

DRAFT

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee, Council Chambers, 795 Mass. Ave.

January 11, 2017 - minutes taken by Susy Jones

Members present: Ilana Bebchick, Michael Papas, Rob Gogan, Martha Henry, Debby Knight, Janet Mosley, David Frank, Keith Cialino, Matthew St. Onge, Joel Dashnaw, Susy Jones, Meera Singh, Debby Galef, Anne Sherman

Members absent: Mary Verhage, Liz Marr, Quinten Steenhuis, Laura Nichols, Kristen Watkins

Staff present: Meryl Brott, Michael Orr, Camilla Elvis, John Fitzgerald

Guests/members of the public: Helen Snively

Meeting Notes

1. Housekeeping

- The RAC welcomed new members. Keith reviewed public meeting process. Discussed how new leadership (i.e. chair, vice chair, secretary) for new committee will be decided at future meeting. Minutes from December 2016 were approved.

2. Introductions & Positions

- Each member of the Committee introduced themselves. Mike Orr said the #1 reason for joining was people wanted to get more civically engaged.
- Members here today:
 - Ilana Bebchick, lives in Cambridgeport, school administration and public school principal
 - Michael Papas, Cambridge resident, retired carpenter, property owner, community advocacy
 - Rob Gogan, been on committee for 20 plus years, manages recycling at Harvard
 - Martha Henry, Cambridge resident, Harvard School of Public Health, HIV research group
 - Debby Knight, Cambridge resident, teaches science at Cambridge Friends School
 - Janet Mosley, lives in Arlington, environmental consultant, works on lifecycle assessment
 - David Frank, Sustainability Director for Dining at BU, lives in Cambridge
 - Keith Cialino, Chair, former Cambridge resident, Marine Debris Coordinator for NOAA
 - Matthew St. Onge, ED of Boston Building Resources in Roxbury for 23 years, resident of Cambridge
 - Joel Dashnaw, Save that Stuff business management, former teacher
 - Susy Jones, MIT, Office of Sustainability, reaching out to work with other people, unsiloing, LCA, digging into real data
 - Meera Singh, returning member, works with high school students on office-based waste/recycling efforts, Cambridge resident
 - Debby Galef, returning member, teaches ESL
 - Anne Sherman, new member, Dir. of Sustainability for Staach (based in Rochester, NY), architecture and sustainability background, Cambridge resident
- Other members not here today:
 - Mary Verhage is sick today, she is a former member
 - Liz Marr, new member, works at Harvard
 - Quinten Steenhuis, former volunteer for City, lawyer

- Laura Nichols, ED for Consumer Council, former member
- Kristen Watkins, MIT grad
- Cambridge Staff
 - Michael Orr, Recycling Director, DPW
 - Meryl Brott, Recycling Program Manager, works with schools and multifamily
 - Camilla Elvis, works part-time on outreach with City
 - John Fitzgerald, Environmental Services Manager, DPW
- 3 Positions will be up for "election" in February/March - Chair (Keith's position), Vice Chair (supports Chair), Secretary (gets all the minutes and documents in order)
 - 1-2 monthly calls to chat
 - Additional 1-2 hour/month extra
 - Debby K. proposed having current team continue to serve out for 3 years
 - Rob G. also suggested the vice chair might transition into chair
 - David Frank volunteered for chair or vice chair
 - Anne Sherman also volunteered for chair or vice chair
 - People can also email Mike Orr if they would like to volunteer. We can vote either next month or the following.
 - Anne asked if there is a written paragraph describing positions. Mike said there is and he will send to committee.

3. City Updates

- Mike updated on staffing, including Waste Reduction Program Manager (Mike's previous position) - http://www2.cambridgema.gov/viewjoblisting.cfm?job_id=1752.
- Matthew asked if it would be helpful for Mike to share job postings, so we can spread around our networks. Application deadline is January 30.
- City Council asked DPW to explore what it looks like for DPW to collect business trash
- Average commodity revenue (ACR) \$3/ton in Dec., \$5/ton this month. This will offset hauling costs (last Feb we paid \$35/ton, big swing). Rob commented that 1 ton of recycling is a ton you don't have to throw away, avoided disposal cost being important here. We pay \$80/ton for trash. Compost is \$70/ton for disposal, hoping to get it down to about \$65/ton in the future.
- HDR is our consulting firm, won RFP to be our zero waste consultant in late fall 2016. Will explore how we meet 2020 30% reduction goal.
- HDR will be helping us analyze hauling/operations/current & future programs/staffing.
- They will meet with RAC in Feb or March.
- Anne asked about high level requirements for RFP. John Fitzgerald said there were 4 bidders, lots of considerations. HDR was involved in some previous advisory work for city composting program here in Cambridge. RFP is included in packet distributed today. HDR is also working on a greenhouse gas inventory baseline for the City. HDR will be working with us through July/August. They are in data collection mode now. They'll eventually propose how to do citywide composting, which will help DPW submit budget by Feb 22 to City Council. Other topics might be: pay-as-you-throw, etc. They will also have 2-3 public forums.
- Janet suggested we all read up on RFP and their proposal, and come prepared with questions in March; also if we have any input, to funnel through Mike.
- Keith/Mike will circulate HDR proposal so that we can discuss in February.

4. Discussion Topics, 8:55am (25 min)

- **Questions for HDR consultants**
- On the back of today's agenda is data collected from trash sorts - nearly 40% of trash could have been composted
 - David Frank asked: Did you see BPI containers? Mike responded: No not much, because sort was all residential. David said that 30 percent is also what you see in landfill, numbers are consistent.
 - Ilana asked about pathogens in composting. If we switched to anaerobic digestion this would kill pathogens and more items, such as tissues, could be included.
 - Debby G. was surprised at Monday food waste numbers. How many households participating in Monday route? Mike said about 40-50% households are participating in Monday route composting. We have a lot of work to do. Need to do something else to nudge them.
- Rob suggested we look at every-other-week trash, and weekly pickups of organics. But how do you prepare public for this?
- Matthew wondered about a voluntary reduction for weekly pick up
- Meera asked if HDR would help with outreach? How do we resolve whether things that are contaminated can go into compost? Mike said that there will always be things in compost that can't be processed, but most can be.
- David is curious if consultants are thinking about rebounding effects of changes to schedule, etc. How does this impact lower socioeconomic levels? Understanding collective bargaining requirement and effect on employees. Understanding marginal effect on municipal employees.
- Janet asked about expanding organics drop-off locations for compost. Is HDR looking at those sites? Mike said that the biggest hurdle is finding spots.
- Mike said in Toronto they allow diapers and kitty litter in organics collection.
- Anne Sherman asked about final report, what's missing is: what are educational and social impacts of recommendations?
- Mike said that if we don't like some of their recommendations, we can respond, i.e. if we don't like pay-as-you-throw, we can write a letter to City.
- Interests of new and returning RAC members
- Keith asked what people's particular interests are. What do you want to learn about? What do you want to tackle? Keith asked everyone to write top 3 items.
- For those not at meeting, Mike will ask new members to submit their topics of interest to Keith
- Members' topics of interest:
 - Anne - education/behavior change and social impacts (business and residential); expansion of composting; climate plan integration
 - David - biodiesel, city-wide yard sale/repurpose event; Cambridge aerobic digestion facility
 - Debby G - education concerning city's recycling and composting policies; more discussion of bulky waste disposal; recycling and/or composting of more items, such as mattresses, cat litter, diapers
 - Debby K - proliferation of single-use containers - can we disrupt the growth/encourage bring your own/look at best materials practices?; expansion of curbside organics - education/behavior change; education in general about sustainable materials management
 - Ilana - curbside composting - I'd like to help develop educational materials with easy tips, "how to" guide, etc.; curbside recycling - education to increase participation; materials recycling - "Get Rid of It Right"

- Janet - continued work on programs to promote reuse; work with businesses to reduce single-use items; work with businesses to increase their recycling; work on assessing policies for long-term large scale waste reduction (e.g. pay as you throw); work on strategies to increase recycling in large multifamily buildings
- Joel - education and behavior change re: contamination, compliance; extended producer responsibility; waste data/dashboard/tracking
- Keith - bulky waste; non-curbside items (e.g. cigarette butts, chip bags); behavior change/education
- Matthew - more composting and curbside organics pick up; better education for residents to know about donation opportunities; explore pay as you throw
- Meera - increase education, outreach efforts to Cambridge Public Schools, residents, businesses; learn about recycling markets, average commodity revenue (ACR), cost benefits
- Michael P - questions about disposal of miscellaneous (odd ball stuff) - batteries, furniture, electronics, packing peanuts, etc. - asked from a multi-family owner
- Rob - promote culture of reuse; bulky waste/overage fees; producer responsibility - policy proposals with Beacon Hill
- Susy - waste and climate action process; changing food/waste culture; socio-economic impact of waste strategies; citywide yard sale

5. Closing

Action Items

- Mike Orr will send written paragraph describing Committee positions and members can get back to him if they'd like to volunteer. We can vote in Feb. or March.
- Mike Orr will share job postings, and we can spread around our networks.
- Janet suggested we all read up on RFP and HDR's proposal, and come prepared with questions in March; also if we have any input, to funnel through Mike.
- Mike Orr will circulate HDR proposal so that we can discuss in February
- Committee can email Mike with other suggestions for HDR consultants
- For those not at meeting, ask new members to submit their topics of interest
- Mike will send around members' emails

Announcements:

- Harvard is running a cosmetics drive (nail polish, hair treatment, feminine hygiene products, open nail polish ok), new, unopened. Bring to Feb meeting and Rob will bring to Cambridge Family Shelter. Harvard has drop offs across campus.
- Save that Stuff - organics recovery, slurry facility, accepting test loads. Run by Waste Management, STS is host. Looking now at what doesn't make it through to become slurry. If anyone is interested in taking a tour, let Joel know. If there's interest, he could set up RAC tour.
- Anne started something called "Four for Tomorrow" - volunteering 4 hours of time, <http://www.four4tomorrow.org>, check it out. Staach is making business recommendations on takeout containers. If anyone has expertise on this, get in touch with Anne.
- Mike Orr: if anyone wants to volunteer 1-2 hour shifts, get in touch with him.

December 2016 Waste Characterization Analysis

City staff and volunteers sorted trash from 100 Households on two different days. The results are below:

	Monday Sort	Thursday Sort
Paper/Cardboard	9.7%	10.7%
Containers/Plastics	5.6%	7.4%
Food Waste (includes food still in packages)	29.3%	33.1%
Organics (non-food paper)	12.3%	8.3%
Diapers/Pet Waste	8.7%	11.0%
Textiles	3.9%	4.4%
Waste Electronics and Electrical Equipment (i.e. anything with a cord)	3.4%	2.2%
Trash	21.4%	18.7%