**DRAFT**

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting

**January 8, 2020,** 8am – 9:30am

City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave, Council Chambers

Minute Taker: Martha Henry

**Members Present:** Rob Gogan, Martha Henry, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Janet Mosley, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Mary Verhage.

**Members Absent**: Ilana Bebchick, Debby Galef, Laura Nichols, Kristen Watkins

**Staff Present**: Mike Orr

Members of Public Present: Scott Welch, Katharine Davis.

**Housekeeping**

Concerning Minute Taking:

* Mary commented on the need for meeting minutes to be accurate and asked about how edits could be made to Draft Minutes. Mike noted that minutes were not meant to be verbatim, but rather a summary of what happened. Janet suggested that people who would like edits could propose suggestions that could be voted on at the next meeting. Mike stressed the point that minutes are meant to “collect the essence of the meeting.”
* Mary said the website link to RAC minutes no longer works.
* Meera suggested going through points that Mary had an issue with from December 2019 minutes, which Mary had sent to RAC members in an email. Three changes were discussed and amendments were approved:
  + Letter with RAC suggestions was sent specifically to DPW Commissioner Owen O’Riordan.
  + O’Riordan met in December with Councilman Zondervan to discuss single-use plastics.
  + City Manager and O’Riordan will resume discussion on single-use plastic in January 2020.
* Susy suggested sending Draft Minutes as a Word Doc to track changes. Mary said she would find that helpful.
* December 2019 amended minutes approved.

**CPAC/RAC collaboration on consumption-based GHG emissions**

* Subcommittee document reviewed.
* Quinten asked what is particular to Cambridge in this process and what are other cities doing? Janet suggested the subcommittee create a list of best practices. Rob said emphasis is on the products that residents of Cambridge consume and discard. He suggested the committee come up with thoughtful responses to the genuine concern people have about plastics, and how they affect marine environment and greenhouse gas emissions. Rob also suggested we carefully consider categories for future waste audits. Susy questioned whether the scope of the subcommittee was too large. Debby said the timeline seemed aggressive for the scope of the subcommittee. Mike suggested that the subcommittee could be extended beyond June 2020. Janet reiterated her enthusiasm for the idea, stressing the long-term nature of the goals, and how the subcommittee is a first step. Mike suggested having subcommittee members report back to the RAC every other RAC meeting.

**City Updates**

* Cambridge reduced trash from 16.29 lbs/HH/wk in 2018 to 15.49 lbs/HH/wk in 2019.
* Of the 670 tons of trash reduction, Mike said that 300 tons were diverted to compost, 120 tons were mattresses diverted to UTEC. The source of the remaining 250 ton is unclear. Mike speculated it may be from increased “reduce & reuse” and increased recycling.
* Janet wondered how much of the reduction may be due to reduction in water through compost sitting around and drying out. Mike mentioned the possibility of doing more outreach for composting program. Rob said nationwide trash is getting lighter because packaging is getting lighter for water bottles, tuna cans, etc., while at the same time there is recycling fatigue at Harvard as recycling becomes more complicated.
* Mike gave a shout out to his staff for enabling trash reductions while being short-staffed. Mary said numbers were impressive. However, they are a bit misleading because they represent only those households serviced by DPW. The numbers do not include the many large condo and rental buildings in the city.This segment is growing. DPW provides no trash, recycling, or composting services to large rental/condo buildings.

Susy said goal setting for 2020 for the future would be moved to February meeting when new members may be present. I don’t recall any conversation about new members attending the meeting. Didn’t Mike say they were coming on board in March? His email of 2/4/20 ” stated “Because we were on the fence about whether the new members would be added for this months’ meeting,”

* She suggested providing some sort of orientation for new members.
* Debby mentioned there are a lot of questions around textiles and would like to see the RAC address them. Meera suggested having current members help orient new members regarding how much time the RAC requires and what volunteer opportunities exist. Rob suggested having a history of lbs/HH/wk [pounds of trash per each household per week] the “physical accoutrements” that enabled changes: blue bins, compost and recycling toters, etc.

**Action Items**

* Going forward, meeting minutes with be circulated as a Word doc so that members may suggest changes in the document, which may be discussed/voted upon at next meeting prior to vote to approve minutes.

Mike will reach out to CPAC to form subcommittee Hasn’t this committee been formed already? Isn’t Janet on that Committee? See “**CPAC/RAC collaboration on consumption-based GHG emissions” above.**

* When subcommittee formed, RAC members on subcommittee will report back to RAC meetings regularly.
* Orientation for new members will be created.
* Why you’re interested in RAC, what you hope RAC will accomplish.
* Quinten will collect photos, contact information and brief bios of old and new RAC to create Member Contact List.

**Announcements**

* Rob said [Harvard Recycling & Surplus Center](https://green.harvard.edu/tools-resources/green-tip/free-furniture-supplies-equipment-harvard-recycling-and-surplus-center) is loaded with materials. People should stop by if they need furniture or other items. Harvard Surplus is open to the public on Thursdays from 11 am to 2 pm.
* Rob announced there will be a Fix-It Clinic on Saturday, February 8th, at 224 Western Ave at Harvard Ed Portal from 11 am to 2 pm.
* Rob is collecting cosmetics and toiletries for the [Valentine’s Cosmetic Drive](https://green.harvard.edu/events/valentines-cosmetics-drive). Items will be donated to the Cambridge Family Shelter of the YWCA. RAC members can bring items to the February meeting.

**Public Comment**

Scott, a member of the public, thanked everyone for all their hard work.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.