

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Notes

October 9, 2024, 8:00am – 9:30am

Minute Taker: Debby Galef

Members present: Dailey Brannin, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Emily Lee, Richard Nurse, Carlie Peters, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Helen Snively, Quinten Steenhuis, Rob Vandenabeele, Stephanie Wasiuk,

Members absent: Dave Demme, Lee Elliot, Elka Kuhlman, Dawn Quirk

Staff present: Mike Orr

Public present: Amy Waltz

1. Housekeeping

- September minutes were approved

2. Discussion and review of letter to Commissioner Watkins

Lengthy discussion regarding #6. How to phrase so as to be respectful and inclusive.

Cambridge as a whole is considered an environmental justice community according to the MA DEP.

Maybe more urgency needed. A deadline for mandatory food diversion? Fall 2025. Our goals may be out of date by this point.

Add Patty Nolan as recipient, as she's chair of the relevant city council committee.

3. Amended letter approved.

4. Closing

Next meeting October 23rd, to discuss and review city council October 22nd hearing regarding Zero Waste Plan, and what the consultants have to say.

Zoom Chat:

08:14:16 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Consider the effects of our waste reduction efforts on low-income communities inside and outside of Cambridge. Make it easier for these communities to fully participate in waste reduction.

08:14:49 From Tracie to Everyone:

Good Morning,

08:14:57 From Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone:

Maybe change "effects" to "impacts."

08:15:46 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Consider the effects of our waste reduction impacts on low-income communities throughout Cambridge. We should strive to Make it easier for these communities to fully participate in waste reduction. The City should also consider how waste impacts people outside of Cambridge.

08:15:50 From Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone:

And perhaps clarify what kinds of impacts they may be. "environmental" or "economic"?

08:17:01 From carlie to Everyone:

"Make sure any new initiatives take an equitable and inclusive approach for all community members..."

08:17:23 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to ""Make sure any new i..." with 👍

08:17:29 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Ensure that waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive of all community members.

08:17:45 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to ""Make sure any new i..." with 👍
08:17:51 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to "Ensure that waste re..." with 👍
08:17:54 From Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone:

Reacted to "Ensure that waste re..." with 👍
08:17:59 From Dailey Brannin to Everyone:

Reacted to "Ensure that waste re..." with 👍
08:18:00 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:
Replying to "Ensure that waste re..."

I like the term, "accessible"
08:18:01 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

i like where richard and carlie and Emily are going.. make it easier for all Camb residents...
08:18:05 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to "Ensure that waste re..." with 👍
08:18:20 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Consider the effects of our waste reduction policies on low-income communities throughout Cambridge. Make sure any waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive for all community members. We should strive to make it easier for these communities to fully participate in waste reduction. The City should also consider how waste impacts people outside of Cambridge.

08:20:09 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to "Consider the effects..." with 👍
08:20:10 From carlie to Everyone:

Reacted to "Consider the effects..." with 👍
08:20:12 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

I feel it's best to focus just on Cambridge and not on other communities for this letter.
08:20:23 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

Reacted to Consider the effects... with "👍"
08:20:52 From Tracie to Everyone:

Reacted to "Consider the effec..." with 👍
08:21:12 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

And also not bring in EJ into this letter - just to focus on waste reduction in Camb
08:22:50 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

I think it's best to include why. I like to shift into this approach of including reasons as much as possible without confusing people too much

08:23:32 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Waste reduction is still relevant
08:25:05 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Consider the effects of our waste reduction policies on low-income communities throughout Cambridge. Make sure any waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive for all community members. - Mike

08:25:20 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

Reacted to Consider the effects... with "👍"
08:25:25 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to "Consider the effects..." with 👍
08:25:48 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Reacted to "Consider the effects..." with 👍
08:26:54 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

environmental justice communities?

08:27:57 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Cambridge is planning for gradual reduction in trash (50% by 2030), at a time when ICCP tells us we need exponential reductions in methane from all sources. Agriculture and waste are the largest sources. Composting both directly reduces methane from landfills, but also allows residents to assess and reduce the amount of food waste they are producing (significantly reducing Agricultural waste). The \$4 million dollar question, is will Cambridge mandate composting this year, or four years from now. While \$4 million loss does not matter much in the Cambridge, the effects on the climate from US not meeting goals because no one is taking a strong enough lead are catastrophic. We will face unfathomable problems. We have a fleeting moment to make a small impact on a large problem, but allowing outdated goals to remain in place will hamper progress.

I would love to see 2 things on this letter -

1. Request that mandated composting is urgent (as soon as possible no later than the next year).
2. Indicate that trash st

08:28:10 From Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone:

There are also EPA grids that separate each municipality into sectors.

08:28:18 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

2. Indicate that trash studies show 55% of Cambridge trash can be redirected today (mostly compost, recycling, etc.) Our efforts should be to immediately reduce trash by half.


08:28:30 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Make sure any waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive for all community members. Consider the effects of our waste reduction policies on low-income and environmental justice communities throughout Cambridge.

08:28:32 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Make sure any waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive for all community members. Ensure that no communities are negatively impacted by

08:28:42 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to "Make sure any waste ..." with 

08:29:10 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Make sure any waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive for all community members. Ensure that no communities are negatively impacted by our WR policies.


08:31:38 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

13% is recycling

08:32:09 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

I think the focus is food waste reduction

08:32:22 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "I think the focus is..." with 

08:32:35 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

and SUP

08:33:43 From Debby Knight to Everyone:

Reacted to "Make sure any waste ..." with 

08:33:59 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

Keep discussing please.

08:35:58 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

our trash is 29% compost, 13% recycling, 13% other items that can be diverted

08:37:21 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

how about this for the 2nd sentence? In setting WR policies, consider how they might impact particular communities.


08:37:46 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

The time frame for implementing required composting will make a huge difference.


08:38:40 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Make sure any waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive for all community members. In setting waste reduction policies, consider how they might impact particular communities.


08:38:49 From Dailey Brannin to Everyone:

Reacted to "Make sure any waste ..." with 


08:39:00 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to "Make sure any waste ..." with 

08:39:12 From Tracie to Everyone:

Reacted to "Make sure any wast..." with 

08:39:24 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "Make sure any waste ..." with 

08:48:34 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

First sentence of #1: Because food waste is the #1 item in Cambridge's trash, the City should mandate the diversion of food waste by Fall 2025.

08:48:57 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

rather than perpetuating the myth of 50% trash reduction by 2030, we need to suggest greater urgency

08:49:18 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

Reacted to First sentence of #1... with 


08:49:20 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to "First sentence of #1..." with 

08:49:23 From Dailey Brannin to Everyone:

Reacted to "First sentence of #1..." with 

08:49:26 From Tracie to Everyone:

Reacted to "First sentence of ..." with 

08:49:30 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Reacted to "First sentence of #1..." with 

08:49:33 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to "First sentence of #1..." with 

08:49:43 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "First sentence of #1..." with 

08:51:03 From Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone:

Reacted to "rather than perpetua..." with 

08:52:57 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

In order to reduce trash 50% by 2030 and to take meaningful steps to reduce our climate impact, it's imperative that the City take aggressive action to implement these initiatives for the benefit of the community.


08:53:22 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

This does not include messages and ideas on how & why of trash reduction. Will there be opportunities for ongoing input?


08:53:55 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

In order to reduce trash 50% by 2030 and to take meaningful steps to reduce our climate impact, it's imperative that the City take aggressive action to implement these initiatives.


08:54:03 From Dailey Brannin to Everyone:


Reacted to "In order to reduce t..." with 

08:54:09 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to "In order to reduce t..." with 

08:54:09 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to "In order to reduce t..." with 
08:54:37 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "In order to reduce t..." with 
08:55:19 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

In order to meet the City's goal of reducing trash 50% by 2030 and to take meaningful steps to reduce our climate impact, it's imperative that the City take aggressive action to implement these initiatives.


08:59:24 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

I love Amy's points but let's move on and approve this :)


08:59:36 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Reacted to "I love Amy's points ..." with 

08:59:42 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

Reacted to "In order to meet the..." with 

08:59:52 From Debby Knight to Everyone:

Reacted to "In order to meet the..." with 

09:03:56 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

no 3.. add access in the first sentence, take it out of the 2nd.

09:04:30 From Deborah Galef to Everyone:

Remove space before physical

09:04:38 From Stephanie Wasiuk to Everyone:

Reacted to "Remove space before ..." with 

09:05:30 From Deborah Galef to Everyone:

Replying to "Remove space before ..."

It's still there.

09:06:07 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

i like where you're going Tracie!

09:07:09 From Mike Orr to Everyone:

Work closely with landlords, property managers, trustees, and tenants to maximize food waste diversion.

09:07:19 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

Reacted to "Work closely with la..." with 

09:07:21 From Emily Lee to Everyone:

Reacted to "Work closely with la..." with 

09:07:26 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Reacted to "Work closely with la..." with 

09:08:01 From Amy Waltz to Everyone:

It is partly a matter of getting funding in the appropriate efforts to have meaningful goals. We need to be phasing out trash and trasfering funding and staff to reuse & recycling efforts.

09:08:32 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

good improvements on no. 1!

09:08:39 From carlie to Everyone:

I have to hop but I support this letter!

Dear Commissioner Kathy Watkins and Councilor Nolan,

The Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) consists of approximately 18 members, and has been an active committee for over 30 years. We are Cambridge residents, university representatives, and industry experts who are passionate about moving Cambridge forward in the areas of waste reduction and more effective and accessible recycling through community engagement. We regularly speak to residents about composting (as well as other waste reduction efforts), encourage reuse through a Circular Business list, and have recently piloted move-out waste reduction via the Free Store at the Cambridge Community Center.

We have thoroughly discussed and debated which efforts would best position Cambridge to meet its goals and continue be a leader not only in the surrounding area, but nationwide. We urge the City of Cambridge to pursue the following initiatives:

1. Food waste is the #1 item in Cambridge's trash. The City should mandate the diversion of food waste by Fall 2025. Specifically focus on Cambridge's large buildings, as many are not participating in the compost program. Work closely with landlords, property managers, trustees, and tenants to maximize food waste diversion.
2. Create outlets to reduce move-out waste generated by the high turnover of students and renters, particularly during peak season (May - September).
3. Improve access to the Recycle Center, including location within the City, physical space, and extended hours. Create more options for residents to divert materials from the trash (e.g. satellite locations, mobile Recycle Center for residents without cars, etc.).
4. Require foodservice businesses to reduce single-use packaging (e.g. take out containers, utensils, condiment packaging, etc.).
5. Expand city outreach to the entirety of the Cambridge commercial sector (all business sectors) to improve waste reduction efforts.
6. Ensure any waste reduction efforts are accessible and inclusive for all community members. In setting waste reduction policies, consider how they might impact particular communities.

In order to meet the City's goal of reducing trash 50% by 2030 and to take meaningful steps to reduce our climate impact, it's imperative that the City take aggressive action to implement these initiatives.

Sincerely,

Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee Members