

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

DATE: August 27, 2015

LOCATION: City of Philadelphia Municipal Services Building

ATTENDEES:

SWRAC Members Present

Bob Anderson, ReCommunity Recycling
Phil Bresee, Streets Department/Recycling Office
Jack Embick, Environmental Law
Michelle Feldman, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful
Paul Kohl, Philadelphia Water Department
Chuck Raudenbush, Waste Management
Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery
Michael Roles, Clean Water Action
Sal Iadonisi, U.S. Recycling
Maurice M. Sampson II, Niche Recycling
Vivian Van Story, Community Land Trust Corp.

Others Present

Andrew Sharp, Office of Sustainability
Laura Cassidy, Philadelphia Prison System
Mike Giuranna, US EPA Region III
Tamika Davis, Philadelphia International Airport
Sara King, University of Pennsylvania

Streets Dept. Staff/Consultants

Scott McGrath, Director of Environmental Services, Streets Dept.
Maria Vamvakidou, Streets Dept.
Nadira Kholb, Streets Dept/Recycling Office
Jim Osborn, Alternative Resources, Inc.
Jason Rossano, LevLane Advertising
Allison Sands, Recyclebank/Recycling Office

Call to order/introductions:

The meeting was called to order by the co-chairs at approximately 3:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from July 23rd were approved unanimously via voice vote.

Organics Subcommittee Report:

Paul Kohl reported on behalf of the organics subcommittee, which met on August 25th. The subcommittee discussed a possible framework for establishing goals and metrics related to organics recovery, and rolling them up into the SW Plan. There was discussion as well on how the City's organics plan may relate to any state-wide goals for recovering organics. Bresee commented that DEP

has not articulated a clear vision on how to best capture and recover organics, and that the feasibility study may help guide state policy.

The subcommittee also voted to support Council Bill No. 150610 (O'Brien), which would require that in-sink food disposers be required as part of issuance of building permits for new residential construction. Matt Braden from Councilman O'Brien's office said that a hearing date for this bill has been tentatively set for October 7th.

Update on Solid Waste Management Plan Schedule:

Jim Osborn of ARI presented the revised SW plan schedule. The new schedule envisions that a draft of the plan will be ready for PA DEP review in November, with January through March reserved for public participation. City Council will review the plan in May and June under the revised schedule.

Staff commented that DEP has been provided with draft chapters throughout the process, and so far has not expressed concern with the plan's progress.

Review of July 23rd Chapter 5 Discussion:

SWRAC members received LevLane's notes from the July 23rd facilitated discussion. Mr. Osborn also reported that he and his firm are finalizing the reorganization of chapter five of the plan, and incorporating SWRAC and stakeholder input from the July SWRAC meeting.

Phil Bresee shared that SWRAC's July 23rd recommendations were very similar to those expressed by stakeholders as part of the Greenworks Plan, Goal #7 discussion convened by the Office of Sustainability in June (many of the participants at this workshop are also SWRAC members).

Bresee indicated too that now that various policy and programmatic goals have been identified, SWRAC has to consider strategic goals or guiding principles.

Maurice Sampson raised the issue of "Zero Waste" and said that many jurisdictions around the U.S. have adopted Zero Waste goals. He further shared that the City's Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC) has recommended that the City adopt a Zero-Waste goal.

Bresee acknowledged that Zero Waste goals have become more conventional, and that most of the top 10 largest cities in the U.S. have adopted them. He followed though that interpretation of what constitutes Zero Waste varies widely. For example, some jurisdictions don't consider Waste to Energy (WTE) as part of a zero-waste strategy. Other jurisdictions consider "Zero Landfill" to be one and the same with Zero-Waste. Bresee also explained that opinions differ on whether alternative technologies, similar to those presented by Jim Osborn at the May meeting, can be part of a true zero waste strategy.

There was also discussion on the practicality of a zero waste goal, and whether it would be achievable or aspirational. Bresee noted that many of the zero waste plans are actually designed to meet 90 percent reductions. He also pointed out that the rapid changes to our solid waste stream (i.e. less packaging, paper, etc.) make long-term goal setting even more difficult. Finally, he indicated that much of the work involved in creating zero-waste policy needs to be done "upstream", or before materials even become wastes, and ideally should be linked with statewide policies.

Bresee said that he would provide a summary of solid waste management and recycling goals from the top-10 U.S. cities (in terms of population) as well as some other selected jurisdictions at the next SWRAC meeting.

Discussion of Solid Waste Plan Public Forum:

Phil Bresee reported to SWRAC that based on further consideration, and discussion with department leadership, holding a special public forum(s) on solid waste issues and on the plan during the fall was not feasible due to limited resources and staffing. SWRAC co-chairs Michelle Feldman and Fern Gookin suggested holding extended and specific-issue oriented SWRAC meetings in lieu of a city-wide forum. Committee members agreed to regroup and discuss this issue further when the draft plan is closer to completion.

Recycling Ordinance Discussion:

This discussion was tabled.

SWRAC September Meeting:

The committee agreed unanimously to reschedule the September meeting because of the Papal visit. The meeting will be held on September 17th.

Other Announcements:

Sara King from UPenn said that due to a program change, they have a number of 95 gallon roll-out carts that they would be interested in making available or donating.

Adjournment and Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m. The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 17th at 3 p.m.