

## Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2024, 8:00-9:30am

Hybrid Meeting

Minute Taker: Richard Nurse

**Members present:** Dailey Brannin, Lee Elliott, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Laura Nichols, Richard Nurse, Carlie Peters, Dawn Quirk, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Helen Snively, Quinten Steenhuis, Rob Vandenabeele, Stephanie Wasiuk

**Members absent:** Dave Demme, Scott MacGrath, Audrey Ng, Alex Toupal

**Staff present:** John Fitzgerald, John Nardone, Mike Orr, Kathy Watkins,

**Public present:** Judy Nathans, Tamene Tedla, Amy Waltz

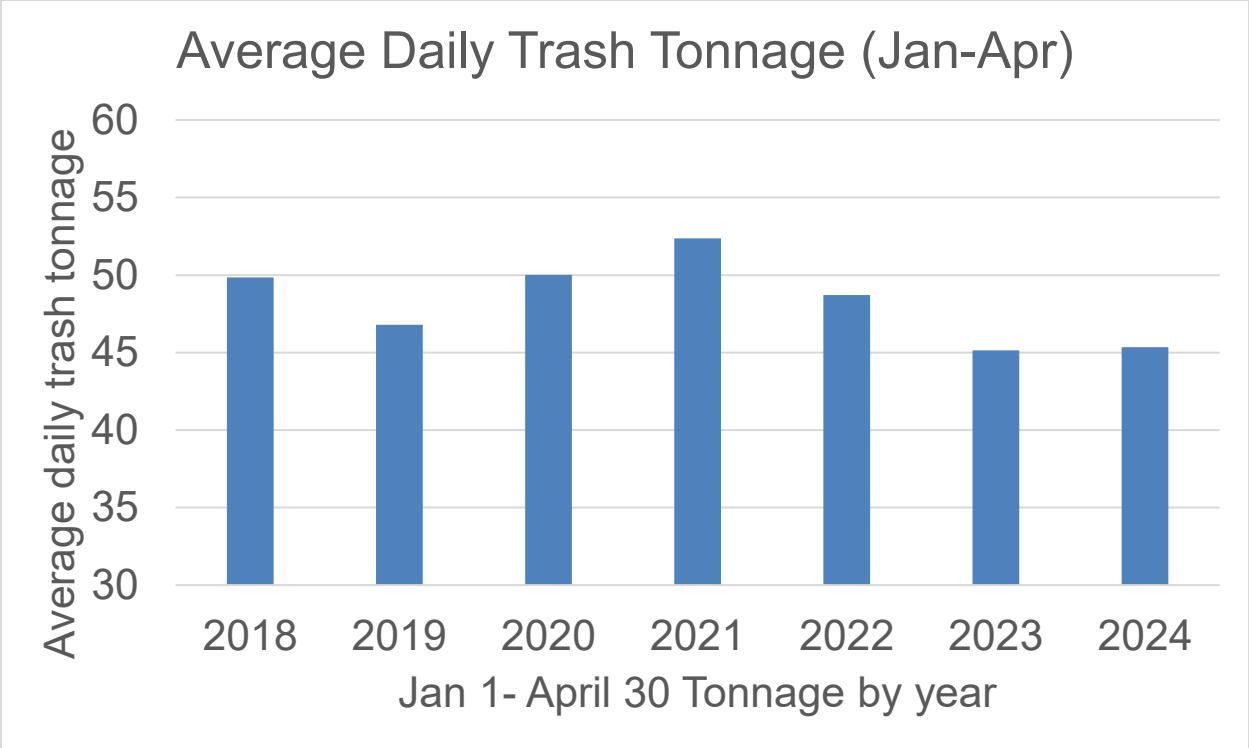
The minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Mike Orr opened the meeting by introducing Kathy Watkins, Commissioner of the Public Works Department as well as John Nardone, Deputy Commissioner, and John Fitzgerald, Environmental Services Manager

Each member of the RAC was asked to explain their background, particular interests in the Committee and length of service.

Kathy Watkins explained her role as Commissioner, and expressed appreciation for the work of the Committee, which she believes has made a positive contribution to the progress that the City's recycling program.

Mike Orr gave an update of the year-to-date trash generation statistics and a snapshot of textiles tonnage.



April 2024 Textiles program

<b>Textiles Bins</b>	<b>Textiles collected (lbs)</b>
MIT	551
Hoyt Field	972
Cambridgeport School	1339
CRLS Environmental Action Club (one-time event)	1444
Corporal Burns Park	1640
Donnelly Field	2101
Haggerty School	2205
Putnam Upper School	2810
Russell Field	3323
Kennedy Longfellow School	4450
Danehy Park	4479
Graham & Parks	6276
Tobin School (Broadway)	6396
<i>Curbside Pickup</i>	6858
<b>Total</b>	<b>44844</b>

General comments from the Committee members followed:

Collection of compost remains an issue for large multifamily buildings, often having limited or no options to deposit compost. Use of drop off sites can be inconvenient for residents without transport.

Several members suggested mandating food waste diversion in the City.

Suggestion to encourage public school students to be leaders in the push to get families to compost more aggressively. One option is gaining the cooperation of School Management to include details of the compost program during student orientation to high school. Furthermore, access to food waste diversion at University's seemed underwhelming.

Plastic film and bags are not collected as part of normal household waste, but collection/drop off sites are available. The city is advised to study the results of total bans on plastic bags as enacted by NJ, Ireland and, more recently, CA. Consumption of plastic recycled film or reusable fabric changed format and increased.

Discussion relative to metal collection and drop off options; several members thought the Recycle Center could increase hours and have a more friendly site within the DPW Yard that was easier to navigate and could accept more items.

Furthermore, there was discussion of making the recycle center more accessible to those who didn't live near DPW, or didn't have access to a car.

There could be better electronics recycling, and two members cited banning e-waste from the trash, as many of the metals contained therein are valuable and can be reused.

An opinion was expressed by two members that the total volume of trash should be more aggressively managed on an individual basis by greater urgency by personal commitment and responsibility.

A DEP grant has been applied for to fund a household goods collection program around the time of move out.

Regardless of whether that's received, there'll likely be a large free store/swap event taking place on August 26th at the Cambridge Community Center. Volunteers will be most welcome.

Zero Waste Plan public event, June 12, 5.30-7.00pm at the King Open School. Several members have volunteered to participate. The goal is to educate the public and get suggestions.

Public comment: Tamene Tedla is looking into volunteer opportunity for local youth, via Peace Corps Climate Heros.

Next Meeting September 11, 2024.