

DRAFT
Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2021, 8.00am-9.30am
Virtual Meeting Minute Taker: Richard Nurse

Members present: Catrina Damrell, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Martha Henry, Sakiko Isomichi, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Scott MacGrath, Janet Mosley, Audrey Ng, Laura Nichols, Richard Nurse, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Mary Verhage, Suzanne Wong

Members absent: Ilana Bebachick, Leah Beckett, Holden Cookson, Shirley Elliot, Lindsay Levine, Laura Nichols, Diane Roseman, Kristen Watkins

Staff Present: Deb Albenberg, Camilla Elvis, Mike Orr

Public present: Judy Nathans, Helen Snively

1. Housekeeping

Minutes from the April meeting approved.

2. City Updates

Curbside pick-up of green compost bins to resume week May 17! Lots of new people, trucks, etc. City has appointed a new Solid Waste Supervisor: Severo Rodriguez.

City Council approved a commercial composting program for small businesses at April 26 meeting. Aim to service 100 locations twice per week. Expectation to have the program running by October-November 2021. Focus to be on small businesses and those operated by women & minority business owners.

Rob suggests rebranding to “Food Scrap collection” instead of composting. The question of rebranding the program name remains open.

Mike suggested the need to market the program to those who do not compost food waste. There is a need to provide more education.

Susy states some confusion at MIT relative to compostable tableware.

City Council to hold Health and Environment Committee hearing on June 9, 2021, 11.00am -1.00pm, aimed at the Zero Waste Program. Topics of focus will be: single use plastics, food waste, new city provided trash bins, BYOB program.

Susy suggested that RAC resubmit the two letters sent to the commissioner regarding single use plastic items and standardized trash bins.

Mike explained that the City plans to buy and supply households with standardized trash bins in 2022. Current plan is a maximum of 65gal. Other standard sizes are 35, 48 gal. The City will do a curbside audit of current bins for large and small families.

Discussion included rodent issue, damage and replacement parts, longevity,

households sharing bins. DPW is well equipped to make repairs of bins which are expected to last 10 years. City would like bins to have 30% Post Consumer Recycled Content. The major supplier of 48 gal size, potentially the favored size, currently does not have as high of percent recycled content. Boston's new recycle bins have 30% PCR plus 10% "Ocean Plastic" - (recovered by the Ocean Recovery Program).

No pilot program for launch of standard trash barrels. All will receive bins at once. The question of RFID tags was raised but had been considered too much trouble for value by DPW.

Mike stated that consideration to be given to branding the new bins with the Zero Waste logo/Objectives.

3. Action Items from April 15, 2021 Meeting

None

4. Single Use Plastics and Trash Barrel letters

Susy restated the need for clear statements from RAC on its position on single use plastics: reuse, reduce, should not be an economic burden. Rob suggested rewording for compostable service ware. An executive summary was suggested.

Re new trash bins:

Advocate smaller bin size

Include recycled content

Branding with Zero Waste message

Encourage Food Waste reduction.

Janet cautioned that Lifecycle Analysis consideration may play a role of unintended consequences and should be part of the decision as it relates to the PCR content and the net environmental impact. 48 gal. bin could be better than 65 gal. with recycled content.

Janet proposed a motion to approve the letters with the option to modify. Modifications to be undertaken by Susy, Rob and Meera

5. Sub-Committees

Time was limited and sub-committee meetings were not held.

Catrina stated that the Food Waste Sub-committee had created a newsletter with positive response. Sakiko reported and displayed a detailed survey by the Analytics Sub-committee. A copy will be distributed to RAC for comment.

Suzanne advised the updated list of Recycle/Reuse options had been completed.

6. Closing

No public comment

7. Action Items

Susy and Rob - Single Use plastics letter
Rob – Send him suggestions for tours
Communications Survey -to be circulated Sakiko
Postcards to business re compost program - Camilla

8. Announcement

Sakiko organized and participated in 400 hrs Waste related information/seminars to comply with graduate study requirements over the past academic year.

The meeting ended at 9.30am. The next meeting will be June 9, 2021.