarized in the recycling program [outreach overview document online](#).

Members discussed how to reframe recycling and make it new. Brief debate on whether recycling still grabs people's attention. Ideas: focus on new accepted materials, complement outreach efforts the "carrot" with increased compliance efforts as the "sticker", waste reduction (such as opting out of junk mail and phonebooks) and develop messaging in a theatrical way, such as Harvard's Mount Trashmore, which can make a lasting impression. Other ideas included signs on public area bins, a well-designed 4-part publication on the "story of Cambridge trash, water, electricity, and wastewater".

Waste Reduction, Reuse & Donation Discussion

Randi shared the new [Donate Your Stuff](#) flyer that features a list and map of local places to donate clothing, furniture and other household goods; as well as websites where you can share, borrow, rent, buy, and sell stuff with others. This information is a short version of the web-based [Get Rid of it Right](#) page.

Randi showed a waste management hierarchy which shows the ways in which we should handle our discards from most desirable (reduce) to least desirable (dispose/landfill). Two Cambridge volunteers helping in the office are working with her to develop a top ten list of tips to reduce and reuse materials in different categories: food, plastics and clothing/textiles. **She's looking for people to help with additional categories: electronics, furniture and paper/cardboard.** This is about trying to influence resident's decision making on the front end of consumption. What do I really need? What do I already have?



Members brainstormed on the topic:

- how to frame these ideas “consumer responsibility”, give it a tone of empowerment, keep it local, save money, etc.
- Encourage people to share, barter, rent stuff. These ideas are referred to as [Collaborative Consumption](#) (Book: What's Mine Is Yours). As the website for the book explains, “*Collaborative Consumption describes the rapid explosion in swapping, sharing, bartering, trading and renting being reinvented through the latest technologies and peer-to-peer marketplaces in ways and on a scale never possible before*”.
- Learn more about the City's green jobs initiative in Community Development's Economic Development Division.... The task force created a [green jobs training program](#) focused specifically on energy efficiency, audits and green building maintenance, which is run by the Asian American Civic Association.
- Doing YouTube videos, Story of Stuff videos online?
- Film: The [Economics of Happiness](#)
- Products and packaging contribute [44%](#) of US greenhouse gas emissions.
- Posters from World War II that focused on reuse and recycling. Need to develop messaging to “shop differently”, to swap, share, or rent things
- [Carrot](#) Mobs: create a buzz, come out between 8 and 9pm, shop local, shop here
- Encouraging free tables in common areas of multi-family and commercial buildings that allow occupants to swap stuff in good condition (kitchenware, decorative items, clothes, etc) This concept still needs to be managed to restrict unaccepted items.

General Announcements

- Trash Talk Series: Peabody Museum.
- Please let Adam or Judy know at least a week in advance of next meeting of requested agenda items.
- We are going to try to start subcommittee meetings by 9:00 if possible so we can leave at 9:30am.
- Minute takers: Jan in November. Judy in December. Juliana in January. Lisa in February. Debby in March. George in April. Need volunteers for both May and June.