

DRAFT
Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2022, 8 am – 9:30 am
Virtual Meeting Minute Taker: Diane Roseman

Members present: Leah Beckett, Dailey Brannin, Holden Cookson, Catrina Damrell, Shirley Elliott, Debby Galef, Martha Henry, Sakiko Isomichi, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Scott MacGrath, Audrey Ng, Laura Nichols, Richard Nurse, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Mary Verhage

Members absent: Janet Mosley

Staff Present: Mike Orr

Public present: Amy Waltz

1. Housekeeping

Minutes approved unanimously.

2. City Updates

This is day three of the new trash cart rollout. Crews are ahead of schedule, which is a nice surprise! Getting a dozen/hour requests for changing the cart size or number to receive, 2100 so far. Had to change order with manufacturer. DPW is a bit mired in chaos and there have been unavoidable traffic delays. Much better to have put in request in advance since later process will be slower and more complicated. Retrieval of old carts starts on Saturday June 11; hoping to reuse as many as possible. Some large companies interested. Door hangers with info about composting, rat control, and the survey come with each new cart.

We'll discuss surveys in future, after trash cart rollout and when there are more responses.

Unclear if new, incoming City Manager will make a difference for DPW but before he arrives, Commissioner O'Riordan will become Acting City Manager for a period of time.

3. Ordinance review.

Particular focus on sections 8.24.030, 8.24.050, 8.24.070, 8.24.120.

Originated in 1991. State passed a law banning recyclables and yard waste from the trash. DPW uses the ordinance on a daily basis for compliance issues: items sitting on the curb too long (we don't want sidewalks blocked) or put out too early, also for enforcing mandatory recycling.

Warnings and citations may be written. We try to avoid fines as they don't really help. Mostly focus on outreach and education, Meryl's province.

Commercial piece of the ordinance: collaborating with licensing commission – making sure dumpsters are licensed, and working with inspectional services to get data on how well businesses are complying. Lots of room for improvement here.

What would be valuable for the RAC to do?

Over the summer, there will be one or two conversations about the ordinance. If people have ideas, please let Mike know. Other cities have such ordinances so no need to reinvent the wheel. We also have suggestions from consultants.

4. Subcommittees recap

Catrina: Food waste committee catching up, admin stuff, inspired by the communications subcommittee's event. May want to coordinate something with them. Working on getting a list of summer events to see if there are opportunities to be present and conduct some outreach.

Should they look at mandatory food waste ordinance language for summer homework?

Sakiko: We would love people to come and help at our upcoming outreach events in East Cambridge the weekend of June 18 and 19 at Tim Toomey Park. Meeting Friday June 10 at 3pm on Zoom, if you want to join the discussion and planning.

Textiles: no major updates, hoping to have a sign for moveout in September to help avoid textiles in the trash. Work on this over the summer. Also the impending statewide November 1 ban on textiles. What can we do to plan for that?

5. Public Comment

Amy wants to be better connected to volunteering opportunities. Wants to help with barrels, really any way she can help. Email recycle@cambridgema.gov for opportunities.

6. Announcements

RAC social sometime in July/August—Mike will email.

Circular economy study: economic development and university relations 6/15. Link in chat.

Mike will work on a list of summer events. Check your email.

Need volunteers in schools to help with compost education.

Trash tonnage for the month of May: lowest in any May in history! Down below pre-pandemic levels.

Thanks everyone and have a great summer!