

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

DATE: January 18, 2017

ATTENDEES:

SWRAC Members

Michelle Feldman, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful (co-chair)

Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery (co-chair)

Paul Kohl, Water Dept.

Sal Iadonisi, U.S. Recycling

Scott McGrath, Streets Dept.

Charles Raudenbush, Waste Management

Maurice Sampson, Clean Water Action

Vivian Van Story, Community Land Trust

Others Present

Amy Cornelius, Citizen

Sara King, U Penn

City Staff/Consultants

Everett Burgess, Recycling Office/Recyclebank

Erin Cartwright, Recycling Office/Recyclebank

Marisa Lau, Streets Dept./Recycling Office

Tamika Davis, Philadelphia International Airport

Call to order/introductions:

The meeting was called to order by SWRAC co-chairs Fern Gookin and Michelle Feldman at approximately 3:35 p.m.

Minutes:

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

Zero Waste and Litter Initiative (Deputy Commissioner C. Williams):

Deputy Williams gave a presentation originally prepared for the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet describing how the City can achieve zero waste by 2035. The presentation summarized Streets Dept. policies and programs that have significantly reduced the amount of waste generated over the last decade, and increased diversion of organics and other materials for recycling. Additional programs that reduce and divert waste in Philadelphia were also outlined.

Questions from SWRAC

- How is the City defining zero waste?
- It could be confusing that recycling tonnages have stayed about the same in recent years (due to lightweighting and other changes to the stream), while the diversion rate has increased. Needs additional explanation?
- Curbside recycling is a problem around Temple – from sparse participation, to incorrect set-outs, to late night collections by private haulers. Can the Cabinet engage stakeholders in this area to address these issues?

Comments from SWRAC

- Having a zero waste goal along with programmatic incentives like a competition should be effective in motivating businesses to reduce waste.
- Waste hauling industry and their customer base need to be brought into planning efforts; downstream vendors for recyclables also need to be engaged.
- Home composting should have a place in any organics recycling strategy used.
- Some of the technical terms in the presentation may not be familiar to audiences (for example, “OCC” instead of “cardboard”) and graphics could be improved for projection purposes.
- Philadelphia Housing Authority should be part of the Cabinet, if it isn’t already.

Organics Subcommittee Report (P. Kohl):

This month’s subcommittee meeting began with an update that PWD is working to upgrade its food waste co-digestion feasibility study with new information and expand analysis to both plants (currently only assesses the Southwest plant). Nic Esposito (Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet Director) then discussed a new executive order by Mayor Kenney creating a cabinet that will develop an action plan for waste and litter reduction. The Mayor has also set a zero waste goal by 2035 for the City. The cabinet, which consists of 16 members from various City agencies, nonprofits, and the private sector, will deliver the action plan in 6 months. The subcommittees that have been established so far are: Data, Communications, Waste Reduction, and Enforcement and Behavioral Science. SWRAC and its subcommittees can support the work of the Cabinet, specifically through ongoing efforts to define zero waste in Philadelphia. Next, Scott McGrath gave an update on the organics feasibility study. Streets is slightly reworking the scope of the study in order to take a closer look at market availability for organics processing and research policy recommendations. The Streets consultant will attend next month’s subcommittee meeting to give a more thorough update. The meeting wrapped up with a legislative update on NJ’s flawed food waste recycling bill, and a discussion about inviting DEP to present on permitting issues for composting facilities.

Solid Waste Plan Update (M. Lau/ S. McGrath):

ARI and PRO will meet next week to go over the revised draft of the plan that incorporates public and SWRAC comments receive. They will also review the draft response document to be included in the plan appendix.

Informational Items and Announcements:

- *Green Schools Update & Staffing update* –Ms. Cartwright announced that two Philadelphia schools have already met their goals, although the donation period has just begun. Schools’ progress can be tracked on the program page on Recyclebank’s website. She also introduced the new Community Outreach Coordinator, Everett Burgess. He began working with Recyclebank as a customer service representative, and is from Philadelphia.
- *School presentations* – Ms. Feldman gave an update on the next round of Green Futures presentations. Schools with newly received recycling dumpsters are being encouraged by the outreach team to schedule recycling workshops. The School District, along with KPB and PRO, also participated in the Girard College Day of Service last month. Partners held two workshops on building successful recycling programs and volunteers made recycling signage for use in the schools.
- *RAIR news* – Ms. Gookin announced that the opening reception for a new exhibition at The Galleries at Moore College of Art & Design will take place on January 27. *RAIR: Filthy Rich – Projects made possible by the waste stream* is a survey of residencies, special projects and performances challenging our perceptions of “trash” on view through March 11.
- *Other Streets announcements* – PRO will circulate the results of leaf recycling and holiday recycling, and the dates of the Block Captain Rally and Philly Spring Clean by email following the meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 pm.