

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2024, 8:00am – 9:30am
Hybrid meeting
Minute Taker: Sakiko Isomichi

Members present: Dave Demme, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Sakiko Isomichi, Elka Kuhlman, Emily Lee, Scott MacGrath, Laura Nichols, Richard Nurse, Carlie Peters, Dawn Quirk, Diane Roseman, Helen Snively, Quinten Steenhuis, Stephanie Wasiuk

Members absent: Dailey Brannin, Lee Elliott, Debby Knight, Audrey Ng, Meera Singh, Alex Toupal, Rob Vandenabeele

Staff present: Mike Orr

Public present: Tamene Tedla, Amy Waltz

Updates

- Earth Day at high school
 - Everyone shoveled soil – gone by Monday morning, all weekend long, worked!
- Fix It Clinic
 - Dailey, Elka, Stephanie – a lot of wins, also brainstormed for the future with written notes
- Need more volunteers for Zero Waste Master Plan Open House on June 12 at King Open School
 - Goals:
 - Answer questions & share facts about recycling, compost programs, etc.
 - Ask people's interests in improving waste-related programs
 - Get community involved in zero waste program process
 - (there will be an opportunity for people to share ideas even after the event)
 - Role of volunteers: hosts, guides (not pushing people toward any direction)
 - Not running small conversations
 - Guide people through this process
 - Fact sharing: compost disposal costs less, helps environment -> what do you think?
 - Come up to the board and share your thoughts!
 - Soon will be distributing flyers to inform the community

- There will be food!
 - Post in Next Door
- Suggestions
 - Videotape as well as write down people's thoughts/ideas
 - Raffle off compost bags
- Sub-committee to work on letter with RAC suggestions to Commissioner Watkins
 - Commissioner to attend RAC meeting in June or Sept
 - Send letter by end of October
 - Chance to put in something more aspirational
 - Sub-committee composes the letter and asks the rest of RAC for feedback
 - Stephanie, Sakiko, Tracie, Tamene, and Amy

Move-Out

- Pilot with potential grant: Reduce and Reuse Grant from Mass DEP
 - For housewares, furniture?
 - Curbside pick-up model
 - Community fridge model
 - People can take stuff and drop off only for a period of move-out time (make it special)
 - Organize attendants check in from time to time
 - Try a pilot for a day or so
 - Somewhere convenient for those who walk and drive
 - Next to Helpsy bins
 - Pick 5 convenient spots
 - Labor Day weekend
 - Pod vs Curbside
 - Already tried curbside – mattress, clothes, etc.
 - Curbside works – ok if it gets scavenged but gets collected at the end
 - Pods are hard: dumping issues need to be managed
 - Where?
 - Buy-nothing solves it but only for people with access
 - “Free store” (vs swap) model worked
 - Why not pilot around housewares & clothes – no furniture
 - Only one trash bagged at the end
 - CCC Gym worked, only one bag of trash at end
 - Or King School?
 - Only available on the day of

- But before the semester begins, school is empty
 - School is great: Helpsy bin is already there
 - Parking issues to be resolved
 - A lot of work by volunteers
 - Set up
 - Quality control
 - Need more staffing, planning, and system separating small from large items
 - In-take control with enough staff
 - Clean up
 - People bring stuff that day
 - Can the grant pay people to set up, sort, clean up?
 - Establish a model
 - Community service credit: high school students could be helpful
 - 2 ½ hours for volunteers
 - 3-5 people came in with a massive amount of stuff & many others with a bag or two
 - Population bringing is different from population taking in
 - Finally getting into the migrant population who really need stuff
 - One of the most compelling arguments for this model
 - Can we do Fix It Clinic, Compost Give Away & Free Store at the same location at the same time?
 - Need to check our resource pool, may not have enough staff to run them all
 - Timing is important to capture the move-out
 - Looking at end of August
- Boomerang closing: location opportunity?
- Pod is better than “free store” one-off model: need a mechanism to cover a range of times that serve multiple move-outs in early May, mid-May, end of May, end of June, etc.
- Free-store sub-committee with DPW staff and RAC members
 - Helen, Emily, Scott, Tracie, Amy, Elka and Claire Davies (2013 RAC member)
 - Include a DPW member

- Find a location
 - High school?
 - Should be near the population in need
 - Fix It Clinic population is different from Free-Store population
- Condition now
 - Pickup is twice as long during the move-out time
- One-pager for outreach to residents
 - Message
 - Reuse instead of putting on curbside
 - Go look for the pod in your neighborhood - if that's the plan
 - General vs detail
 - QR code linked to something Camilla already made
 - Look into Austin, Texas
 - Car parking more limited here than in other college towns
- Need to be ok to focus on one area for pilot
- Try a pilot and see what happens! (instead of continually talking about it)
- Plastic industry insights from Richard, at conference
 - A lot of support for recycling
 - PFAS issues to be resolved
 - UBQ reuse materials coming to Cambridge?!

Action items

- Zero Waste Master Plan Open House on Wed, June 12, 5:30-7:30pm at King Open School on Cambridge St.
 - Create flyer
 - Sign up for volunteer slots
- Invite Commissioner Watkins to RAC meeting before sending the letter on Zero Waste Plan
- Free-store subcommittee meets between now and June meeting
- Letter-writing subcommittee meets