

DRAFT

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee, Council Chambers, 795 Mass Ave
October 19, 2016 - Minutes Taken by Meera Singh

Members present: Keith Cialino, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Janet Mosley, Laura Nichols, Meera Singh, Joanna Vanden, Mary Verhage.

Members absent: none

Staff present: Meryl Brott, John Fitzgerald, Michael Orr

Guests: Judith Nathans, Helen Snively

1. Housekeeping

- The September 2016 minutes were approved.
- There was no public comment as no members of the public were present when the meeting started.

2. City Updates

Staffing Update:

- Recycling Director – 2nd round of interviews were held on Oct 17, for the two short-listed candidates. The decision will be made in a week's time.
- Camilla Elvis' position has been extended by one year.
- Waste Reduction Outreach Assistant, Juliahna Green's last day at work was 10-14-2016.
- Laura Flagg, the new Compost Outreach Assistant, has been hired for six months, to work 10-15 hours per week.
- Drop-off Center Monitor position will be posted next month

Polystyrene Ordinance

- This goes into effect on October 20, 2016.
- There is still some hesitation and frustration on the part of the businesses. Some businesses will have to increase prices in order to offset compliance costs. There will need to be a lot of adjustments as businesses struggle to find the right product for their services.
- PS cups (e.g. Solo brand disposable cups) will be available for sale in Cambridge in stores, though food service venues will not be allowed to use PS items for take-out or in-house food service to customers.
- Mike Orr will be meeting with Inspectional Services Department to follow up on compliance and non/compliance issues regarding the ordinance
- CPS, charter schools will need to comply with the ordinance
 - All CPS now use paper-based trays (@ 8.5 cents/tray) which can be placed in the compost bins
 - CPS have consolidated the leftover Styrofoam trays and these will be used in only one school until they run out.
 - Meryl will find out if the trays have any flame retardant/Teflon ingredients as these are not good for composting

RAC new appointments

Current members interested in continuing also need to apply. The application was sent out earlier and will be resent.

Volunteer opportunities for Fall 2016 were shared on the back of the agenda. RAC members encouraged to sign up.

3. Discussion Topics

ReUseConex takeaways

Members and city staff that attended the ReUseConex conference gave summaries of their experiences:

Rob

Speaker Terry McDonald, St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County | Eugene, OR

Three years ago, the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County hired a fashion designer to help them see reuse through fresh eyes. Today, she has her own trademarked line of clothing, accessories and jewelry and a St. Vinnie's boutique devoted to her products, which are made from damaged materials remade by a small crew of full-time employees. Terry McDonald described the tactical and strategic steps to this success story.

Susy

ReStore of Cape Cod, Yarmouth, Habitat for Humanity reuse furniture store

Oregon's state plan for reuse

Food for Free – recoverable food, reframing it as surplus food rather than food waste

Mike

ChicoBag founder

Overall theme was that it's exciting to be creative and innovative about reuse

Meryl

Reuse orgs for artists

Need for local and state governments' support – push for reuse over recycling

Resources exist to match needs of organizations with items

Film – "ReUse Because You Can't Recycle the Planet"

Mary

Was there an idea coming out of this conference that you might suggest for the RAC to develop?

Helen Snively - public

Consider showing film "ReUse Because You Can't Recycle the Planet" in Cambridge?

Survey Results/Breakout Groups

Survey was sent out to RAC members to prioritize the five topics to be addressed by the RAC:

1. Bulky item reuse
2. Encouraging reusable products as opposed to single use
3. Yard sale/swap event, best practices
4. Encouraging 6 Rs and discouraging throw away economy
5. Multi-family outreach

Based on the survey results, *bulky item reuse* and *encouraging reusable vs single use items* were the top two topics to focus on.

Consider a plan for #3 – yard sale event.

Breakout groups - report out

Brainstorming on how to encourage bulky item reuse

1. Optimize partnership with Mass Coalition for the Homeless
 - a. Specific to elderly - bring info to Senior Centers
 - b. Advertise more
 - c. Speak with Mass Coalition for the Homeless about capacity and how RAC can assist in their efforts
2. Find new furniture pick up partnerships

Capacity

1. Do they have capacity for increase in volume?
2. Improve speed and ease of pick-ups
 - So it's just as easy as putting out on the sidewalk last minute
 - City helps fill out the forms?

Next steps

Meet with Mass Coalition for the Homeless

3. Fee on bulky items
 - Political component
 - Easily implemented with the department?
 - Even with potential non-compliance issues, it is still worth getting 100% adoption

Next steps

Research and recommendation by RAC should city add fees on bulky items

4. Engage HDR consultant (6 to 9 month engagement?)
5. Promote yard sales. Have a yard sale day - like "open studios" or "porch fest"

Action item: conference call

Research and recommend fee

Research and recommend: optimize MA Coalition for the Homeless

Brainstorming on how to encourage reusable rather than single use service items (esp. relevant for food service)

1. Public health issues with bringing your own container
 - How to address/avoid?
 - Food Law and Policy Guidance at Harvard - make connection
 - Ask Public Health Department in City - can help us understand the restrictions - Dawn Alcott
2. RETHINK need for certain items - straws, stirrers
 - Have a foothold in beverage (coffee) container reuse/bring your own - continue to push here?
 - Promote reducing amount of stuff handed out, minimizing packaging
 - Need a bag, utensils, napkins?
 - Add these questions online for takeout?
 - Charge for these items?
 - Normalize these trends
3. Look at different cultures - e.g. India, use of banana leaf
4. Where is most single-use waste? Take-out food venues
5. Frame as positive for businesses
 - CA case studies change from disposable to reusable
6. Green business recognition program?
 - Connection with Cambridge Local First

Next steps

- follow up with connections

- how to operationalize

4. Action Items

- Mike to set up doodle polls for 2 conference calls for next steps on 2 topics – bulky item reuse and promoting reusable vs. single use items
- Meryl to find out if the paper-based trays now used in CPS have any flame retardant/Teflon ingredients (as these are not good for composting)
- RAC members - Sign up for volunteer opps as noted in the 10-19 agenda
- RAC members - Reapply for appointment to RAC if interested

5. Announcements

- Talk/panel on 10-20-16 at 4pm at Harvard Kennedy School on research on behavioral science as applied to energy, environment and climate solutions

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 am.