

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes  
October 12, 2022, 8:00am – 9:30am

Virtual Minute Taker: Audrey Ng

**Members present:** Leah Beckett, Shirley Elliott, Debby Galef, Martha Henry, Sakiko Isomichi, Susy Jones, Scott MacGrath, Audrey Ng, Laura Nichols, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Mary Verhage

**Members absent:** Dailey Brannin, Holden Cookson, Debby Knight, Janet Mosley, Richard Nurse, Diane Roseman

**Staff Present:** Mike Orr

**Public present:** Carol Gieseke, Helen Snively

**1. Housekeeping, 8:00am (10 min)**

- September Minutes approved.
- Sub committees discussion
  - Benefits - Provides a space for RAC members to have more effective discussions in smaller groups while complying with rules around discussion in settings open to the public. Deliberation over email to more than half of the RAC is not permitted.
  - Mary - Motion to remove subcommittees from agenda. No second.
    - Concern that information on subco conversations is not being reported. Proposal to form a process to share notes on conversations.
    - 3 approaches on table - Keep current format for subcos, remove subcos, or move to a hybrid.
    - Some feel the subcos hold value and should remain, but could be more task focused, as opposed to subject focused, which could help ensure subcos are working towards specific goals
  - Potential subcommittee tasks:
    - Food Waste - Food waste reduction one pager for small businesses
    - Textiles - Helpsy Bin info one pager to put in students' backpacks
- The new City Manager has yet to call for new committee members, so current RAC will likely continue into early next year.

**2. City Updates (35 min):**

- Outreach is critical for Fall 2022:
  - Potential to table at the library on Oct. 29 (see below) to pass out kitchen compost bins
  - Waste mailer coming out week of Election Day, to around 53,000 residential mailboxes
- Finished compost giveaway:
  - Opportunity for RAC outreach
  - October 29, 2022 from 9am-1pm at Main Library
- Election Day - another opportunity for outreach/education

- America Recycles Week
  - Mike working on getting staff coverage for events
- Update on Cambridge's Zero Waste Master Plan (See slide show)
- 30% reduction by 2020 (achieved), 80% reduction by 2050
  - Outstanding Recommendations from ZWMP focus on gaps in DPW services
    - Challenges in reformatting Recycling Center. New city architect to evaluate. Center will move to middle of lot instead of back. Won't expand but will be upgraded.
  - Steady increase in Curbside Organics participation
  - Recycle Right Campaign - direct outreach, publicly posted info
    - \$90,000 annual savings by removing contamination
    - Small Business Recycling Program
    - Mattress Recycling Program
  - Small Business Compost Pilot
    - 64 participants, ~.75 tons/day, Avg \$200/month savings per business, slots remain
  - Textile Collection Program - Helpsy
    - 12 drop off locations, looking for 1 or 2 more
  - Citywide Standard Trash Carts
    - Rodent control - supports importance of composting - more trash carts than compost carts have holes
  - Household trash is progressing downwards towards pre-pandemic rates

### **3. Sub-committee topics (30 min)**

- Sub-committee break-out

### **4. Closing, 9:15am (15 min)**

- No Public Comment
- Action Plan/Decisions
  - Textile Subco - Info flier, list of private schools, build on database for potential Helpsy box hosts and alternative donation locations
  - Food waste - see above
  - Follow up on volunteers for various outreach events
- Next RAC meeting is Nov 2

**Announcements:** none

### **Upcoming Meetings in 2022:**

All meetings will be held virtually until further notice.

November 2 (NOTE: Date changed)

December 14

## Chat from RAC Zoom meeting:

Susy Jones to Everyone (8:09 AM)

Minute taker sign up:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pAd9fYlpNZVgC3\\_2kumtPnrsfa6JZbJ6dl6bOXD4Nps/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pAd9fYlpNZVgC3_2kumtPnrsfa6JZbJ6dl6bOXD4Nps/edit?usp=sharing)

Susy Jones to Everyone (8:35 AM)

Recap:

Someone in each subcommittee take a couple notes and post in CHAT at the end of meeting, with name of subcommittee and a couple bullet points.

Proposal on Tasks to Discuss in Subcommittees

Textiles

- One pager for school backpacks

Education/Outreach

- Getting more involved in events
- Strategy re libraries

Food waste – what retail businesses can do to reduce food waste – more comprehensive

- Reducing single use items
- Surplus
- Compost

Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone (8:38 AM)

I vote for the update

Helen Snively to Everyone (8:47 AM)

mike.. i think it's Live Transcript and you clicked on it by accident.. Click it off???

Sakiko Isomichi to Everyone (8:58 AM)

Sorry, I have to go. Hope to catch up with the subcommittee via email!

Susy Jones to Everyone (8:59 AM)

see you back here at 9:15AM

Susy Jones to Everyone (9:22 AM)

Debrief (food waste)

-People agree libraries are a good outreach strategy, our subcommittee endorses this

-we will work on a one pager highlighting food waste reduction from single use to compost, could be on economic dev't website etc.

Susy Jones to Everyone (9:24 AM)

Textile Debrief

-Create one-pager for outreach team, students, general orgs - with gen info about Helpsy, FAQs

-Connect w private schools with property in Cambridge area, expand Helpsy bins there?

-Work on additional database for places that might take stuff helpsy can't take

Susy Jones to Everyone (9:27 AM)

Outreach Debrief

-meera in Mumbai working on waste management program in slum, separate food waste from recyclables

-idea to have magnets with info on get rid it right, could this be useful to have info about recycling center, textiles, etc. – something bigger, not tiny

Susy Jones to Everyone (9:29 AM)

Thanks Audrey!!

Susy Jones to Everyone (8:09 AM)

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[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pAd9fYlpNZVgC3\\_2kumtPnrsfa6JZbJ6dl6bOXD4Nps/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pAd9fYlpNZVgC3_2kumtPnrsfa6JZbJ6dl6bOXD4Nps/edit?usp=sharing)

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Thanks Audrey!!

**Discussion from emails:**

**The following text is from emails sent by a RAC member to the entire RAC. To keep discussion open to the public, we are disclosing this discussion here.**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 4, 2022 9:59 AM  
**To:** Orr, Michael <morr@cambridgema.gov>

**Subject:** Re: Whoops --- Withdraw my motion for edits to September draft minutes

Mike, please see your email at the end--- the yellow highlighted portion. Does this conform with the Open Meeting Law?

I consider the information I sent to be "procedural" and having nothing to do with "deliberation". It's my understanding RAC members agreed (some time ago), that draft minutes would be emailed in Word format so any member could edit the draft minutes and notify members of their intention to request changes. We did that to make the editing process easier and consume less discussion time at the meeting. Is that your understanding? That's what I did.

Also, please consider whether subcommittee meetings (that meet during our RAC monthly meetings) follows the Open Meeting law --- eg can all RAC members attend each subcommittee meeting taking place at the same time? Are guests "eligible" to attend subcommittee meetings? As far as emailing you and the Chairs --- I've done that a number of times and receive no response. I requested, multiple times, that subcommittee meetings, if included as part of the monthly RAC meeting, be held AFTER regular meeting business.

I'm feeling you apply one set of "rules" to some people and another set to me. A case of double standards. Perhaps your legal department could clarify what is a violation of the Open Meeting Law and whether subcommittee meetings can be included in the monthly RAC meetings..

Now, let's move forward. What can RAC members do to accelerate the implementation and participation in programs that improve the environment?

Regards,  
Mary

-----Original Message-----

From: Orr, Michael <[morr@cambridgema.gov](mailto:morr@cambridgema.gov)>

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: Mon, Oct 3, 2022 3:34 pm

Subject: RE: Whoops --- Withdraw my motion for edits to September draft minutes

Hi Mary,

I would advise that you stop emailing the RAC about RAC-related items. It may be a violation of the Open Meeting Law to discuss Committee-related items when we are not in a public meeting (i.e. the monthly meetings we have). Please email the Chairs and I if you would like.

Please review the Open Meeting Law statement about deliberations of a public body here:

The Open Meeting Law defines deliberation as “an oral or written communication through any medium, including electronic mail, between or among a quorum of a public body on any public business within its jurisdiction.” Distribution of a meeting agenda, scheduling or procedural information, or reports or documents that may be discussed at a meeting is often helpful to public body members when preparing for upcoming meetings. These types of communications generally will not constitute deliberation, provided that, when these materials are distributed, no member of the public body expresses an opinion on matters within the body’s jurisdiction. Additionally, certain communications that may otherwise be considered deliberation are specifically exempt by statute from the definition of deliberation (for example, discussion of the recess and continuance of a Town Meeting pursuant to G.L. c. 39, § 10A(a) is not deliberation). To be a deliberation, the communication must involve a quorum of the public body. A quorum is usually a simple majority of the members of a public body. Thus, a communication among less than a quorum of the members of a public body will not be a deliberation, unless there are multiple communications among the members of the public body that together constitute communication among a quorum of members. Courts have held that the Open Meeting Law applies when members of a public body communicate in a serial manner in order to evade the application of the law. **Note that the expression of an opinion on matters within the body’s jurisdiction to a quorum of a public body is a deliberation, even if no other public body member responds.**

See page 6 of the Law online here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-guide-and-educational-materials-0/download>

Thank you,  
Mike

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 3, 2022 1:17 PM  
**To:** Orr, Michael <[morr@cambridgema.gov](mailto:morr@cambridgema.gov)>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Whoops --- Withdraw my motion for edits to September draft minutes

Apology--- there are Action in the September 2022 draft minutes. And with the exception of setting goals/objectives for 2023, the other AI's I listed are covered in the list below. Therefore I will not take up time making any motion.

However, all AI's from September are not included on the October agenda. If we don't have time to cover them, please see they are included in the November agenda. This should be SOP.

#### **Action Items Per the draft of the September, 2023 RAC minutes**

Action items:

1. During October meeting have subcommittees discuss
  - What did each accomplish?
  - Is this an effective use of committee members' time? If yes:
    - o when should subcommittees meet? during the RAC meeting? Other?
    - o Do RAC members support continuing the subcommittees into 2023?
2. How to increase residents' participation in composting? recycling? trash compliance? RAC members brainstorm/discuss. (doing all 3 topics may be too much for a meeting so spread them out)
3. DPW updates--- Mike and DPW did a great job with trash cart rollout etc. However, RAC members should already know about these programs. Let's use RAC meetings to tap the brain power of members and improve/accelerate the work of DPW, maybe add new ideas for DPW's consideration. Set goals/objectives for 2023; identify accomplishments for 2022
4. New Trash brochure
  - Has it been printed?
  - If yes, when will it be available? When will it be mailed? To how many residents?
  - If no, let's have a discussion and get input from "users" (RAC members).
    - o (RAC discussed this in a previous meeting. The version Mike sent with the September meeting info included one of the suggestions (a QR code) but other than that, the mailer is undifferentiated from the previous version.)
7. Webinar on Cambridge Food Pantry – place to plug composting?

Action items From the June minutes

1. Ordinance review
2. Discuss Sakiko's questionnaire and the results. How will the results be used? what did she and Mike learn from this experience? How could RAC use questionnaires in the future?

a. Follow up: what suggestions do RAC members offer to improve the ordinance? Especially in conjunction with inspectional Services?

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]

To: [morr@cambridgema.gov](mailto:morr@cambridgema.gov) <[morr@cambridgema.gov](mailto:morr@cambridgema.gov)>; [REDACTED]

Sent: Mon, Oct 3, 2022 12:18 pm

Subject: Re: September minutes and October RAC agenda

Hello all,

It is a challenge to write minutes. I read them and noticed the Action Items section is missing along with the chat comments from Zoom. There are always a number of action items in that chat that should be captured in the minutes. Debby, as Secretary, perhaps you have a suggestion to address that problem.

For the September 2022 minutes, I motion the Action Items section be added with the following Action Items (some are hold overs from earlier this year)

1. Brochure update; RAC input edits/changes on current draft
2. Results of Sakiko's questionnaire (June minutes document this as a discussion topic)
3. How to increase residents' participation in composting? recycling? trash compliance? Discussing all 3 topics may be too much for 1 meeting. If so, spread them out over several meetings)
4. Set goals/objectives for 2023; identify accomplishments for 2022 (I don't think we had any goals)

Personally, I'd like to have more RAC member discussions. Mike, isn't this one of the purposes of RAC --- to learn firsthand about what Cambridge residents think and feel about DPW's recycling programs? We're a diversified group of mostly Cambridge residents. You don't even need to pay to gather information from focus groups! Take advantage of our knowledge and real time experience. We know what our neighbors support and don't support. We want to make recycling better in Cambridge.

**BOTTOM LINE:**

1. RAC members --- Please support my motion to add the 4 topics above to the September minutes.
2. Mike and RAC leaders--- please include these topics in the meeting agenda  
You have allocated 30 minutes for subcommittee meetings --- that 30 minutes can be used for discussion of the Action Items.
3. Mike, please email a current draft of your brochure



Best regards,  
Mary

-----Original Message-----

From: Orr, Michael <[morr@cambridgema.gov](mailto:morr@cambridgema.gov)>

To:

Sent: Thu, Sep 29, 2022 2:54 pm  
Subject: September minutes and October RAC agenda  
Hi all,

See attached for RAC minutes from Sept. meeting and the October 2022 agenda.

And, Sakiko, Dailey, Audrey, and I attended the MassRecycle Fall Social where Sakiko was recognized for her weekly waste talk series she organized in 2020/2021. Hundreds of students, faculty, staff and others signed up to hear Sakiko's Friday morning interviews. Congrats Sakiko! Also, Rob Gogan, MassRecycle board member and our long-time RAC leader was there too. Check out photos here:  
<https://massrecycle.org/events/fall-social/#>

And last week, 14 Camb residents, Dailey, Susy, Dawn Quirk (she was Cambridge Recycling staff person 2003-2006, and also worked at MassDEP, and now works with Susy at MIT improving their waste systems) and I toured Casella. See attached photo.

Lastly, thanks to Amy Waltz for volunteering all afternoon to pitch composting at Danehy Park Day (photo attached)!

Thanks,



**Mike Orr**, Recycling Director  
City of Cambridge DPW | 147 Hampshire Street | Cambridge, MA 02139  
617.349.4815 | [CambridgeMA.Gov/Recycle](https://www.cambridgema.gov/recycle)

Download the **Zero Waste Cambridge** and never miss a collection again!  
Use the tool to search if an item should be trashed, recycled, or how else to Get Rid of It Right!

Download for [iOS](#) or [Android](#) or find it [online here](#).

**Join 9000 of your neighbors**

Sign up for our monthly [Recycling Newsletter](#)

# City of Cambridge Department of Public Works

## Zero Waste Master Plan Update

October 2022



# Zero Waste Master Plan Goals

- Began process in 2017
- Goals:
  - Provide mechanism for achieving the City's trash reduction goals.
  - Assist City in its operational planning for future
  - Assist in planning ahead for increasing trash disposal costs
- City's trash reduction goals established in 2009:
  - 30% reduction by 2020 (2008 as baseline)
  - 80% reduction by 2050

## Recycle Division Progress

2018

- Expand **Curbside Compost** to residents (up to 12-unit bldgs)
- Begin **Small Business Recycle Pilot**

2019

- Begin **Mattress Recycling** Program
- Improve recycling through **Recycle Right** campaign

2020

- Expand **Curbside Compost** to all buildings on City trash program
- Expand **Small Business Recycle Program**

## Recycle Division Progress

2021

- Resume & expand **Curbside Compost** to more residents
- Start **Small Business Compost Pilot**
- Start **Textiles Recovery** program

2022

- Launch **Standard Trash Carts**
- Expand **Small Business Compost Pilot**

# Outstanding Recommendations from ZWMP

Consider reconfiguration or repurposing the Recycling Center to focus on collection and/or consolidation of specific materials.

Provide mobile collection of materials such as small electronics, HHW, small appliances.

Expand curbside compost program to all buildings NOT on the City trash collection program

To consider in 2025-2027:

Carpet Recycling	Continue to monitor opportunities to divert carpet.
Waste Electronics Recycling Program	Potentially adjust this program based on performance of other programs (recycling center, mobile collection)

# Curbside Organics

- City provides free service, carts, and indoor kitchen bin
- 2015: 5,200 households in program
- 2018: 25,000 households
- 2020: 32,500 households with access
- 2021: 64 businesses added
- 2022: TBD businesses added





# Curbside Organics Data

- Apprx 40-50% participation
- Apprx 7% reduction in trash
- Co-benefits: Compost carts are better for rodent control.



# Recycle Right Campaign

- Started in late-2018 after China National Sword
- Curbside Monitoring in Fall 2018.
  - 4400 carts inspected (20% of City)
  - DPW staff placed 'OOPS' tag on carts with medium & high contamination
  - Postcard mailed to high contamination buildings
  - Drivers reject recycling more frequently

## OOPS!

We need your help to

**Recycle Right.**

Leave these items out of your recycling cart:



Do Not Bag Recyclables  
No Garbage



No Plastic Bags,  
Films or Wrappers



No Food or Liquids  
(empty all containers)



No Clothing or Linens  
(donate)



No Tangles,  
Cords, Hoses, Hangers  
or Electronics



No Hazardous Items,  
Wood or Scrap Metal

NOTES

Thank you for your attention to this--

**Don't let your recycling get rejected.  
Recycle Right.**

**THE WORKS**  
Cambridge

CambridgeMA.Gov/Recycle  
617.349.4800

# Recycle Right Campaign

- City sent 3 mailers in 2018-2019 to educate residents
- Produced new and clearer labels and stickers



# Recycle Right Campaign



- Bus Shelter & Bluebike Ads
- Newsletter - Monthly
- Facebook & Twitter—  
Weekly Or Monthly





## Recycle Right Campaign Results

- Decreased contamination from 11% in 2018 to 4% in 2020
- Slight increase in recycling tonnage
- Surprisingly, decrease in contamination didn't increase trash!
- Cost savings: \$90,000/year



# Small Business Recycle Program

- Ongoing enrollment
- 200 businesses currently in program
- Average savings to business:  
\$200/mo/business
- Up to 50 more slots for businesses



# Mattress Recycle Program

- Started Spring 2019
- Apprx 5000 mattresses recycled annually
- Mandatory to Divert from Trash Statewide as of 11/1/2022
- Apprx 125 tons/yr reduction in trash



# Small Business Compost Pilot



- Started Fall 2021
- 64 businesses participate
- Average savings to business: \$200/mo/business
- Apprx 0.75 tons per day collected
- Expanding in Fall 2022



# About the City's textile collection program

Started Fall 2021

12 drop-off locations

Curbside collection offered also

City is paid \$\$ for all textiles collected by vendor



## Citywide standard trash carts



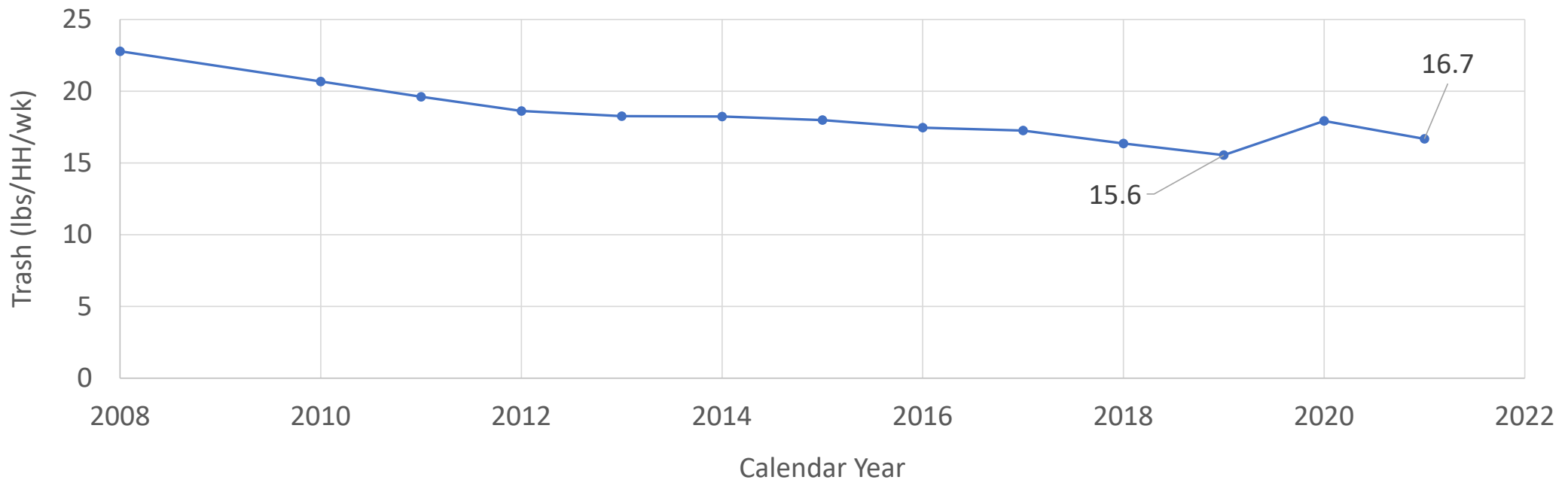
Beginning in Spring 2022: City will supply all trash carts for buildings that receive trash collection from the City.

### Goals of Program:

1. Improve rodent control
2. Improve ergonomics, by reducing lifting impacts on DPW staff
3. Improve sidewalk accessibility

# Zero Waste Master Plan Goals

Cambridge Residential Trash Generation



**Goal:**

2020: 16 pounds/household/week

2030: 12 lbs/HH/wk

2050: 4 lbs/HH/wk