

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee
February 6, 2013 – DRAFT Minutes Taken by Debby Galef

Members Present: Michael Arnott, Liza Casella, Mike Cosgrove, Claire Davies, George Delegas, Jan Dillon, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Jarrod Jones, Juliana Lyman, Adam Mitchell, Laura Nichols, Robert Winters
Members Absent: Luis Baigiorria
Staff Present: Meryl Brott, John Fitzgerald, Randi Mail
Guests Present: Peter Crawley, CPAC; Johanna Jobin, CPAC; Ted Live, Cambridge resident; Helen Snively, Cambridge resident; Quinton Zondervan; Judy Nathans, Cambridge resident

Minutes were approved for January and December. Public comment submitted by John Lively, Preserve, see section on Styrofoam. Members of [CPAC \(Climate Protection Action Committee\)](#) present.

Market Update

Lisa said that with the high generation months of the holidays are behind us, there is a decrease in the daily volumes and a slow return to typical levels of 750-800 tons per day. Markets have been stable since November with slight increases in fiber and plastics. With the recent rise of petroleum, plastics rose 2-4 cents per lb. Export/domestic markets are stable and should be for the next 3 months. Increases in commodity value will depend on supply and demand. Mills are not full but they are not screaming for material. As generation stabilizes commodity value should rise as supply and demand rise.

Tonnage Update

For curbside recycling and trash statistics. **Tons recycled** in Jan 2013 was 833 tons, up nearly 2.5% from 813 tons in Jan 2012. **Tons disposed*** disposed in Jan 2013 were 1,260 tons versus 1,265 tons for 2012, down less than .5%. (*Tons disposed includes city collected trash from about 31,500 households, public schools and city buildings. It does not include multi-family buildings served by private haulers, businesses, or universities.) The city is on target for its goal of 16 lbs of trash per household (HH) by 2020, given 18.7 lbs/HH of trash in 2012. In 2008, it was 22 lbs/HH of trash.

City Updates

Proposed Expansion for Public Area Recycling in FY14

DPW plans to add 68 street recycling bins, doubling the current total. FY14 budget covers increased collection costs but City needs to identify funds for the one-time purchase. Areas for proposed new locations: Mass Ave (Alewife to Harvard, and Harvard to Central), more in Harvard Sq, more along Cambridge/Hampshire St, Western Ave, River St, West Cambridge (Huron, Concord, Mt. Auburn), East/Area 4 (Third, First, Broadway, Main, Prospect, Bishop Allen). DPW may propose a new receptacle with trash and recycling in the same unit, instead of the blue round bins (Victor Stanley) we already have or the Big Belly units. The Greener Corners and Big Belly offer an optional advertising program, where revenue helps cover collection costs, but approval for advertising is unlikely. Options by Greener Corners and Recycle Away offer options on color, opening shape, flap on openings, decals/graphics, etc. Side openings are preferable to avoid water or snow entry. Rob W. thinks recycling should be marginally more of an effort and also fears graffiti on flat panels. Claire thought there should be a visible education component. Rob G. favors steel and a flap for rodent control. Anyone can send further comments to rmail@cambridgema.gov. DPW staff will be speaking with CDD staff to determine the preferred bin, and different bins may be used for different areas in the City.



Victor Stanley



Big Belly



Greener Corners



Recycle Away

Free Pickup and Drop-off Options for Furniture

Randi noted the City's [flyer](#) with a map of clothing donation boxes and organizations that accept donations of furniture, household goods, books, etc. She noted the need to raise public awareness in advance of 2013 move/in out season of the options for free pickup of furniture *in good condition* ([Boomerangs](#), [MA Coalition for the Homeless](#), and [Salvation Army](#)). The [MIT Furniture Exchange \(Fx\)](#) accepts furniture dropped off. These organizations train drivers, staff, and warehouse workers to regularly inspect all items for bed bugs. Items must be clean and have no rips. Donors must describe condition of their items and most email photos. Boomerangs is a non-profit thrift store in Central Sq and all proceeds supports AIDS Action. They do small repairs on nice saleable items if necessary. The MA Coalition for the Homeless in Lynn gives furniture to families transitioning from homeless shelters to permanent housing and accepts mattresses. MIT FX proceeds go to scholarships for women. Anyone can donate to MIT Fx but a university ID from MIT, Harvard, Suffolk or BU is needed to purchase. MIT Fx is considering whether they may allow Cambridge residents to shop there, TBD. Rob G. offered that the City partner again with Harvard (as was done years ago) by placing a collection container for reusables near campus and servicing it daily. Furniture, electronics, appliances, storage containers, clothes and other reusable goods are stored over the summer and sold at the [Harvard Habitat for Humanity Stuff Sale](#) in September.

Some organizations that Randi spoke with thought that it's against the law in MA to sell used mattresses, but in fact that is not true. Salvation Army sells used mattresses, and the MA Coalition for the Homeless gives them to families. Mattresses can be resold in MA as long as the seller gets a license from the MA Department of Public Health, sterilize all secondhand mattresses, properly label the item including that it was "previously sold, delivered, used, returned and offered for resale", description of materials used for filling, "Contents Sterilized", and serial number. This information can be found in [MA General Law Part 1, Title XV, Chapter 94, Section 270](#).

Product Stewardship Update - Paint

The Product Stewardship Council has been working with [PaintCare](#). This industry funded non-profit manages paint take back programs in CA, OR, CT and RI and wants to expand to 2-3 states per year. In states that pass paint take back legislation, they recruit local retailers to voluntarily take back paint from consumers. All retailers in participating states must include fee with all paint (75 cents/gal in OR/CA, more or less in other states depending on the size of the container). PaintCare determines the fee, which is based on volume of paint sold in state and costs to manage, and funds pay for collection, transportation and processing. Local municipalities can decide to cease paint collection programs and direct residents to the local retailer take back programs. Cambridge spends an estimated \$30,000-\$40,000 per year on paint from household hazardous waste collections, a high portion of the hazardous waste budget. Boston DPW will host a meeting with PSI and PaintCare in early March and Randi will plan to attend.

Discussion Topics

Plastic Bag Ban

The City Council held a hearing in December regarding a ban on plastic bags, view the [minutes](#) online. Councilor Decker asked city staff to draft an Ordinance. As of this writing, city staff (DPW, CDD, City Manager's office) have discussed the following DRAFT recommendations: define plastic bags as checkout bags with handles at point of sale, define paper bags as 100% recyclable and contain 40% post consumer recycled content, require that paper bags display the words "Recyclable" and indicate that it is made from 40% post consumer recycled content, define reusable bags as designed for multiple reuse, durable and plastic at least 2.25 mils thick, require retail establishments to charge customers a minimum fee of not less than 5 cents for each paper bag provided (business would keep fee to offset the bag cost), make it effective March 2014 for retail establishments that occupy a space 2,500 sq ft or larger and September 2014 for small retail establishments less than 2500 sq ft. It is important to emphasize that these draft recommendations are being discussed/considered internally and there should be another hearing with an opportunity for public comment.

Promoting reusable bags is the best environmental option. Requiring retailers to charge a fee for paper bags would encourage reusable bag use and would create a financial disincentive for paper bag use, which will help reduce pollution since, over its lifetime, a single-use paper bag results in significantly greater greenhouse gas emissions and greater atmospheric acidification, water consumption and ozone production than plastic bags. If paper bags are required to have at least 40% post-consumer recycled content, which means 60% will be virgin material. Trees are needed as carbon sinks, to produce oxygen, clean the air, slow storm water run-off and fight erosion. Businesses would keep the fee to offset the 10-30% higher cost of paper bags, which depends upon the recovered fiber market. Bag fees are in place in most cities with plastic bag bans in California including San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as Portland OR, Washington DC, Seattle and Boulder.

Most members viewed the 5 cent charge for paper bags as necessary and suggested a 5 cent rebate to incentivize reuse, such as Whole Foods' 5 cent credit. Juliana said that stores may have difficulty getting paper bags with the required language. CPAC members said that 5 cents is not a lot and the point is to change people's mindsets and encourage reuse, not to promote paper over plastic. Randi said that she spoke with bag manufacturers/distributors, some local retailers and learned that 100% post-consumer recycled bags are available and that's what Whole Foods buys, but they can be 10-30% more expensive and supply of the recycled fiber may not always be reliable. Also, paper bag manufacturers can easily stamp the bottom of the bag with required language. Rob W. preferred a fee structure to an outright ban, as not all plastic bags would be banned and not everywhere. Juliana wondered about enforcement and noted that education and outreach is necessary. John Bolduc and CPAC members said they will take a vote on the ban at their next meeting, Thursday February 14 at 6pm, City Hall Annex and RAC members are invited.

Joint Discussion with Climate Protection Action Committee

[CPAC](#) wants to work with RAC members on waste reduction topics including zero waste, extended producer responsibility/retailer take back, and business recycling. Several RAC members volunteered to be a part of a joint committee including Rob Gogan, Adam Mitchell, and Jan Dillon. The city's goals to reduce trash are 30% less by 2020 and 80% less by 2050, down from 2008 figures. Rob G. suggested we should talk about it in terms of "materials management". Adam mentioned the effectiveness of pay as you throw (PAYT) programs in reducing trash. Randi mentioned a new map circulated by MassDEP that showed trash per household in the Commonwealth, indicating which

communities have PAYT. Cambridge households generate less than half the average of other non-PAYT communities, and is one of just a few communities generating less than 750 lbs trash/household without PAYT. Members noted that Cambridge households on average, are smaller.

Council Seeking RAC Input on Brookline Ban on Polystyrene-Based Disposable Food Containers (continued from Jan)

Randi asked RAC to continue this discussion. At the committee's request for more information on whether the health impacts of eating/drinking from Styrofoam containers, Randi found two research articles which from her reading seem to indicate that migration of styrene into various food stimulates was correlated with increased temperature and exposure time, email rmail@cambridgema.gov for these articles. She also shared written comments from:

1. John Lively, Cambridge resident and Director of Environment and Material Science from Preserve Products, who supports a ban on Styrofoam because of the "by-products of styrene degradation that leach into food exposed to EPS/PS containers, found to be called "hormone disrupters". John sent links to 3 articles on this:
 - a. Sakamoto H, A Matsuzawa, R Itoh and Y Tohyama. 2000. Quantitative analysis of styrene dimer and trimers migrated from disposable lunch boxes. J Food Hyg Soc Jpn 41:200-205. www.istage.jst.go.jp/article/shokueishi/41/3/200/_pdf
 - b. Kawamura Y, K Nishi, T Maehara, and T Yamada. 1998. Migration of styrene dimers and trimers from polystyrene containers into instant foods. J Food Hyg Soc Jpn 39:390-398. www.journalarchive.jst.go.jp/inlpdf.php?cdjournal=shokueishi1960&cdvol=39&noissue=6&startpage=390&lang=en&from=inlto
 - c. Ohyama, K, F Nagai and Y Tsuchiya 2001. Certain Styrene Oligomers Have Proliferative Activity on MCF-7 Human Breast Tumor Cells and Binding Affinity for Human Estrogen Receptor. Environmental Health Perspectives 109:699-703 www.ecologycenter.org/ipf/toxicity/styrenemonomerstudy.html
2. Rob Gogan supports a ban on non-compostable take-out service ware, similar to [Oakland, CA](#) (which requires, when cost neutral, the use of biodegradable or compostable disposable food service ware by food vendors and city facilities.) He said that even paper cups have a plastic lining inside, by sharing photos of a Starbucks "paper cup" that he soaked and removed paper on to reveal a low-density polyethylene film liner which weighed 1 gram.

Judy mentioned [Plastic: A Toxic Love Story, by Susan Freinkel](#), which goes through history, science and the global economy to assess the real impact of plastic in our lives and makes a case that we cannot stay on our plastic-paved path, and don't have to. The committee has yet to reach a consensus on whether to ban Styrofoam but does agree that the City should move towards reusable and/or compostable containers.

Upcoming Meetings (Minute Takers): Mar 6 (Juliana), Apr 10 (Robert W.), May 8 (Mike), Jun 12 (Adam)

Adjourn: The Committee adjourned at 10:05 AM.