

DRAFT

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee, Council Chambers, 795 Mass Ave

December 14, 2016 - Minutes Taken by Rob Gogan

Members present: Keith Cialino, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Janet Mosley, Meera Singh, Joanna Vanden, Mary Verhage.

Staff present: Meryl Brott, Michael Orr.

Guests: Judith Nathans, Helen Snively

Housekeeping: The November minutes were approved. No public comment.

City Updates

Mike Orr reported that recycling markets are improving. The City paid \$2.27/ton for November recycling tonnage, the smallest amount in several years. For December Casella will instead pay us, the first month since 2012 that Casella is paying, rather than charging, for recyclables.

Mike and John Fitzgerald are conducting interviews for the next Recycling Advisory Committee term. January's meeting will include both new and old members, with the main items on the agenda being meeting new members and bringing them up to speed with the Zero Waste Master Plan, which the HDR consultants hired by the city will be putting together for the Works this spring.

Discussion Topics

3-year summary of Minutes

Keith shared a recap of the Committee's achievements over the past three years as a warm-up to determining how we can best help HDR chart the future of Cambridge's sustainable materials management program. They will be sending someone to the February or March meeting of the RAC. Keith urged Mike to try for February for the soonest possible opportunity to share our priorities.

(see end of Minutes for summary)

RFQ for Zero Waste Consultant

Mike said HDR's first order of business in the Zero Waste Plan project would be determining the financial feasibility, best collection agent and best strategy for implementing a curbside organics program city-wide this fall. This should be completed by mid-February. The whole project is fast-tracked to finish by July.

Waste sorts of the Monday route were done on December 12, in an effort to collect data for the consultants. Unfortunately organics still constituted more than 30% of the trash.

Several members presented important considerations for the consultants to keep in mind in planning for Zero Waste in Cambridge.

- Meera: importance of continuing education for many different groups, especially for apartment dwellers who want to drop off food scraps for composting.
- Mary: need for multi-family options; where can we get the biggest bang for the buck?
- Rob: need to lay out all strategies for ZW and see what is currently most feasible, including pay-as-you-throw, totes for MSW as well as recycling and organics, bulk waste fees.
- Susy: importance of getting consultants up to speed quickly.
- Debby K.: culture of Cambridge, especially café and restaurant tendency to promote use of single use ware.

Action Items

All members will make efforts to update new members and consultants as to all these campaigns. Susy wants Cambridge to consider partnering more closely with Somerville, Boston and Brookline; Mike said there is a regular meeting between Cambridge officials and their counterparts from these cities.

The Committee thanked Joanna Vanden for her service, and applauded the leadership of Keith, Janet and Debby G. in preparing agendas, conducting the meetings, publishing the Minutes, and running conference calls.

Meeting adjourned at 9:29am

2014 minutes

January:

Review of Orientation Packet.

Review and discussion about orientation materials sent to members

which included information about Committee, web resources, background on programs, historical timeline, and slides about the 3R's, link between climate change and materials, zero waste, what happens to City collected trash and recycling, the link between materials and natural resources/pollution, highlights of the City's compost initiatives, extended producer responsibility, how to donate/recycle textiles, furniture, etc, opt out of junk mail, and how to reduce packaging. Send RAC members past Committee positions on EPR, plastic bags/Styrofoam, and business recycling recommendations. More info on how Cambridge trash generation compares to other MA communities

February:

Review of RAC role, including meeting etiquette, member responsibilities and requirements, structure through which the committee provides advice to the

DPW Commissioner. Review and discussion of survey results among RAC members of 2014 working goals

March:

Additional outreach is needed to multi-family (6 or more units) buildings

Waste Sort

April:

Market & Tonnage Update

Intro to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Overview of EPR, different legislative approaches in terms of framework vs. product specific. Pointed to resources online at the Product Stewardship Institute's webpage including definitions and principles, products, financial and economic impacts and a map of US laws, see www.productstewardship.us. Committee discussed many products/materials, adding to Take It Back map, will primarily focus on supporting paint legislation which is expected to be introduced in MA.

May:

Donate Furniture Campaign. A phone bank held 5/5 to call residents about furniture donation (RM, PK, JM & JV). ~ 200 HH called. Flyers posted major squares, though need more in Kendall. Team has contacted realtors, movers, property managers, off-campus housing offices, etc. Now focusing on Twitter and Facebook. DPW will host a Harvard GSD student this summer to finalize app to assist furniture reuse. Discussion about particleboard furniture.

June:

Furniture Research. DG researched mattress recycling. One company identified, UTEC, is based out of Lowell and serves at-risk youth. Both Lesley and Harvard University use UTEC for their mattress recycling. Mattress retailers also tend to take back old mattresses for recycling. DG to follow-up with Randi to get more information about costs and logistics. MV researched particleboard furniture, retailers and considerations about recycling and take back. MV concluded that neither IKEA or Staples had recycling programs for this material, and generated further questions for consideration and research.

September:

Quick Repair Café Debrief There was a brief recap of the 1st Cambridge Repair Café held 9/27, overall a very positive event. Review of feedback from survey of event organizers and volunteers. 80+ people attended with about a 70% fixit rate.

October:

Review of RAC Working Goals

The meeting focus was on the 3 working goals for RAC, action items for each in the form of SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic/Relevant, Timeframe). The discussion and working session was by Chris and Jeri from the EPA. The goals are:

1. Policy: Integrate extended producer responsibility (EPR) and materials management into the City's solid waste policy and climate protection activities. (team lead is Keith)
2. Business: Increase business and commercial recycling in the City; (team lead is Janet)
3. Outreach: Increase knowledge and promote actions that establish a 5Rs culture (Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle & Rot) through outreach, public relations, volunteerism, incentives and support to residents and multi-family property managers. Do it in a fun way! (team lead is Debby K)

November:

Prioritization of RAC Action Items

Jeri Weiss from EPA expertly facilitated the process for the RAC to prioritize the 12 action items:

The high priority action items are (not in any order):

- Customize support statement for paint EPR legislation in MA provided by PSI. (DG)
- Increase Cambridge Public School participation in MassDEP's Green Team program and involve high school students. (MS & DK)
- Review DPW recycling outreach budget. Develop proposal to leverage funds for media campaign. (JV, DK, KC, MO)
- Incorporate materials management into the City's waste and climate goals and strategy. (JM, RG, MO, MV)
- Review and recommend changes to the Recycling Ordinance, and the Commercial Rules & Regulations. (all)

The medium priority action items are (to be prioritized):

- Engage City in planning, response & implications for rodent-proof trash barrels, and propose short term, more tangible trash reduction goals (30% less trash by 2020 & 80% less by 2050).
- Host a roundtable/speaker series on waste reduction, highlighting checkout bag ordinance, curbside organics, and trash barrels.
- Assist with regular outreach to multifamily buildings, publicize big building performance and do surveys to gauge attitudes/awareness.
- Review and follow-up on Business Recycling Recommendations presented to the commissioners in June 2014.
- Research options and explore policy recommendations to increase reuse and/or recycling of bulky items such as broken furniture.

The low priority action items are (not in any order):

- Support organics outreach and help expand drop-off program.
- Ensure pharmaceutical collection options are publicized by the recycling program.

December:

Incorporating materials management in city's waste and climate goals

The working group reported on their discussions: Plan to keep 2020 waste reduction goal, Potential to make changes to 2050 goal, Use quarterly reports to better publicize pounds per week per household numbers, Look into green procurement for city purchases, and Work more closely with CPAC

Finding out how/what Cambridge Public Schools teach on waste reduction

The working group reported on their discussions: Need to investigate reasons for minimal participation in The Green Team, Meera talked to Belmont (parent-run) and CRLS (will offer course option next year)

Trash barrels, practices by zero waste communities, council order on rodent

-proof barrels City Council passed order for report on rodent control operations and the possibility to provide rodent-proof trash barrels to residents. This is

similar to Somerville, which issued 64 gallon barrels to each household for rodent control. DPW staff to meet with City Manager soon on this as well as recommendations related to curbside organics program and waste reduction goals. City would integrate new barrels with waste reduction goals, barrels would probably be smaller to encourage less waste disposal

2015 Minutes overview

January

Paint Stewardship Letter sent to Owen

Subcommittee discussions

- Materials management in city's waste and climate goals
 - 1) 5 Year Plan to achieve 16 lbs/household, 2) Review DPW webpage 3) Follow up with DPW on rodent control and trash can size; and 4) Continue working with CPAC.
- School curriculum on waste reduction
 - 1) check in with Owen O'Riordan regarding public school curriculum discussions; 2) Speak with City Sprouts regarding program curriculum; and 3) Reassess Green Team/curriculum as a priority area.
- Outreach
 - 1) Recycling outreach budget review; 2) plans for outreach campaign on 5Rs

Pending - Research WeUse Furniture App

Pending - Review of the Recycling Ordinance

February

(meeting canceled)

March

Continued subcommittee discussions

- Materials management in city's waste and climate goals
- School curriculum on waste reduction
- outreach budget review and plans for outreach campaign on 5Rs

Pending - curbside composting pilot

April

Continued subcommittee discussions

- Materials management in city's waste and climate goals
 - Furniture campaign, MA Coalition for the Homeless
- School curriculum on waste reduction
 - Meetings with school staff
- Outreach budget review and plans for outreach campaign on 5Rs
 - Suggestions for spending remaining balance

Pending - ISD surveys

May

Discussed Janet's model to determine what is needed to reach 2020 Trash Goal - curbside organics, municipal best practices with every-other-week trash/weekly organics, mattress grant

Phone bank Mon 5/18 for furniture donation campaign

City to advertise for internship position for help with recycling outreach

Pending - business recycling discussion

June

Outreach budget analysis continued - research how other cities spend their marketing/outreach dollars

Review of outreach tabling materials

September

Curbside compost pilot starting

Mike hired, Camilla hired

BYOB ordinance passed

Outlined goals for future meetings:

- Volunteering for compost door to door campaign
- Education for the BYOB Ordinance, possible reusable bag drive
- Materials management/2020 plan to reduce trash 30%
- Data review from ISD on business recycling
- Forum for property managers of large residential buildings
- Continue working on integrating Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot into school curricula

- Understand costs and collection for public area recycling bins

October

Door to door outreach in North Cambridge on composting, additional outreach through other venues
Reusable bag drive organized

November

School composting – new schools added
Polystyrene ordinance passed, was news to RAC
Public area recycling increasing due to new bin placements
Reusable bag drive planning
Pending - Property manager forum brainstorm

December

BYOB outreach
Bag drive planning

2016 Minutes Overview

January

BYOB outreach

- Planning, outreach, and implementation surrounding reusable bag drive
- Suggestion to do some data gathering/surveys before and after the Bring Your Own Bag ordinance goes into effect to be better able to assess the impact of the ordinance and outreach efforts.

Polystyrene ordinance

- Review of ordinance and brainstorming questions surrounding ordinance.
- Long term areas of consideration:
 - This seems like it could be a missed opportunity to eliminate non-compostable single-use food containers and utensils in conjunction with taking curbside composting city-wide. The committee noted that the City's curbside organics program does not accept compostable containers due to contamination concerns.
 - Should such an Ordinance encourage and incentivize businesses allowing customers to bring clean reusable containers such as Tupperware to restaurants, salad bars, etc? What are best practices for a reusable to go container system?
 - What are the impacts of banning specific materials?

Topics committee members are interested in learning more about:

- Learning more about the basics of LCA, how it can be helpful, what it includes, what it doesn't include, etc.
- Options for stronger programs for reusable bulk items such as furniture and mattresses
- Waste to Energy options at either the commercial or local scale
- A better understanding of the pros and cons and uses of various types of materials in common use or emerging on the market, especially plastics.
- Toxic and hazardous materials within consumer products such as flame retardants
- Available options for reusable to-go containers and/or how to encourage people eating out to bring their own reusable to-go containers

February

Continued BYOB ordinance outreach

Continued Polystyrene ordinance discussion

March

Continued BYOB ordinance outreach including collecting data on reusable bag use before ordinance takes effect
Continued Polystyrene ordinance discussion

Presentation by Bronwyn Cooke, Sustainability Planner in charge of GHG inventory for Cambridge. Bronwyn hopes that the RAC can help think about in-boundary waste – how to collect the best data, projecting reductions, thinking about

goods and foods, which have a huge impact upstream. There was not sufficient time to begin those discussions at this meeting.

April

Continued BYOB ordinance outreach including collecting data on reusable bag use after ordinance took effect
Continued Polystyrene ordinance discussion

- Discussion of potential life cycle impacts of PS ban and the potential health risks of using PS in food containers
- Working towards a consensus on what recommendation to send to the Commissioner.

Exploring current relevant legislation that members of the committee may want to take action on, such as potential revision of the bottle redemption program

May

Continued BYOB ordinance outreach including collecting data on reusable bag use after ordinance took effect
Polystyrene ordinance discussion

- Presentation from Clint Richmond from Sierra Club on their motivations to push PS food container ban
- Open discussion
 - It would be good to have the consultant who works on the upcoming solid waste master plan to take a more holistic approach in considering how Cambridge can reduce use of disposable food service items
- RAC voted to send a letter to the commissioner recommending that the foam polystyrene ban go forward, but that the city should consider revising the ordinance to exclude solid PS from the ban.

June

Final Polystyrene ordinance discussion

- Casella says that solid PS containers are not recycled as there is no market, so the Commissioner has decided not to forward the RAC's recommendation to remove solid PS from the ordinance to the City Council. The PS ordinance will go into effect in October as it is currently written.

RAC accomplishments and goals discussion – future considerations:

- Make data public about effect of Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance
- Is it possible to have more sites for compost drop-off before city-wide compost expansion?
- Do more on furniture reuse. Possibly have an annual yard sale.
- Work further to integrate materials management into climate strategy by working collaboratively with CPAC members.
- Promote drug take back program, which is being spearheaded by Product Stewardship Institute.
- Update Janet's spreadsheet on reducing pounds per household. Could add new data and refresh.
- Do more with multi-family housing next year.
- Quarterly report of outreach budget spending for better planning.

September

Initial data from Inspectional Services on business recycling is not very detailed, but perhaps it can be used to identify businesses that are not recycling at all – could be connected with current outreach for PS ordinance.

Open discussion on how to promote reuse

- Used furniture drive with MA Coalition for Homeless
 - Publicize stats on avoided disposal and # of families helped;
 - Partner with furniture stores for more permanent advertising for program
 - Better understand if MA Coalition is able to provide enough service or if more truckloads are needed
- Further explore moving towards a fee on disposal of bulky items.
 - Possible recommendation from RAC to DPW Commissioner.
- Make sure Cambridge's map with recycle and reuse locations is up to date
- City-wide or neighborhood yard sale.
- Develop materials to share best practices for yard sales, swaps, repair cafes, etc
- Leverage websites and apps such as the Buy Nothing website: <https://buynothingproject.org>, as well as apps such as NextDoor

- Consider launching a campaign to reduce consumption of non-durable goods, e.g. Rethink Refuse Reduce Reuse Recycle
- Most recent paint EPR bill failed. Write op-ed discussing cost of disposing of paint cans to taxpayers when it is raised again in the legislature.

October

Highlights from Reuse Conex conference

- Potential public screening plus discussion of the film “Reuse Because You Can’t Recycle the Plant” seen at the conference

Continuation of brainstorming on methods to promote reuse

- Bulky waste
 - (See September)
 - Make sure to engage solid waste master plan consultant in thinking about reducing bulky waste.
- Single use items
 - Public health issues with bringing your own container
 - How to address/avoid?
 - Reach out to Food Law and Policy Guidance at Harvard for advice
 - Contacted Dawn Olcott in Public Health Department in City but did not have much input
 - Identify where there is most single-use waste. Largely take-out food venues? How does that compare to private use of disposables?
 - RETHINK need for certain items - straws, stirrers
 - Have a foothold in beverage (coffee) container reuse/bring your own - continue to push here?
 - Promote reducing amount of stuff handed out, minimizing packaging
 - Need a bag, utensils, napkins?
 - Add these questions online for takeout?
 - Charge for these items?
 - Normalize these trends
 - Frame as positive for businesses o CA case studies change from disposable to reusable
 - Look at different cultures for inspiration - e.g. India, use of banana leaf
 - Green business recognition program?
 - Connection with Cambridge Local First
 - Other green recognition programs for restaurants?

November

Continuation of brainstorming on methods to promote reuse

- Bulky waste (see Sept and Oct)
 - Develop subgroup to work on documentation of best practices for yardsales/swaps
- Single use items
 - (see October)
 - Continue to look into Green Restaurant Association recognition program
 - Contact Grendel’s Den (participating local restaurant)
 - Look into feasibility of 10 cent fee on disposable cups etc (similar to the BYOB ordinance)
 - Reward people around the city with remaining reusable bags for getting “Caught Green Handed” i.e. bringing a reusable mug to a coffee shop
 - Golden recycling box for best recyclers
 - Promoting discounts for those who bring reusables