

DRAFT
Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2020, 8:00 am - 9:30 am
Virtual Meeting
Minute Taker: Diane Roseman

Members present: Leah Beckett, 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, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Mary Verhage, Suzanne Wong

Members absent: Ilana Bebchick, Holden Cookson, Laura Nichols, Kristen Watkins

Staff present: Michael Orr

Public present: Helen Snively

January's minutes were approved

Don't forget to sign up for minute taking! No action items to review from the last meeting.

1. City updates

Not much news to report.

Question re new, city-provided trash containers: are they still high priority?

Yes for DPW, but we don't know if the city manager will agree at this time due to budget constraints. Most likely we'll know for sure by June. Issues involve rodent control, various size(s) of bins, residents of multi-family housing not wanting to share bins, and space for bins. Residents will have some say in size of barrel they receive.

Will curbside compost return in March?

Maybe but we're still trying to figure it out. Don't want to give people false hope.

Residents should put out the green bins regardless, to get food out of the trash and unavailable to rats. Education is needed to explain this.

Fresh Pond Whole Foods has a silo in back and they have been composting food scraps on site for 3 months or so. Creating energy with food, including prepared. Slurry tank has been on their agenda for awhile.

2. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Rob and Mike are on the board of MassRecycle--part of it is Mass Product Stewardship Council (MassPSC). EPR loops in the industry for responsibility for the full cycle of product manufacturing. One good example is paint. If you sell a gallon of paint at a hardware store, there's a fee that is tacked on that covers the disposal cost. The fee goes to the a product

stewardship organization, which asks municipalities or companies to collect the old paint and reimburses for the cost of collection and hauling to a recycler of paint. There's always a cost for this, so the goal is to make sure we're using the most efficient way to cover the cost of disposal. If we cover the cost at the beginning, we can centralize and enhance efficiency of the disposal/reimbursement process--hence EPR.

Many states have these laws, and there's a company called PaintCare that collects paint in these states. MA hasn't had a law for 20 years, despite many attempts to create an EPR law over the years. Our success has been only in EPR for medications, which the MassDPH has not allowed to take effect. There is a push for EPR for mattresses, paper, cardboard, to make manufacturers responsible for all packaging--a bill is coming up this year.

How do you deal with people buying stuff out of the jurisdiction? Buy in NH, get rid of it in MA--what will happen with that?

Mike: most likely MA would have to foot the bill, probably it will balance out.

Rob: Canada has EPR for everything, each province. We're heading toward a critical mass, producers want the same rules everywhere.

Mary: MA has a container deposit model for bottles and cans.

Rob: the next iteration is PPP (paper and packaging)--EPR, and there'd be a small charge when you buy them. I think BC or Nova Scotia has that--the goal is to affect the disposal process right from the manufacturing moment--if we charge manufacturers more for things that we have to trash versus things that we recycle, it will affect how they manufacture items. It's really bringing manufacturers in from the beginning.

Richard: One practical issue is how do you put the logo on film that doesn't have printing on it--it's a separate operation. Will be difficult to put into practice.

Mike: It's an incentive nudge--we probably can't recycle everything. How do we work towards that process? A supermarket taking back bags is voluntary product stewardship, moving towards mandatory.

Rob: with EPR we frontload the processing costs to the consumer. The taxpayers are now funding the infrastructure for collection and disposal. If we frontload the costs to the consumer, the producer can fund the infrastructure--people don't want to pay twice, once at the market and once on their taxes.

Mike: it's cheaper if it's centralized, the cost upfront is cheaper for consumers as it's more efficient.

Scott: What are the main obstacles to adopting a mattress EPR?

Mike: Maine has been very successful with EPR despite it not being as progressive as MA. The DEP is very active there. Here in MA we deal more with bans rather than a more nuanced approach. We don't have opposition from industry per se. It's just attention & prioritization.

Susy: What's the economic argument? I don't quite understand it with packaging? How does it help?

Mike: Right now there's demand for plastics, to make new products. It's voluntary for companies to commit to. EPR can cement it in place, by creating a permanent steady

market for these materials. Waste is an externality--you don't pay for the disposal up front. This internalizes the cost. It's hard to fully understand the breadth of the effect. Companies have a financial interest in the proper disposal of their products.

Meera: What sort of advocacy is really needed to get everyone involved?

Mike: If people are really interested and want to know more, let me know! MassRecycle call open to the public is coming up next month. Rob will provide info.

Debby K: Are the same people involved on this new bill? There had been an active group in the house working on this.

Rob: there is a new speaker, and MA has a very untransparent process. People want to change this.

Subcommittee check-ins--20 minutes

Action Items

- Rob was going to send the link to the March MassRecycle meeting
- Subcommittees should let Susy/Scott know if they want to present at an upcoming meeting

Public Comment: no public comment

Announcements:

- RAC social is Tuesday February 16th from 5-6:30, everyone's welcome. Bring wine, dinner, imagine we're at the Cambridge Common again
- Susy--Had a meeting with 2good2go--an app that restaurants use to post for food that is about to go at a discount Great for food waste reduction
- Rob--Fix it clinic Saturday sponsored by the Harvard Science Library. Rob will send the link.