

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Notes

September 11, 2024, 8:00am – 9:30am

Minute Taker: Dailey Brannin

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

Members absent: none

Staff present: Mike Orr

Public present: Tamene Tedla

1. Housekeeping

- June minutes were approved
- Scott MacGrath and Audrey Ng have stepped down from the RAC

2. City Updates & Zero Waste Master Plan

- Volunteers are needed for upcoming events: [visit here](#). Some of these events will be dependent on city staff availability and the amount of volunteers signing up.
- Zero Waste Master Plan updates:
 - Open House debrief (June): good turnout and the event went generally very well. People were engaged in all the different ways to learn and give feedback (wall posters, questions on table, sorting game, etc.). Lots of families attended. Having a mix of DPW staff and RAC volunteers worked well.
 - Universities Meeting (July): Harvard and MIT representatives met with DPW.
 - Outcomes from that meeting – compost ordinance would be supported
 - Difficulty around single-use products; multiple events a day
 - Basil Tree does reusables – could be a useful case study
 - Harvard requires Crimson – very wasteful and expensive
 - Harvard Housing – composting – can use city services? Graduate housing
 - ISD meeting (July) Inspectional services department, which includes rodent prevention staff. They're in favor of composting with the compost bins being more secure than the trash. General support for compost all around – trash reduction, rodent prevention, etc.
 - Upcoming: City Council Health & Environment Committee hearing on 10/22, 11am-1pm.
 - Letter to Commissioner Watkins; Diane, Carlie, Helen, Stephanie, and Dawn volunteered to help draft and/or edit this before 10/9 RAC meeting.
 - Community survey was sent out and got over 700 responses! It was promoted on the city's daily email and DPW email.
 - As part of the ZWMP, DPW is starting to talk more to commercial and real estate groups .

3. Move-Out

- 8/25 Free Store was really successful!
 - Preparation: subcommittee met several times, did lots of publicity for the event. Event-goers came from all different audiences so the publicity was successful! City calendar brought in a surprising amount of people
 - 40 volunteers, several of whom were RAC members
 - Lots of textiles and housewares were donated. Clothes, sheets, curtains, mugs, kitchen appliances, etc.
 - Leftovers went to organizations/donor partners like Thrifty Threads, MAAP, Goodwill. Textiles in bad shape went to Helpsy and Goodwill. Multiple carloads

- To keep in mind for next time:
 - should have more people for clean-up and driving
 - Be more explicit with what you bring and don't bring
 - Check items before they're dropped off
 - Shift timing so that so that donations don't come in the last hour or so
 - Manage donations/sorting area so that shoppers can't be butting in
 - Need no parking signs
 - Need to count people – could have a volunteer with a clicker
 - Rent U-haul van to take pressure off volunteers' cars
 - Possibility of making it a larger DPW event – DPW trucks, electronics recycling, trash collection, make it easier to manage shopping, waste, and people counting
 - Be mindful of overlap/collaboration with Buy Nothing
 - If it's unclear what an item is, have donor give explanation/sticky note
- Going forward, we'll consider whether to do a Free Store for both June and September move-outs, possibly even January, while not conflicting with Buy Nothing. Consider rental costs and possible transportation costs, and how to deal with larger items
- DEP grant—Cambridge has received the grant; still figuring out if can be used in May 2025.
 - Mike will be finding out more details this week about what the grant can be used for
- Move-out in general
 - Curb alerts – move-out seemed its usual messy self but FB Curb Alert group is pretty effective at notifying people about nicer items available on the street
 - Buy Nothing is good for describing items – missing from the Free Store or items on the curb

4. Closing

- No Public Comment
- Action Plan/Decisions
 - Volunteer for events linked above
 - Subcommittee to write letter to Commissioner Watkins before next meeting

Zoom Chat:

Deborah Galef (Sep 11, 2024, 8:05 AM)

Thank you, Meera!

carlie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:05 AM)

Ooh the science festival was fun last year!

Dawn Quirk (Sep 11, 2024, 8:08 AM)

And Judy!

Elka (Sep 11, 2024, 8:15 AM)

I would be willing to help Rob

Tracie Gordon (Sep 11, 2024, 8:17 AM)

I'd like to help Rob.

Stephanie Wasiuk (Sep 11, 2024, 8:26 AM)

You can click the "React" button at the bottom of the screen and it will give you the option to raise your hand

carlie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:27 AM)

The rodent folks!

Wait is rodent czar an actual title?

Tracie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:28 AM)

Yes...

I remember when the czar was announced, I was like, wait, what?!?

Dawn Quirk (Sep 11, 2024, 8:33 AM)

Carlie, I would help comment on it!

carlie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:33 AM)

I can help!

Tracie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:33 AM)

I can help

Stephanie Wasiuk (Sep 11, 2024, 8:34 AM)

I can help with comments/editing too :)

Dawn Quirk (Sep 11, 2024, 8:34 AM)

Let me know if ya'll need another set of eyes

carlie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:34 AM)

Google docs is great!

Tracie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:40 AM)

Other concerns are just as my property managers said - How can they think about composting and recycling when they can't get the tenants to properly put garbage in garbage bins and paper , plastic in recycle bins.'

Meera Singh (Sep 11, 2024, 8:45 AM)

What did you do with what was left? Where did you take it?

carlie (Sep 11, 2024, 8:45 AM)

Also fresh volunteers at the end because I think folks were also tired who had been there all day and that made sorting hard too

Dailey Brannin

Meera Singh (Sep 11, 2024, 8:57 AM)

I wonder if we could partner with Furnishing Hope for what doesn't get taken - they make starter kits for people transitioning from homelessness to their own apt. which includes bed linen, kitchen ware and such.

Tracie (Sep 11, 2024, 9:00 AM)

The leftovers went to about 5 differeent sites.

Lee (Shirley Elliott) (Sep 11, 2024, 9:01 AM)

GREAT JOB ALL

Helen Snively (Sep 11, 2024, 9:03 AM)

thanks, Mike.. those suggestions could really help!

Quinten Steenhuis

Dawn Quirk (Sep 11, 2024, 9:16 AM)

I need to hop off a little early. Wonderful meeting. Thank you Mike and everyone!

carlie (Sep 11, 2024, 9:21 AM)

Tracie and I discussed we should have a game night!