

Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee

March 12, 2009

Minutes Taken by Ryan Gray

Members Present: Rob Gogan, Harvard; Ryan Gray, MIT; Cathy McCormick, Adam Mitchell, Save That Stuff; Cambridge resident; Judy Nathans; Andrea Yonge, FCR/Casella

Guests Present: Ted Live, Cambridge resident; Randi Mail, Recycling Director

King Open Food to Flowers Compost Project

Randi reported on this [exciting project](#). On 3/11, the two-school-wide assemblies went extremely well. Students were very receptive to the compost program and loved the pictures of animals. A major theme is that when we recycle and compost, we protect nature and animals.

After the assembly, Randi and Meryl were in the lunchroom for 4-5 consecutive lunch periods. Parent Melissa Lutdke, developed a [short video](#) of the Food to Flowers kick-off and took many pictures. All were enthusiastic and did a great job sorting leftovers at 3 sorting stations, each with 4 clearly marked containers:

- **Trash:** gray 55-gal barrel on dolly, black bag
- **Compost:** yellow 20-gal on dolly, [BioTuf](#) bag
- **Liquids:** white 5- gal pail on crate, emptied 2x in the hallway drain closet with catch for solids
- **Styrofoam:** clear bag on plastic stand

Randi and Meryl were very proud as the students clearly understood the program. Vice Principal Regina Osborne helped motivate and instruct 1st/2nd grade kids on how to compost. She encouraged them to say "Amazing!" instead of "Ew!" in response to the liquids bucket. She made a commitment to recycle at home.

DPW is working on a step-by-step guide to lunchroom composting to inform interested principals seeking to launch a program. Rob Gogan will send information regarding Harvard's food waste audit program. Andrea also mentioned some useful charts to graphically depict greenhouse gas emissions based on waste/landfills, etc.

Randi said that since 2002 (when she started), school support and interest in recycling has definitely increased.

School Styrofoam Recycling

Meryl & Randi recently visited the Boston Public Schools' Styrofoam recycling facility in Brighton and took pictures. Trays are separated from one another at the conveyor, washed, shredded, dried, and shredded again. The flakes are then melted into plastic pellets (that look like pearls) and stored in gaylord boxes (3" square). The volume reduction from flakes to pellets is about 12:1. A gaylord of pellets weighs 900+ pounds. [Evergreen Partnering](#) purchases the material and blends it with virgin resin to produce a "Poly-Sty-Recycle" material. [Eastern Bag & Paper Company](#) uses it to produce new polystyrene and rigid plastic food service products. The program is economic for the Boston Public Schools.

Market Report

Andrea said there were no major changes in commodity pricing. Movement is returning, but not significant. She stressed the importance to focus on avoided disposal costs from diverted tons rather than recycling revenue.

Rob said that the amount of reusables generated at Harvard for their Recycling & Surplus Center have decreased because people are hanging on to items.

Statistics

As the Committee requested, these figures are presented for the calendar year, which DPW recently submitted to [MassDEP](#). However, the City records are typically fiscal year, July 1st-June 30th.

	CY 2008	CY 2007	Percent change CY08 to CY07
Trash (city-served)	18,418	18,980	-3%
Recycling: Curbside paper	5,891	5,944	-1%
Recycling: Curbside commingles	2,761	2563	8%
Recycling: misc*	4,737	4,256	11%
Total Recycling	13,359	12,763	5%
Total Trash & Recycling	31,777	31,743	0%

*This includes yard waste, electronics, Drop-off Center tons, redeemed bottles, appliances and compost.

From CY07 to CY08, City-served trash dropped 3% while total recycling rose 5%. Rob suggested issuing a press release for the drop in trash tons.

Following up on previous discussions, Randi explained that looking at per capita trash is misleading because not all Cambridge residents received City trash service. Many apartment buildings receive private trash collection, but the exact number is unknown.

MassDEP Report

Commissioner Lisa Peterson and John Nardone, Assistant Commissioner for Operations, will both attend the April 9th RAC meeting to discuss the report. All present expressed their interest in reviewing the report and having an opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations.