

**City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee**  
June 11, 2009 – Meeting Minutes Taken by Judy Nathans

Members Present: Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Ryan Gray, MIT; Laura Nichols & Corey Pilz, Cambridge Consumers Council; Robert Winters, Cambridge resident; Judy Nathans, Cambridge resident

Guests Present: Randi Mail, Recycling Director

**Market Updates**

Randi reported that the markets are returning and the City earned \$16.50 per ton for paper and cardboard and \$100 per ton for scrap metal in June.

Rob said that Harvard's price for single stream per ton improved from \$45 to \$35. He discussed technology that can be installed on trash compactors to reduce unnecessary hauls including [Oneplus](#), that will email you to tell you how full they are. Harvard bought one and installed it, and immediately cut hauls in half. They asked its contractor, Allied Waste Systems, to install Oneplus units on all eight of the trash compactors they service at Harvard, which were installed over the summer. This saves money, helps the neighborhood reduce congestion and wear on streets.

**Go Green Awards**

Randi reported on the 2009 Go Green awards. Winners can be viewed on the [City's website](#). Storm water management was added as a new Go Green category this year. The small business winner for waste reduction was Grendel's Den and the large business winner was the Volpe Transportation Center.

Dan Ruben from [Boston Green Tourism](#) was the keynote speaker and spoke in detail about green initiatives in the hotel industry. Randi asked the committee submit suggestions for keynote speakers for next year's awards.

**School Recycling Contest: RecycleCraze**

[RecycleCraze](#), the Cambridge Public Schools paper and cardboard recycling contest, concluded on May 8. The 1<sup>st</sup> Place winner was the Tobin School with an impressive comeback and turn-around from years past. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner was the Graham & Parks School and it is fantastic to see them as a top-recycling school. Congratulations to both schools for their impressive efforts and performance. Bob Mederios, the head custodian at the King Open School received an honorable mention for his strong support of their new lunchroom composting program.

A big thank you goes out to each school for their participation in this 14-week contest. Together, the Cambridge City Schools' efforts to recycle paper and cardboard make a big difference for the environment. During the competition, the schools collectively recycled over 100 tons of paper and cardboard! This prevented 1,700 trees from being cut down and avoided pollution equivalent to removing 90 cars from the road.

This is an amazing accomplishment, and DPW would like to acknowledge and congratulate all the schools for their contributions.

**Composting at the King Open**

King Open began composting in March 2009 and through the end of the school year, composted 4,460 pounds! Overall, the program was a great pilot and Randi said that the educational campaign at the school was essential with top leadership from Principal Tim Groves, Assistant Principals Regina Osborne and Roxie Coicou. DPW is finishing up a step-by-step guide to lunchroom composting that will be released in September. Principals at public schools that want to begin composting should call Meryl or Randi. Meryl will be revisiting the King Open in September to help ensure that the program begins with a strong start.

Judy asked about what happens to food not eaten but served or leftover. Randi said that the school nutritionists indicated that there are laws about students receiving a certain quantity of food.

This fall [CitySprouts](#) will expand to include the Baldwin and Cambridgeport schools, bringing school gardens to ALL public primary school students in Cambridge! CitySprouts will be the first program in the country to integrate garden-based education into an entire school district's curriculum.

Randi mentioned that MIT graduate students submitted a proposal that the City consider curbside collection of food waste by cargo bikes and begin with a pilot project in the Porter Square neighborhood. They worked closely with a Somerville-based business, [Metro Pedal Power](#) to develop the idea. Cargo bikes can haul up to 500 lbs and are used to deliver produce for CSAs, by Harvard Book Store and by Harvard University to collect reusables during move-out season. Rob G said that the cargo bikes are limited in the amount they can transport and that the workers are non-union. He felt that food waste should be in a packer truck while Robert W said that there can be a role for smaller vehicles for narrow areas. Randi estimates that 30% of residential food waste might amount to 3000+ tons a year. If that was combined with 2000 tons of yard waste, collected year-round with 261 collection days, this might be 75+ bike trips daily if the loads were limited to 500 pounds.

She also discussed an idea to create a mini-grant program to install in-vessel composters that could create green jobs (installation, maintenance, etc.) like the [Earth Tub](#) at locations in Cambridge with landscaped grounds that the public would be able to access.

[Taste of Cambridge](#), held June 25<sup>th</sup> received a technical assistance grant from the Northeast Recycling Council to develop a zero waste plan and pilot compost collection. Rob expressed an interest for all city festivals to compost. The group briefly discussed the difficulty in doing this at large events that would require a huge volunteer force to sort out contaminants as is done at the Lowell Folk Festival, or with a paid vendor, as Save That Stuff does at Earthfest. At a minimum, vendors must be required to use biodegradables instead of plastic and Styrofoam items.

### **Single Stream Recycling**

Robert Winters brought up status of single stream vs. dual collection. Randi indicated that the curbside collection and processing contracts both expire in July 2010 and will be rebid in the fall. The City will likely include options in the price form to be able to consider the option of single stream. Since there still is a lack of adequate processing capacity for organics in the Greater Boston area, curbside collection of organics is not yet feasible. Local processing capacity must first develop before the City can consider this service.

### **Random Updates**

- [May 30<sup>th</sup> Electronics Recycling Event](#)  
8,000 lbs was collected at the event held in Somerville open to Cambridge residents as well. This event was paid for courtesy of Samsung in partnership with CRT Processing. Cambridge typically recycles about 300,000 lbs of electronics annually.
- [Harvard Graduation](#)  
Rob reported that 6,000 seniors graduated and there 93% of the waste was recycled or composted with only 30 bags of trash.