

MEETING MINUTES: City of Philadelphia Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee (SWRAC)

DATE: April 28th, 2016

ATTENDEES:

SWRAC Members

Michelle Feldman, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful (co-chair)
Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery (co-chair)
Bob Anderson, ReCommunity Recycling
Jack Embick, Environmental Law
Sal Iadonisi, U.S. Recycling
Paul Kohl, Philadelphia Water Department
Scott McGrath, Director of Environmental Services, Streets Dept.
Charles Raudenbush, Waste Management
Andrew Sharp, Office of Sustainability
Vivian Van Story, Community Land Trust Corp.

Others Present

Nic Esposito, Parks and Recreation

City Staff/Consultants

Marisa Lau, Streets Dept./Recycling Office
Bianca Reid, Streets Dept./Sanitation
Jim Osborn, ARI
Allison Sands, Recycling Office/Recyclebank
Erin Cartwright, Recycling Office/Recyclebank

Call to order/introductions:

The meeting was called to order by SWRAC co-chairs Michelle Feldman and Fern Gookin at approximately 3:10 p.m.

Minutes:

Meeting minutes from the February SWRAC meeting were approved by voice vote.

Organics Subcommittee Report (Paul Kohl):

- Adam Hendricks from PWD presented research into various pre-treatment technologies for food waste, focusing on seven options currently marketed in the U.S. A major finding is that the technology used should match the feedstock. Feedstocks with a higher level of contamination require advance processing, and thus a multi-step process would be needed such as those made by BTA and GE. A report will be given to the consultants for the Organics Feasibility Study.

- The discussion following this presentation focused on how to create the market in Philadelphia in order to attract one of these technologies to build a facility in the city. Drivers could be economic (either energy generated or end compost product) or legislative (an example being the food waste landfill ban currently before the NJ legislature). PWD distributed a map with a 35 mile radius from both of our plants with digesters to show the amount of NJ that would be covered if PWD accepted food waste.
- Paul Kohl then led a discussion on the engineering principles behind food waste co-digestion in anaerobic digesters. The main takeaway was that a large portion of the material would be destructed throughout the process due to the high water and volatile solids content of food waste, leaving only a small amount of material at the end of the process.
- The closing discussion centered on the organics feasibility study. It was decided that a list of questions for the consultant to ask would be generated by the organics subcommittee and then passed onto the consultants. The goal would be to help guide them to a better understanding of the potential market for food waste recycling.

Solid Waste Management Plan Update (Jim Osborn):

- The Department received word from PA DEP that the plan must be submitted this summer. The delay may be causing an unintended ripple effect at DEP on other timelines for decision-making. According to the new timeline, the draft plan will be sent to the SWRAC in mid-May. DEP will receive a courtesy copy at the same time. Comments from the SWRAC will be incorporated into the plan before it is released for a 90-day comment period.
- Mr. McGrath indicated that the goals technically only have to demonstrate how the City would meet or exceed the state 35% goal. The plan will indicate that the City will continue to maintain its current 45% to 50% rate and create a long term strategy for a zero waste goal. The goals subcommittee will be referenced as a part of this process which would also integrate the Organics Feasibility Study and organics subcommittee. This would be done as a Minor Plan Revision. Mr. Kohl asked if a more formal statement could be included in the plan. McGrath said that the Department will work with SWRAC on this issue.
- Ms. Van Story asked for more information about trash and recycling violations at multi-family properties. Mr. McGrath described this as an adjudication matter outside of the Department's purview. Fines are structured so that they increase over time if not paid. Mr. Kohl added that the Kenney administration is emphasizing litter prevention. Keep Philadelphia Beautiful and other organizations can connect citizens to resources to help address problems in their neighborhoods.

SWRAC: Potential focus areas moving forward (S. McGrath / M. Feldman / F. Gookin):

- The committee discussed forming new subcommittees to focus on recycling ordinances and regulations. Updates to the ordinances are needed so that the City can regulate and keep track of private haulers through business licensing. These options are just some potential focus areas for SWRAC post-sustainability management plan. The committee may want to revisit notes from the visioning sessions for other ideas.
- Ms. Van Story asked whether changes to the regulations along with increasing or adopting different strategies for enforcement could be used to address litter and dumping. Ms. Feldman described in more detail the resources offered by her organization, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, to help citizens take practical measures toward improving the physical and visual aspects of neighborhood environments.
- The Department will set up the next meeting date for the goals subcommittee in May.

Informational Items and Announcements (S. McGrath / M. Feldman / F. Gookin):

- *Events* – Spring and summer household hazardous waste drop-off events will be held on 05/14, 06/11, and 07/14. The first event of the year was held on 04/23.
- *Recycling Director search* – The job announcement to replace Phil Bresee has been posted on job boards for recycling professionals in the Mid-Atlantic region. Mr. Embick asked if any of the applicants from the previous hiring process should be contacted, and if the Department would invite SWRAC members to be part of an application evaluation committee; Mr. McGrath will check on what the Department's plans are.
- *Philly Spring Clean-up* – The Philly Spring Clean-up had over 900 projects this year, a new record. The kick-off event was held in Strawberry Mansion, and included a basketball game with Mayor Kenney and Council President Darrell Clarke. The Department helped clean up the neighborhood for the event, supplementing residents' outstanding efforts throughout the year; the Department is now taking requests for assistance with other community-led clean-ups. Planning for next year's event will address the growing popularity of greening projects, the increased amount of supplies distributed to participants, and adding more corporate sponsorships.
- *LED project* – Mr. McGrath reported that the Sanitation Division has been working with the Sustainability Office which funded new LED lighting for two Fleet Shop Areas in Sanitation buildings as well as a Yard lighting project at State Road and Ashburner Street. The Sustainability Office is also funding two new LED Yard projects in the coming year. Their

lighting design consultant has been working closely with the Sanitation Engineers and Mechanics who are installing the new lighting.

In response to questions from the committee about truck purchases and snow removal, there are 120 trash trucks and 70 recycling trucks out on any given day; recycling is picked up first. Drivers go through training for snow removal operations, but may not be able to place snow with precision depending on the type of vehicle being used.

- *Residential Multi-Family Recycling project* – Ms. Sands gave an update on the project, which kicked off in March. Community Marketing Concepts completed canvassing of the first two pilot areas out of six total, and are now working in the third. SWEEP has been issuing warnings in these two areas, and will start ticketing in May. Community groups in these areas have also received presentations from the Recycling Office.
- *Prison systems composting program* – Ms. Gookin reported that Philadelphia Prisons System received funding from the Office of Sustainability to expand their composting program.
- *GreenFutures update* – Philadelphia School District is finalizing the release date of their sustainability plan. They will analyze the results of their recycling pilot over the summer and expand recycling to all district schools in the fall. The district has released a bid for a waste hauler.
- *Democratic National Convention* — Public works projects for the DNC in July include the installation of new models of Big Bellies and new wrappings on containers in targeted areas. PennDOT was responsible for paving the streets around City Hall this spring.
- *Sustainability Roundtables* –Mr. Sharp announced that the Office of Sustainability is holding a series of issue roundtables and community meetings as part of its outreach to update Greenworks, Philadelphia’s sustainability framework.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 pm.