

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2024, 8:00am – 9:30am
Virtual - Zoom
Minute Taker: Dailey Brannin

Members present: Dailey Brannin, Dave Demme, Lee Elliott, Debby Galef, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Scott MacGrath, Richard Nurse, Dawn Quirk, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Helen Snively, Quinten Steenhuis, Rob Vandenabeele, Stephanie Wasiuk

Members absent: Tracie Gordon, Audrey Ng, Laura Nichols, Carlie Peters, Alex Toupal

Staff present: Mike Orr

Public present: Seth Finkelstein, Judith Nathans, Tamene Tedla, Amy Waltz

Consultants/speakers: Matthew Naud, Erin Oulton, Rachel Perlman, Amy Perlmutter

1. Housekeeping

- March minutes were approved
- Julia Tsang has resigned from RAC; thanks Julia!

2. City Updates

- Earth Day event at the Library this Saturday (4/13/24)!
 - Lots of outdoor activities going on
 - A few signed up for Fixit Clinic will be around to mill
 - Different event on the same day – free store at the Cambridge Community Center
 - Volunteers and attendees welcome
 - 5 Callender St, noon to 3. Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/4se3MPntF>
 - With compost give-away at the event, some questions came up about compost
 - Quality of compost? It's not organic but is tested for major contaminants and is generally safe for backyard gardens
 - Any compost that's not taken will go to the forestry division nursery at the golf course
 - Parking permit outreach debrief
 - It would be helpful to have a map of compost drop-off locations
 - Drop-off info on handout is really helpful during permit outreach
 - Permit outreach generally works really well; people are bored waiting in line so it's a good time to get their attention
 - Almost 200 more bins given away this year than last
 - Can compost bins go to religious organizations?
 - Yes, offered to a few and open to more
 - Recycling also offered for free
- May RAC meeting will be in-person (hybrid)
- Some other events coming up that DPW could use outreach help for
 - Sunday 5/5 – Mayfair, Harvard Square 11-6pm
 - Saturday 6/15 – Riverfest, Charles River from Harvard (Anderson Bridge) to Western Ave, 11-6pm
 - Saturday 6/22 – Fresh Pond Day, Fresh Pond, 11-3pm

3. Visit from RRS, Cambridge's Zero Waste Master Plan consultant

- RRS is new consultant for ZWMP, based all over US
- Consultant introductions: they have a variety of experience with Zero Waste plans and material flow systems. Erin, Rachel, and Matt are from RRS, and Amy is an independent consultant partnering with RRS
- [Mind mapping exercise](#) and discussion
 - What does the RAC want to see addressed in the new ZWMP?
 - Move-out waste
 - Mandatory compost collection
 - More accessibility in general for hard-to-recycle materials
 - Mobile recycling options for hard-to-recycle materials
 - Improved recycling center
 - Reusable takeout container program
 - Circular economy initiatives
 - Education
 - around recycling
 - in schools
 - around anaerobic digestion and its benefits
 - Benchmarking against other cities
 - Look at what groups and neighborhoods we aren't reaching
 - How to include residents of large apartment buildings
 - How should we measure progress besides tonnage reduction?
 - Surveys
 - Participation counts
 - Waste characterization, audits
 - Connecting this work to other city initiatives/planning, such as bike lanes
- RAC can join in RRS's open house/public forum when that is scheduled

4. Closing

- Public Comment
 - Seth F would like DPW to reopen the book exchange at the recycle center (he has brought this up previously). It seems to not be a burden on staff or volunteers, and would also help promote the recycling center.
- Action Plan/Decisions
 - Come to the Earth Day event!
 - Volunteer for outreach for events in May and June
 - Send any other thoughts on ZWMP to Mike or RRS
- Announcements: none

Zoom Chat

Tamene Tedla 8:07 AM

Yes, I signed for compost giveaway

Helen Snively to Everyone 8:11 AM

Free store at Camb Commty Center, 5 Callender St, noon to 3. Here's the event on Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/4se3MPn>
tF volunteers welcome.. feel free to bring stuff.. tell friends..

Helen Snively to Everyone 8:14 AM

or, lee, get a friend to go to the library and get some compost for you?

Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone 8:15 AM

Really successful

Helen Snively to Everyone 8:20 AM

oh, elka, I'd do that with you..

Mike Orr to Everyone 8:27 AM

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- Saturday 6/15 – Riverfest, Charles River from Harvard to Western Ave, 11-6pm
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Amy Perlmutter to Everyone 8:29 AM

If you need non RAC volunteers, I may be able to help on Riverfest.

Rachel Perlman, RRS to Everyone 8:29 AM

Hi Everyone! We're very happy to join your RAC call today and looking forward to hearing your ideas about what you'd like to see in the ZWMP.

Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone 8:39 AM

Hi, I've been on the RAC since 2017. I teach at Suffolk Law School and I'm just an enthusiast in sustainability and waste reduction

Mike Orr to Everyone 8:40 AM

The contract they speak of is the daily curbside recycle and yard waste contract with Save That Stuff

Emily Lee to Everyone 8:40 AM

Nice to meet you all and hear your backgrounds! I'm Emily Lee, co-chair, been on the committee 1 yr+ and counting, Cambridge resident for the past 9 yr.

Helen Snively to Everyone 8:40 AM

my first term on rac but I've attended for years. I'm not in a recycling job, just a fanatic volunteer. Always fascinated to learn what else we can be doing

Diane Roseman (she/hers) to Everyone 8:40 AM

Diane Roseman, co chair, member since 2019

Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone 8:40 AM

Sakiko - design school student, 5 years in RAC

Stephanie Wasiuk (she/her) to Everyone 8:41 AM

I work at GSK (biotech/pharma) and joined the RAC last year. Interested in lab/mfg sustainability and also how to incorporate it in everyday life

You to Everyone 8:41 AM

Dailey Brannin, recycling supervisor at Harvard, attended RAC for a bit before becoming a member this term!

Debby Galef to Everyone 8:41 AM

Debby Galef, secretary, RAC member for many years

Scott MacGrath to Everyone 8:43 AM

Scott MacGrath, 5 years with the RAC, work in renewable energy development, and passionate about waste reduction/environmental sustainability.

Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone 8:43 AM

Rob Vandenabeele, RAC member 2 years, graduate certificate in sustainability from Harvard Extension School, launched a state wide plastic can carrier reuse/recycle program for the Mass Brewers Guild, field manager for an EPA P2 Grant working with craft beverage producers.

Tamene Tedla to Everyone 8:44 AM

Tamene - RAC volunteer since August 2023 and an advocate Zero Waste Master Plan - Circular Economy

Erin Oulton (she/her) to Everyone 8:44 AM

<https://mm.tt/app/map/3222820789?t=HGdMejdZr>

Mike Orr 8:45 AM

link doesn't seem to be working

Sakiko Isomichi 8:45 AM

Same here

Stephanie Wasiuk (she/her) 8:45 AM

<https://www.mindmeister.com/app/map/3222820789?t=HGdMejdZrs>

Rachel Perlman, RRS to Everyone 8:48 AM

Link: <https://www.mindmeister.com/app/map/3222820789?t=HGdMejdZrs>

If it doesn't load, try refreshing

Meera Singh to Everyone 8:49 AM

Meera Singh, RAC member for 9/10 years. Educator, advocate for 3R lifestyle.

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 8:53 AM

Commenting here because I cannot figure out the mind map (sorry!) I second mandatory compost. Mimic the state's reuse action plan. get right of "stuff" from take out. Mandate electronics recycling

Debby Knight to Everyone 8:53 AM

Debby Knight, long-

term RAC member, have seen lots of positive change over that time, lots of room for growth as we learn more - how to engage/educate more people, encourage waste reduction

Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone 8:53 AM

Same with the compost mandate. Maybe eventually fine for non compliance

Helen Snively to Everyone 8:53 AM

another plus 1 on mandatory compost and yes eventually a fine

Meera Singh to Everyone 8:53 AM

I also agree with Debby G - composting should be mandatory

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 8:54 AM

Amazon box reduction

Meera Singh to Everyone 8:54 AM

I would like to see Tetrapak and MLP recycling receptacles across the city.

Amy Perlmutter to Everyone 8:54 AM

ReThink Disposable, a program of Clean Water Action, works with restaurants to reduce disposables for eating in (vs takeout)

Dave Demme to Everyone 8:55 AM

Dave Demme - First year on the RAC. 30 years of consulting experience in solid waste management and renewable energy.

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 8:55 AM

New laws on food donation— i.e. only ban donation of the most dangerous foods that have been put out buffet style (versus temperature controlled food)

Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone 8:58 AM

Clearer, visual communication on waste systems and destinations

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 8:58 AM

Fast fashion reduction campaign

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 8:58 AM

Shoe and sneaker recycling

Meera Singh to Everyone 8:59 AM

Dawn, someone at MIT is developing a shoe recycling program - I can get you the contact info if you like.

Dawn Quirk 9:00 AM

I know her— Yuly Fuentes. She is seeking a demonstration space and needs help with that

It would be nice if the City could help

Amy Perlmutter to Everyone 9:00 AM

The City does have a circular economy report, we have looked at that for this report (I was involved in that as well!)

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 8:59 AM

Sports equipment/home tool sharing programs

Debby Galef 9:00 AM

We talked about tool sharing years ago, but then the pandemic intervened. Maybe via the library?

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 9:01 AM

Infrastructure to support reusable water bottle and coffee cup habits such as washing stations

Helen Snively to Everyone 9:01 AM

oh, yes, let's address fast fashion. somebody come to the swaps and talk to people about it? stand outside of stores and hand out flyers/talk to people? (oy). what else could we be doing?

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 9:04 AM

@Helen Snively I loved the Boston Globe article on repairing clothing. That is a cultural skill that could be taught more widely.

Helen Snively to Everyone 9:04 AM

oh, elka, what good points! yes, how do we tailor our outreach to the wide range of people in cambridge
thanks, Dawn.. anyone else want to think about addressing fast fashion?

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 9:05 AM

Even educating the public on the negative impacts of fast fashion would be huge, and who knows, maybe it would push more responsible producers

Quinten Steenhuis to Everyone 9:07 AM

Agreed, a promo for ad would be helpful!

Amy Waltz to Everyone 9:07 AM

Continue making reducing, reusing, & recycling easier & more convenient

- Everyone needs access to / mandated food waste Composting
- Drop Bins for Scrap Metal similar to clothing bins
- Bulk refundable bottle/can return vender
- Carton recycling
- Replace single use plastic with reusable options (ie metal utensils in public schools, recircable.com in restaurants) eliminate single use plastic.
- Carpet recycling
- Pet waste solutions
- Household Cooking Oil / Grease waste drop location
- Reusable items out of the waste stream

Helen Snively to Everyone 9:07 AM

thanks, Erin.. this will eventually be a resource for all of us to study and ponder .. and then we'll all want to add to it 😊

Meera Singh to Everyone 9:08 AM

Re lang barrier, When I helped Deb A. for compost outreach at Lincoln Way we had talked about getting a community member to organize informal gatherings in their n'hoods to share information in their language and giving the opp for a Q &A session with residents.

Helen Snively to Everyone 9:06 AM

erin.. will you share your map with all of us eventually? I'm not doing a great job of following it all

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 9:08 AM

Unofficial swapping at the drop-off center is SO popular. I an expanded permanent city-run swap shop would be off the charts popular

Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone 9:13 AM

How to measure reuse, especially for businesses, and the trash reduction that comes from reducing single-use.

Dawn Quirk to Everyone 9:14 AM

@Rob Vandenabeele measuring reuse is a big goal of mine and I have many ideas. A charrette with experts would be a mazing

Debby Galef to Everyone 9:14 AM

I think it's important to note that some don't participate in curbside composting because they have their own backyard composters. Maybe we need to focus on food items that wouldn't go in a backyard.

Rachel Perlman, RRS to Everyone 9:18 AM

Feel free to email any additional thoughts to the RRS team: RPerlman@recycle.com and EOULTON@RECYCLE.COM

Meera Singh to Everyone 9:20 AM

Do you think local real estate companies would be receptive to getting educated about our ZW goals and advertise this in their marketing materials and other forms of collaboration?

Sakiko Isomichi 9:20 AM

I reached out to some of them a few years ago and some of them sounded interested

Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone 9:15 AM

I don't think bike lanes are particularly controversial, with the exception of a small but vocal number of businesses owners who perceive bikes as bad for their business.

Elka 9:18 AM

there is also residents concerns around bike lanes and how they change the car patterns in neighborhoods which effects pedestrian safety.

Emily Lee 9:21 AM

It's some businesses but also some members of city council that consistently try to delay bike lane initiatives: <https://www.cambridgeday.com/2023/11/03/some-council-candidates-would-set-cambridge-back-when-it-comes-to-bike-lane-infrastructure/>

Debby Knight to Everyone 9:22 AM

I've bumped into several residents at the DPW recycling center who also talked about missing the book exchange a lot

Helen Snively to Everyone 9:23 AM

i wonder if we could have book exchange elsewhere? Isn't it hard for DPW?

Helen Snively 9:24 AM

DPW yard in Cambridge is so crowded.. we don't have room like arlington does. Winchester is wonderful. we just don't have room! I soooo wish we did

Dawn Quirk 9:25 AM

@Helen Snively what if space was not a problem? We might have to think about public private partnerships. A permanent swap would not have to be located a DPW

Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone 9:25 AM

Awesome!

Seth Finkelstein to Everyone 9:25 AM

Helen Snively - The problem is people are already taking stuff to the recycling center, so it's not a different trip for books

Meera Singh 9:20 AM

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Rachel Perlman, RRS 9:26 AM

That's an interesting idea. In general, I think education of businesses about how to handle materials (and the plan) is important

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nt swap would not have to be located a DPW

Helen Snively 9:26 AM

yes, I'd love it if we could find a space.. The Buy Nothing swap at CCC is a tiny step toward that.. Where do we find space ? It's also a load of work to organize swasps...

Rob Vandenabeele to Everyone 9:25 AM

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Seth Finkelstein to Everyone 9:25 AM

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