



**City of Philadelphia Solid Waste & Recycling Advisory Committee (SWRAC)**

MEETING MINUTES

November 21, 2019

Philadelphia Municipal Services Building, 1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19102

16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room X

ATTENDEES

**SWRAC Members:**

Fern Gookin (Co-Chair), Revolution Recovery  
Jack Embick, Interested Party  
Maurice Sampson II, Clean Water Action  
Bob Anderson, Retriever  
Paul Kohl, Philadelphia Water Dept.  
Sal Iadonisi, US Recycling

**Others Present:**

Peter Karasik, Interested Party  
Phil Bresee, MSW Consultants  
Maria Horowitz, Philadelphia Water Dept.  
Adam Hendricks, Philadelphia Water Dept.  
Neil Garry, City of Philadelphia-Streets  
Amy Cornelius, Interested Party  
Laura Cassidy, Dept. of Prisons  
Tamika Davis, PHL Airport  
Daniel Lawson, Philadelphia Parks and Rec  
Andy Shea RNG Energy Solutions  
Bill Lehman, Waste Management  
Natalie Walker, University of Pennsylvania  
Kyle Lewis, City of Philadelphia-Streets  
Nic Esposito, Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet

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Called to order by F. Gookin at 3:10pm.

Approval of Minutes from September 2019.

Organics Subcommittee – Paul Kohl

- No updates; there was no meeting.

Philadelphia Recycle Office Update – Neil Garry

- Education Campaign – Contaminations Rates
  - Contamination rates vary throughout the city, district by district and seasonally
  - The city contamination rates are tracking with the national rate of about 24%
  - We need to improve
  - P. Kohl asked if it is known how much organics make up the contaminants; N. Garry responded that they will have more data on that in 2020
  - M. Sampson asked if PRO is still tracking diversion rates; N. Garry responded yes: they are tracking diversion and contamination rates and report them quarterly; he will see if this information can get added to the open data portal

- Commercial, civic, religious, and overall Community Outreach
  - Outreach campaigns are ongoing; have gotten a good response so far by meeting people where they are
  - Will do a staggered approach by neighborhood and will share a calendar of neighborhoods, event dates and locations by the end of the year
  - 2020 outreach will increase focus on the plastic bag (the #1 contaminant); for retailers who sell 'recycling bags' will be asking them to either add signs to clarify that they cannot go into the recycling stream or remove the bags from their shelves
  - Recycling Game and instructions is on the recycling website
  - M. Sampson asked if PRO is working with the Trash Academy; N. Garry responded yes.
  - Requesting leads for:
    - Venues and events for outreach campaign and messaging
    - Merchants who are selling 'recycling bags' so they can receive targeted messaging
    - Christmas tree disposal sites
- Commercial Waste Report
  - Just started; have received about 1,000; hope to get 13,000 returned by the end of 2020
  - Mapped responders and they are equally spread out throughout the city
- Participation Rates
  - J. Embick asked if incineration is still happening; N. Garry responded no: that stopped around April, only a portion of the pick-ups were being incinerated for about 4-6 months; while a new contract was being negotiated, about ½ of the recycling pick-ups (the most contaminated) were sent to an incinerator as a temporary measure
  - Discussion continued about how this may have affected participation rates, and if the city is tracking participation rates to even know if there was an effect
  - N. Esposito commented that we are not tracking participation rates, we are only tracking tonnage
  - M. Sampson commented that the city used to measure participation rates by counting set-outs.
- SWRAC Website
  - J. Embick commented that there are many pages out of date on the SWRAC website including missing minutes, agendas, and meeting date; N. Garry responded that the website is currently out of their control but they hope to regain control soon; they will update information at that time.

### Zero Waste and Litter - Nic Esposito

- Progress Report
  - Report is nearly ready; press release will be coming soon
  - Does not count waste to energy as diversion, it counts as disposal
  - Based on the 2017 Action Plan, trying to count other things that were previously missing from calculations, like Parks organics, reuse items, and more.
  - Will include information on zero waste partnerships, zero waste events, community composting, municipal building audit
- Community Composting
  - PowerCorps is building the bins now
  - RFP is due on December 6<sup>th</sup>; expect to choose a vendor soon after
  - Working on a path to permit with the State
- Working on 2020 Litter Index
- Anti-Litter Enforcement
  - Seeing improvement: 11,500 tons collected in FY16; 6,500 tons collected in FY19
  - Environmental crimes unit is doing a great job; 11 cases in FY18; 35 cases in FY19; crimes are tried in court of common pleas
  - J. Embick commented that it could be interesting to invite people to an upcoming SWRAC meeting to talk about the prosecutions; N. Esposito responded that he can see if he can bring in a speaker.
- Waste hauler permits started being required on construction permit applications starting in October 2019; hauler and contractor are required to keep documentation on file for 3 years.

### MSW Consultants - Phil Bresee

- MSW Consultants tasked with updating Municipal Solid Waste Plan to comply with Act 101; Act 101 requires plans to be updated on a 10yr cycle, which commonly ends up being a 12yr cycle
- In 2017, an updated plan was submitted to DEP; DEP advised to resubmit when a new disposal contract went into place in 2019; now that the contract is in place, the plan is being edited for resubmission.
- The plan is very prescriptive; MSW Consultants is working with the city to update chapters; also working with commercial haulers to get data
- Original goal was to get a draft done and sent to the DEP in January; February is more likely
- Want to incorporate information from various city departments: ZWL, Parks, Water, Prisons, Airport
- Will get SWRAC a draft of the plan for review and comment
- This version is considered a 'non-substantive update' which does not require a public hearing
- A 'substantive update' would be triggered if the city removed something from the plan (like elimination of curbside pick-ups) but not for adding to the plan (like plastic bag ban or organic curbside pick-ups)
- The 10yr cycle for this plan will be for 2019-2028

### Keep Philadelphia Beautiful Update

- No one present to give update.

### Informational Items, Open Discussion, and Announcements

- Discussion about the current state of the recycling markets
  - Markets are generally low and not good at the moment
  - New investments are underway for paper, but it could be several years before capacity comes online; new mills are being designed to handle more contamination
  - Value of recycling is about \$35-45 per ton today, which is about \$100 per ton lower than what it was a few years ago
  - The city is currently paying about \$106 per ton now, for clean material, higher for more contaminated loads; these rates include the processing fee;
  - \$100 per ton is about the entry point for recycling contracts right now; some contracts are as high as \$150 or \$200 per ton.
- Question to the group about any comments on the recent Inquirer article about Streets Dept accidents and also about workers comp issues; no one had additional comments or information to provide.
- Update requested on RNG Energy Solutions by Andy Shea
  - Proposing an anaerobic food waste processing facility on the PES refinery property that is expected to process 1100 tons per day, 5-6 days per week; plus 300 tons per day of fats, oils and grease
  - PES refinery site is going through bankruptcy hearings tomorrow
  - Point Breeze Renewables filed a lease with the city in 2017
  - Starting to introduce permits to the city; there will be changes to the stormwater plan: the water will be processed until purified then returned to the Schuylkill River
  - Will be sending in individual permits for resource recovery, taking food waste and turning it into biogas and water
  - Will keep SWRAC apprised about public hearing
  - Expect permitting process to take another 12 months
  - Site would be listed as a facility in a future MSW Plan
- Update requested on zero-waste Marathon event this weekend by Daniel Lawson
  - Goal is to get over 90% diversion; have been just shy of 90% in the past
  - Retriever is working to collect the clothes; the Prisons will be washing the clothes
  - Philabundance will be taking all uneaten foods
  - Braskem and Hillcrest will be taking the heat blankets and coroplast for recycling

Called to close by F. Gookin at 4:30pm

**Next Meeting 01/16/20**