

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) minutes

March 12, 2025, 8:00am – 9:30am

Minute Taker: Tracie Gordon

Hybrid Meeting

**Members Present:** Dave Demme, Lee Elliot, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Carlie Peters, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Stephanie Wasiuk

**Members Absent:** Dailey Brannin, Richard Nurse, Dawn Quirk, Helen Snively, Quinten Steenhuis, Rob Vandenabeele

**Staff Present:** Mike Orr

**Public Present:** Amy Waltz

1. Housekeeping:

February 2025 Minutes approved.

2. City Updates:

RAC name change? Results of poll discussed. RAC voted to change name to WRAC:

Waste Reduction Advisory Committee

City Council hearing on ZWMP on 3/25, 3-5pm. Would the RAC like to comment?

- When will plan be released? Might be published as soon as tomorrow, but might be next week, finishing touches
  - Property Manager Zero Waste Plans.
  - Mandatory City-Wide Composting.
  - Move-out waste
  - Single Use Plastic Bags of any mils

- Banning all polystyrene Items (Styrofoam, etc)
- Decision on WRAC Representation:
  - No WRAC comment now, but we can opine individually

Earth Day: 4/19:

Finished Compost giveaway

Fix-It Clinic

at and inside Main Library

WRAC members are welcome to show up, especially to help with compost, but we already have a bunch of volunteers

Volunteer program launch 3/10

- Program Overview: Meera and Stephanie attended the launch - 13 prospective volunteers attended - enthusiastic and were happy to be involved
- Discussion:
  - Should we create a volunteer handbook or pamphlet?
  - Onboard them with a pamphlet containing FAQ's
  - Send Chart - Cheat Sheets - First Compost, then Recycle, etc.
  - Create a map (not just addresses) with composting drop off locations
  - Learn how to direct conversations "Are you a Cambridge Resident?"
  - Icebreaker questions. How to approach strangers - Cultural Norms.
  - Scare Tactics. Where do things go? Our trash travels great distances.
  - Video as Cheat Sheet. Sketches - Scenarios.
  - We (DPW) already have a thirty minute video on YouTube
  - Affirm things are getting recycled. Lots of articles these days claim otherwise.

- Give context to the argument of what we are actually recycling, or how much, and how few people are actually doing it, etc.
  - How to address people who are really interested versus those simply with some interest. All the different reasons, etc.
  - Latest updates on what is or is not recyclable.
  - Can we use different types of plastic bags for compost?
  - Paper bags work well for compost
  - Tracie and Saikiko are interested in forming a subcommittee. Powerpoints for discussion amongst the committee, cheat sheet for volunteers.
  - Like Sparknotes
- Participatory Budget Voting

The PB11 Vote is now open from March 6-16, 2025! All Cambridge residents aged 12 and up, including all 6th graders, university students, and non-US citizens, can vote for their top 5 favorite PB11 projects during this year's vote!

- Relevant Recycling/Zero Waste Projects:
  - [Install Safe Disposal Boxes for Sharp Items \(\\$30,000\)](#)
  - [Mobile Center for Hard-to-Recycle Items \(\\$75,000\)](#)
  - [Build a Pollinator Garden in a City Park \(\\$75,000\)](#)

### 3. 2025 RAC Projects

Support the ZWMP

- Research Terracycle or other items to consider diverting
  - How do other jurisdictions recycle milk cartons, etc., since we can't
- Work on technical assistance for food establishments to reduce trash
  - Public Health issues regarding customers bringing reusable containers at food establishments.

- Move-out handbook.
  - Resource for volunteers

#### Free Store:

- Sunday June 1st
- 11am - 1pm (Setup at 10am, 3pm end time)
- Donation time 10:30am - 12pm.
- FURNISHING HOPE PILOT
  - Led by DPW, funded by grant from MA DEP
  - Collection will take place last week in May, other than the 29th, which is graduation day

#### 4. Public comment:

- Amy: Our outdated waste reduction goals remain the same and we are failing regarding climate change. 80% reduction goals can be met within 5 years.
  - Response by Lee - Extremely valid points, however for some of us, demands and needs are changing. Would love to hear ideas on attaining these goals.
- Action Plan/Decisions
  - Subcommittee for Cheat Sheet / Reference Sheet.
  - Name Change to WRAC
  - Free Store June 1st