

DRAFT
Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2022
Virtual Meeting Minute Takers: Debby Galef, Richard Nurse

Members present: Dailey Brannin, Catrina Damrell, Shirely Elliot, Debby Galef, Martha Henry, Sakiko Isomichi, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Scott MacGrath, Laura Nichols, Richard Nurse, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Mary Verhage

Members absent: Leah Beckett, Holden Cookson, Janet Mosley, Audrey Ng

Staff Present: Mike Orr

Public present: Barbara Harris, Helen Snively, Amy Waltz

1. Housekeeping

- Minutes from the April 2022 meeting approved, no amendments.

2. City Updates

25 tons of finished compost given out on Saturday May 7th

Trash carts topic at Monday's (5/9) City Council meeting.

Councilor Nolan encouraged residents to opt for smaller bins to encourage less trash. So far (as of 5/10) 1280 change forms have been received and more than 50% are choosing smaller sizes. 45 gallon size can hold 3 kitchen size trash bags. 65 gallon cart will be very heavy when full.

No trash from old barrels will be collected after change over but black contractor bags may still be put out on collection days. No food allowed.

How can RAC support this effort?

Nextdoor posts, encouraging composting, conversions with neighbors and other residents

Last sneak peek outreach event to take place on Sat. May 14th from 11 - 1 at Main library

Mike reported on City Council meetings and related State decisions:

The City supports pending state Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation related to mattress and paint products. Unfortunately MA has no designated EPR paint coordinator (czar). Bottle Bill still without a resolution.

State EPR bill related to packaging and paper products remains unresolved. If passed, would create large shift.

Maine and Oregon have enacted EPR legislation, to take effect in 2024.

There seems to be an unexplained lack of momentum on single use packaging.

Mike explained that state DEP is not permitted to communicate with the State Legislature on these issues. MA has the highest waste disposal costs in the country. Maine has banned all imported waste which further frustrates MA's situation.

The non-profit Product Stewardship Institute, based here, provides leadership and assistance throughout the country, but has no active power.

NY, CT and RI have passed various EPR bills.

Harvard Kennedy School wants to eliminate as much plastic as possible. Not an easy task.

City's 1991 trash ordinance needs updating. The RAC could provide broad comments. They'd need to be submitted by our October meeting at the latest. Perhaps this can be discussed further at the June meeting.

3. Sub-committee Breakouts

- Communications - Chair: Sakiko Isomichi
 - Hope to meet with other subcommittees.
 - Sakiko will be extending her studies to landscape design and potential usage of biosolids.
- Food Waste - Chair: Catrina Damrell
 - Catrina will be leaving the RAC after the June meeting, heading to the Yale School of Environment for graduate studies in the fall. The RAC warmly congratulated her.
 - Continued collaboration with the Communication subcommittee.
 - More on-site events with the warmer weather
 - A compost bin hand-out event planned for Saturday 14 at the Main Library. Volunteers are welcome
 - Discussion followed regarding a compost drop-off location near City Hall. No conclusion but the idea will be considered.
- Meera and Sakiko suggested a greater effort should be made to engage the East Cambridge neighborhood to encourage compost collection. Amy Waltz wondered if there could be a coordinated effort through the schools.
- Will the old bins definitely be recycled? Mike confirmed, although repurposing as yard waste containers is another (and better) alternative.
- Sakiko's earlier committee's waste survey is now available via QR code on the trash cart postcard sent to households.

4. Closing

- Action Items
- Fill out social, in person meeting forms
 - Explore the 1991 Refuse & Litter Ordinance
 - Last sneak peek trash cart event and compost bin hand-out at main library May 14

Public Comment from Amy Waltz:

Dear RAC Members,

This group has done an amazing job in getting many effective waste reduction programs up and running quickly! It is truly impressive how many ZWMP goals have been met! It is because of this success that the default distribution of multiple 45 and 65 gallon trash bins will be largely obsolete upon arrival. This can still be avoided if residents are encouraged to request the size and number of trash carts that meet their needs. The City Council has given the green light to encourage a more appropriate distribution of

new trash carts and better inform residents in hopes of **not reversing** the waste reductions already achieved.

The default distribution of trash carts is set at the highest level of trash volume usage around 45 gal. This ensures that everyone can access adequate trash capacity. Normal usage, however, for more than half of Cambridge residential units is between 1 - 20 gal./week. With this knowledge, it is clear that more than 60% of residential units should be requesting a decreased volume and/or number of trash carts.

As of Monday, only about 660 requests for smaller volume have been received by the DPW. To be roughly on target, we would need to have over 7,000 requests for smaller trash capacity, since the total number of buildings served is around 12,000. A more appropriate distribution seems unlikely without a second, more informative mailing.

What are the barriers to a mass mailing?

Are other methods actually reaching residents, and encouraging the appropriate downsizing in the numbers required to get a more appropriate distribution of carts? How can we increase effective outreach?

I am happy to help with getting a mailing out, or in some other capacity.

I would also like to help find sources to repurpose trash carts that are in good condition, and help with the process in coordination with those who would benefit.

It is critical to better inform residents to select the best trash options for their needs.

It is also crucial that waste reduction goals not be derailed by oversized waste receptacles.

Thank you for your dedicated service in helping reduce waste!

Amy Waltz

Chat from Zoom

08:07:34 From MICHAEL ORR to Everyone:

RAC members: Please fill out this form:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/532edcbb38214560a0bb9bea090fc7b8>

08:21:52 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Some to prefer to call it materials management!

08:26:10 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

mike... can you tell us more about the ordinance from 91? Maybe we as RAC can have input into how to redo it?

08:28:30 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Ditto to Helen's comment

08:28:36 From Shirley Elliott to Everyone:

Yes Debbie!

08:41:21 From MICHAEL ORR to Everyone:

https://cambridgema.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=4027&MediaPosition=&ID=16222&CssClass=

08:44:50 From Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone:

MassRecycle conference covered about the different EPR implementations in ME and OR

08:52:31 From Dailey Brannin to Everyone:

<https://upscorecard.org/>

08:55:03 From MICHAEL ORR to Everyone:

RAC members: Please fill out this form:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/532edcbb38214560a0bb9bea090fc7b8>

08:58:43 From Diane Roseman to Everyone:

Atwoods patio!

09:00:12 From Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone:

congrats Catrina!

09:00:42 From Shirley Elliott to Everyone:

MANY MANY CONGRATULATIONS! 🎉

09:00:50 From Deborah Galef to Everyone:

Yes, congratulations!

09:00:54 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

yes, congrats, Catrina... bring back lots of wisdom!

09:01:57 From Martha Henry to Everyone:

That's so exciting, Catrina!

09:03:13 From Meera Singh to Everyone:

Congratulations Catrina and Sakiko!!!

09:03:38 From Catrina Damrell to Everyone:

Congratulations Sakiko!! That sounds so cool.

09:03:51 From Catrina Damrell to Everyone:

Thanks everyone! 😊

09:03:57 From MICHAEL ORR to Everyone:

very exciting--stay in touch on this Sakiko!

09:04:06 From MICHAEL ORR to Everyone:

And, Congrats Catrina!

09:05:09 From MICHAEL ORR to Everyone:

www.CambridgeMA.Gov/WasteSurvey

09:24:00 From Catrina Damrell to Everyone:

I will send out a FWR subcommittee email and include the Rehash It newsletter schedule — thanks Dailey for asking about that!

09:25:53 From MICHAEL ORR to Everyone:

Barbara, email Camilla to stay in touch on compost volunteering. Her email is celvis@cambridgema.gov

09:28:10 From Diane Roseman to Everyone:

Maybe for yard waste?

09:28:31 From Helen Snively to Everyone:

dpw already suggesting ppl use them for yard waste.. but we can push that!