

DRAFT

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC), Sullivan Chambers, 795 Mass Ave.

Sept 14, 2016, 8:00am - Minutes Taken by Janet Mosley

Members present: Keith Cialino, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Janet Mosley, Joanna Vanden, Mary Verhage

Members absent: Laura Nichols, Meera Singh

Staff present: Meryl Brott, Recycling Program Manager; John Fitzgerald, Environmental Services Manager; Michael Orr, Waste Reduction Program Manager

Members of the public present: Judith Nathans, Helen Snively

Housekeeping

- Each member shared a brief story from the summer having to do with sustainable materials management.
- The June minutes were approved. There were no public comments.
- The October meeting will be moved to the third Wednesday of the month (Oct 19th) to avoid meeting on Yom Kippur.
- Market update: Stronger market for recycled materials over the summer, expected to drop slightly over next few months. At \$3/ton, recycling costs for City of Cambridge were reaching a break-even point.
- No public comment

City Updates

Polystyrene (PS) Ordinance: City staff have had door-to-door contact with 350/500 businesses affected by the ordinance, which goes into effect Oct 20th. Some businesses are concerned about the cost because of the large number of different items that must be replaced with another material. There is also uncertainty about how to determine whether straws and utensils are PS.

Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) Ordinance: Seems to be a success. Results from a survey at grocery stores showing 50-80% reduction in single-use bags were publicized over the summer.

Inspectional Services Business Data: A report on data collected regarding evidence of recycling by businesses renewing licenses has been received by DPW. In some cases, the businesses provided their list of haulers, but there is not much information on what is actually getting recycled. Committee suggests a first step of outreach to those businesses that were not able to provide the name of their recycling hauler. Mike mentioned that this could possibly be bundled with some of the ongoing outreach for the PS ordinance.

CCTV Videos: Committee viewed three videos made this summer in collaboration with CCTV. The Move-Out video was publicized through social media in August and the recycling and composting videos will be publicized through social media this fall.

Staffing: Camilla Elvis' Recycling Outreach Assistant position has been extended. Juliahna Green, Waste Reduction Outreach Assistant, continues to do business outreach. They are reviewing resumes for the Recycling and Composting Outreach Assistant, hope to have him/her on board within a month. Interviews have begun for a new Recycling Director and second round interviews may begin within the next few weeks.

Curbside Composting: There was a drop in total food scraps collected over the summer. More outreach to come, and the City is starting to advertise the plan to go city-wide with composting in the fall of 2017. Food scraps are still going to Rocky Hill Farm.

Outreach: There are several upcoming events that RAC committee members should volunteer for if possible.

Legislative Update: No known action on Bill H.646 (bottle bill) in legislature. Bill S.408, an Act establishing the Massachusetts Paint Stewardship Bill, did not pass. Rob suggested that the public should be informed about the cost to taxpayers for disposing of hazardous waste, including paint, when this issue is raised again in the state legislature. Pharmaceutical take-back program takes effect in Jan 2017; Walgreens has announced that they will be hosting six collection kiosks in Massachusetts.

RAC Appointments: The current 3-year term ends in Dec. Those who are interested in continuing on the committee need to reapply. DPW will put out an application soon and will likely accept applications until Oct 31st. It is expected that the new Recycling Director will be involved in the interviews for the new appointments.

Outreach Budget: A large part of the outreach budget remains for the new Recycling Director to decide how it will be best used.

Waste Trends: Compared to the previous fiscal year, trash quantities remained about the same, recycling was up ~1%, and composting was up 130% due to the expanded curbside composting program.

Discussion Topics

Open discussion of how to continue to promote reuse

- Used furniture drive with MA Coalition for Homeless is a big success story. Would be good to continue to push this program. Some ideas: publicize stats on avoided disposal and # of families helped; partner with furniture stores for more permanent advertising for program; better understand if MA Coalition is able to provide enough service or if more truckloads are needed.
- Further explore moving towards a fee on disposal of bulky items. Possible recommendation from RAC to Owen O'Riordan, DPW Commissioner.

- Make sure Cambridge's map with recycle and reuse locations is up to date
- Discussion of interest in a city-wide yard sale. Could model it based on another city's program or MIT Swapfest. Most agreed it would probably be better to promote neighborhood yard sales or swaps among smaller groups. Several members expressed interest in developing materials to share best practices for yard sales, swaps, repair cafes, etc
- Possibility of leveraging the Buy Nothing website: <https://buynothingproject.org>, as well as apps such as NextDoor
- Consider launching a campaign to reduce consumption of non-durable goods, e.g. Rethink Refuse Reduce Reuse Recycle

Action Items

- Mike to consider bundling outreach on recycling to businesses that did not note a hauler in Inspectional Services report with ongoing outreach for PS Ordinance
- Meryl to push to get RAC's recommendation on Bill H.646 (bottle bill) out to appropriate City staff.
- Potentially Rob or another committee member could write an op-ed on the cost to taxpayers for disposing of paint cans
- Mike will follow up with MA Coalition for the Homeless to get updated stats on truckloads of furniture and families helped
- Mike to send out Doodle for fall RAC social
- Staff and RAC members who attend ReuseConex conference (Oct 17-19) will report back at next meeting

Announcements

- ReuseConex, an international reuse conference and expo, will be held October 17-19 in Somerville, MA (www.reuseconex.org)
- Large Harvard Surplus Giveaway Days in Allston on Thursdays 11am-2pm (50 truckloads remaining from Stuff Sale)
- Mass COASTSWEEP coastal cleanup events Sat Sept 17th – Oct 22nd. See dates and locations at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/coastswEEP/lists/complete-public.pdf>.
- Consumers' Council is holding another Shred Day on Saturday, October 22
- Mike Orr participating in NY-DC bike ride to raise money for Bikes Not Bombs. Fundraiser at Aeronaut Brewery.

The meeting adjourned at 9:33am.