

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting
December 13, 2023, 8:00am – 9:30am

Minute Taker: Julia Tsang

Hybrid Meeting: 147 Hampshire St, and on Zoom.

Members Present (in person): Dailey Brannin, Dave Demme, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Debby Knight, Emily Lee, Scott MacGrath, Richard Nurse, Diane Roseman, Helen Snively, Stephanie Wasiuk

Members Present (Zoom): Lee Elliot, Elka Kuhlman, Carlie Peters, Dawn Quirk, Quinten Steenhuis, Alex Toupal, Julia Tsang.

Members Absent: Audrey Ng, Laura Nichols, Meera Singh, Rob Vandenabeele, Sakiko Isomichi.

Public Present: Katie Steinhoff, Amy Waltz, Tamene Tedla.

Staff Present: Meryl Brott, Camilla Elvis, John Fitzgerald, Mike Orr, Jalen Bernard, Teddy Valcourt, Kevin Richardson.

1. Housekeeping,

- Vote on November Minutes – approved

2. City Updates

Debrief of progress made in 2023 (2023 Waste Reduction Effort Data Analysis)

- Substantial finding: trash volumes declined despite no new diversion programs; awareness and participation increased
- Reduce and reuse page getting a lot of clicks
- Recycling weight decrease is more likely due to materials getting lighter
- Rodent control continues to be a great motivator to drive participation in composting programs
- Still work to be done on getting food waste out of trash

Debrief of RAC highlights from 2023 (Mike shared powerpoint summary)

- Tours over course of the year covered our top 5 waste streams

Debrief of Dec. 11 tour of newly renovated Casella facility

- Sorting is driven primarily by cameras and air jets
- Automation with robotic arms
- 4th largest facility in the country, processes 50 tons / hour
- Contamination level is a core metric for the business model

- Industry standard specification: waste must be processed down to 1% contamination before a buyer will purchase it
- Cambridge waste contamination level = 5% (upon receipt)
- Full facility waste contamination level = 15-20% (upon receipt)

3. Discussion of Move-Out and Textiles waste

Review of Emily's research and recommendations

- Researched local nonprofits and volunteer organizations
- Findings
 - Many nonprofits and volunteer organizations across Cambridge
 - Transportation and storage will likely be key logistical challenges that these organizations face if we are seeking to rehome move-out durable goods, etc.
 - Durability of the furniture and goods themselves are quality challenges
 - Example: IKEA furniture is not worth it for some (disassembling, reassembling, missing parts, etc.), but it also likely comprises a decent amount of the move-out waste that could be rehomed
- Next steps: Put organizations on a google map

Brainstorm: ideas for move-out durable goods / waste; what can reasonably be done?

- Work with organizations to direct move-out waste to refugees that are settling in the area?
- Post google map of organizations on Buy Nothing Facebook groups?
 - Note: some of these volunteer organizations already have folks looking on Buy Nothing to source items
- Pilot a mobile pickup service?
- Work with Harvard and MIT on storage opportunities?
- Get property managers involved, if possible
- Block party yard sale?
 - Interesting opportunity that enables us to avoid a large challenge of transportation and storage if the goods are located more locally and at the block-level
 - Note: it can be challenging to get citizens to take advantage of these opportunities, even if they get financial support; RAC members may have to lean in on coordinating / organizing
- Brainstorm: other RAC activities for 2024
- Initiatives to improve on bring-your-own-bag; audit numbers seemed to indicate there are opportunities for improvement

- Continue to share materials amongst RAC members (e.g., Meera slide deck)
- Work/meet with Zero Waste Master Plan consultants; project being finalized and selected firm can be shared in future RAC meeting

4. Closing

Public Comment: Tamene spoke up about how to build more public-private collaborations between university's and businesses and the local community.

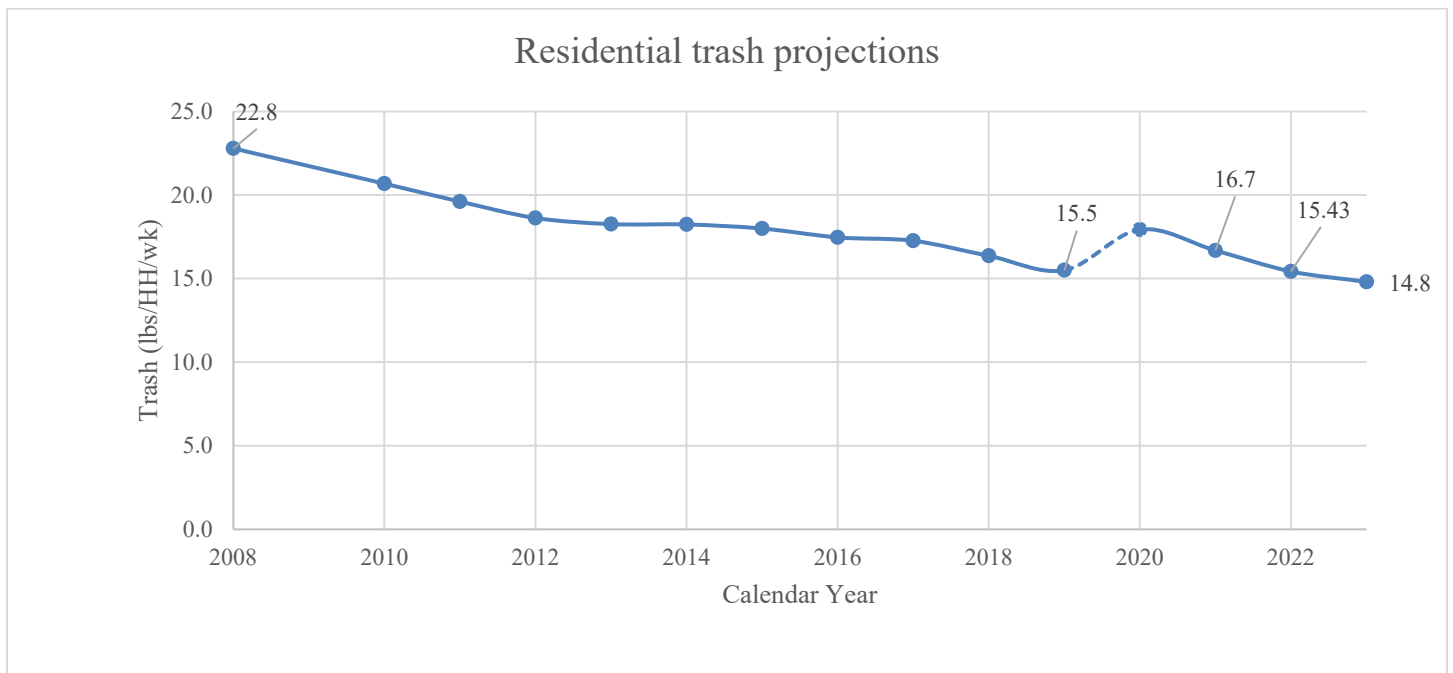
Action Plan/Decisions: N/A

Announcements

- Mike will be present at January 2024 RAC but may not be present at February 2024 RAC
- John Fitzgerald will be sitting in for Mike while he's on paternity leave
- Siddharth Vedullapalli will be stepping down from the RAC

2023 Waste Reduction Efforts

We're projecting we will be near 14.8 lbs/HH/wk for 2023. This is a relatively strong reduction compared to 2022 tonnages, considering we didn't add more diversion programs; we simply emphasized more and better participation in current programs. Furthermore, we launched the Reduce & Reuse webpage, with the RACs help.



Notable changes to waste tonnages (January-October)

	Textiles	Food Waste	Recycling	Trash
2022	131	1,522	6,974	11,009
2023	212	1,763	6,911	10,550

Zoom Chat:

08:04:03 From Elka To Everyone:

Does anyone have any sound?

08:04:10 From Alex Toupal To Everyone:

No sound for me

08:06:40 From Quinten Steenhuis To Everyone:

Aye

08:06:50 From Alex Toupal To Everyone:

Aye

08:27:45 From Quinten Steenhuis To Everyone:

Cargo bike!

08:38:11 From Scott To Everyone:

https://youtu.be/FPgd0uR0Mas?si=dOeR_As3JTVGBJ-K

08:38:32 From Scott To Everyone:

^video of the Charlestown facility

08:49:24 From Katie To Everyone:

Yeah map!

09:01:46 From Elka To Mike Orr(Privately):

Mike is it possible to get out of sharing screen mode for this conversation

09:03:14 From Lee (Shirley Elliott) To Everyone:

I need to sign off.

Happy Holidays and New Year, Everyone!

09:13:09 From Carlie P To Everyone:

im having trouble hearing whats being discussed at the moment

09:15:50 From Carlie P To Everyone:

that's a really cool idea

09:21:44 From Katie To Everyone:

Thank you all!



Covanta
Incinerator
Tour



WM CORe
pre-
processing
Tour



UTEC Tour



UTEC Tour



Clothing
Swap



Fix-It Clinic
featuring
Dave
Demme



We gave
out all of
the finished
compost!



Elka, Amy,
and
Stephanie
help break
the news
that we ran
out of
finished
compost



Don't Worry!
We had an
additional 20
tons delivered
the next week.



Tracie, Elka
Amy and
DPW staff
Jalen giving
out kitchen
bins





Lee and
Deb talking
to people
about
compost



Amy Waltz
doing
outreach at
event



Yard Waste
Tour—West
Bridgewater



Cambridge
Community
Center Swap

Organized by
Helen
Snively