Members present: Ilana Bebchick, Leah Beckett, Holden Cookson, Catrina Damrell, Shirley Elliott, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Martha Henry, Susy Jones, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Lindsay Levine, Scott MacGrath, Janet Mosley, Audrey Ng, Richard Nurse, Meera Singh, Quentin Steenhuis, Mary Verhage, Kristen Watkins, Suzanne Wong

Members absent: Laura Nichols, Diane Roseman

Staff Present: Mike Orr

Public present: Helen Snively

1. Housekeeping
   • Scott runs the meeting!
   • Minutes of October 14 approved as presented to RAC.

2. City Updates
   • Mike: Save That Stuff is the new contractor, steep learning curve
     o The first two weeks decent collection though there were some missed collections
     o The third week now: recycling is in the good groove
     o Some issues: Some workers working late and the goal is to be done by 4pm
     o Much more yard waste this year: Exceptionally heavy yard waste this year.
       ▪ Many collections are behind
       ▪ Trying to get the message out
       ▪ Working this Saturday to try to get as many trucks out there as possible to collect what was missed
     o Debby Knight asked if the collection would happen by the end of the week.
       ▪ Mike: it is difficult to catch up after the first two weeks with the new contractor
     o Goal: by December, the collection will be all settled
     o Mary asked how Mike is getting the message out: social media, the city hall, people making the posts and reposting at nextdoor.com etc.
     o Scott suggests if there could be a poster on a bulletin board
     o Mike: but this is a very temporary thing and becomes obsolete quickly
     o Rob asked: what is the proportion between paper bags and barrels
     o Mike: hard to say but slightly more paper
     o Richard: technical question whether downed branches from personal property are the property owner’s responsibility, to which Mike said yes
     o Mike: what’s most difficult
- Not everyone reports missed collections
- We had so many missed collections which made the collections more difficult

**Small business recycle program**
- 200 small businesses are now being served, many women and minority owned. Mostly retail and restaurant businesses
- Nearly all are non-formula businesses
  - Program is free. 1 - 2 times a week recycling collection.
  - Trying to do more outreach
- Mary: what’s the target number?
- Mike: budgeted for up to 250. But not sure if there are more small businesses.
- Scott: did the small businesses not have a recycling system before?
- Mike: probably they did
- Suzanne: is this a good representation of the businesses in the city?
- Mike: hard to assess. I would not say this is representative because most office and corporate offices didn’t apply because they couldn’t meet requirements of program.
- Rob: what about non-profits?
- Mike: not many non-profits. We already serve non-profits: church, school, etc. They could have applied

**Single use plastics**
- This is a recommendation RAC sent in November 2019 and it is in the minutes from the meeting
- The city council asked the RAC and DPW to weigh in on banning on single use plastics
  - So RAC did research on ordinances like this in Berkeley, Brookline, etc.
  - RAC recommended life cycle analysis
  - Was supposed to be discussed by City Council in March 2020 but the COVID hit and other priorities arose. In sum, no update.
- Mike: around last June or July, the state lifted the ban on reusable bags. Then it took a few weeks or more for the City to change their policy.
- Ilana: any way for the city to incentivize use of compostable containers. What can the city do to promote this?
- Mike: we don’t accept the compostable containers in our composting system. Life cycle of compostable vs. life cycle of recyclable is tricky. I don’t know what the city can do, especially since it costs more to purchase compostable. PFAS, forever chemical commonly used in compostable ware, is a concern.
- Mike: BPI is trying to implement a rule to ban this chemical. But what could replace it in compostable ware? Seems to make more sense to focus on waste reduction
- Susy: at MIT, there is such a shortage of single use plastics as food businesses are struggling to find containers. A shortage of PPE and clam shells.
- Mary: asked Mike to send out the letter to commissioner about the ordinance from Nov RAC meeting.
Scott: any way for the city to encourage and remind businesses to not automatically include single use items
Mike: not sure if the city has a mechanism but will look into the possibility
Susy: a lot of restaurants seem to avoid single use items now in Boston. There seems to have been a shift
Debby Knight: is there any update on EPR? Can Mike let people know when there’s state legislation we can or should support?
Debby Galef: PaintCare: this never passed in MA though it did in other states

MA forum on waste bans
• Proposing new regulations in attempt to reduce waste disposal as landfills close in the state and lots get shipped out of state
• Future proposal: bans on mattresses, textiles and food waste when producing more than ½ ton/wk. For fall 2021
• Will impact Cambridge around textiles. City already has mattress recycling program
• City still exploring textile recycling options.

3. Shirley on food waste subcommittee
• See PPT at end of Minutes for presentation from Shirley.
• Susy suggested setting a time to collect questions and comments in the next meeting.
• Mike: Send comments to either Mike or Shirley

4. Breakout room by subcommittee

5. Closing
• No public comment
• Action items:
  • Mike will send the letter on single use ordinance to the RAC
  • Everyone will send in comments and questions about Shirley’s food waste project
  • CPAC/RAC subcommittee update to RAC in December meeting
  • Scott, Susy, and Mike will think about whether or not to address action items in the beginning of the meeting every month
  • Susy will send out questions on RAC goal setting

Announcement:
• Rob: DPW will distribute compost bags on 11/23 to help folks compost during Thanksgiving
• Sakiko: waste talk series on MIT material life cycle analysis this Friday (Nov 20th)

Q & A
• Scott: what are some ways to drop off food waste at the drop-off sites?
  • Mike: freeze food waste in the compost bags
• Scott: can we start a Slack to share articles?
- Mike: concern – sometimes it violates the open meeting rule unless someone is willing to ensure strictly no opinions or judgments
- Rob: don’t like article sharing unless there is annotation or comments with it. Perhaps, suggest it on the agenda for the next meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:30am.
RAC’s 2021 Food Waste Reduction Initiative

REHASH IT
DON’T TRASH IT
THE CURBSIDE COMPOST PROGRAM HAS

- Reduced trash by 35%
- Resulted in expansion to 20K homes
- Revealed residents are willing to make changes when informed
Reduce Compost Tonnage by
- 1% year 1*
- 5% year 2
- 40% 2030

Enhance the 2050 Trash Goal

View Compost As The Last Resort

*Based on Pre-Covid figures after adjusting for reinstatement period and WFM shift
THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

Health

Value

Environment

RAC
HEALTH IS WEALTH!

- FOMO
- Convenience > Cost

VALUE!

- Reduced Weekly/Monthly Expenses
- Pantry Cooking Tips
- Fewer Trips To The Grocer* 😷
Inform Residents Their Plates Affect The Environment As Much As Their Cars

Simplify Language Of GHG Emissions

Make Trash Cans The Enemy
Title

Reoccurring FW GHG blurb

Spotlight Article

Tips & Reminders

Fluff Article

Social Media Section

RAC/DPW info and statement
Seasonal items with significant portions typically discarded
Written to include history, health benefits, vitamins, minerals, and an easy plant based recipe*
Recipes will focus on items on hand and avoid specialty purchases.
RAC members are encouraged to try recipes prior to publication and share feedback
Readership target: ages 8-80

*Meat based recipes will be featured only twice in the first year
‘Unconventional’ Ways To Use Food Waste
Dispelling Misconceptions
Getting Crafty
How-to’s
Connecting With Food Resources In The City*
Tips For Storage, Meals, and FoodKeeper App

Landing Page

Social Media Handles (#CharlesChew)

Courtesy of the RAC
- Schools
- Mailers
- Surveys (Sakiko)
- Cambridge Access TV
- Social media (Nextdoor, FB, IG, Cheesy TikToks)
- 1 Pagers posted in every square, major grocers bulletin boards, and local stores (i.e. Thistle & Shamrock)
- Demonstrating the ease in short videos (1 min max)
Questions