

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

**DATE:** October 27, 2016

**ATTENDEES:**

SWRAC Members

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

Others Present

Laura Cassidy, Philadelphia Prisons System  
Tamika Davis, Philadelphia International Airport  
Amy Cornelius, Citizen

City Staff/Consultants

Erin Cartwright, Recycling Office/Recyclebank  
Marisa Lau, Streets Dept./Recycling Office

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**Call to order/introductions:**

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

**Minutes:**

Meeting minutes from the September SWRAC meeting were approved by voice vote (Embick move, Sharp 2<sup>nd</sup>).

**Goals Subcommittee Report (M. Lau):**

The subcommittee reviewed meetings notes and documents from the beginning of 2016 about developing a zero waste framework, and discussed how the framework would be integrated into the solid waste management plan. Much of the discussion focused on the impending release of the City's Greenworks plan as well as other upcoming City initiatives to address litter and waste reduction; the subcommittee will continue to work closely with partners like the Office of Sustainability moving forward. The discussion moved on to what data is needed to establish a zero waste framework in the Philadelphia context. Subsequently, the immediate

priorities for the subcommittee are defining "zero waste" for Philadelphia, and setting targets to measure our performance against. The date for the next subcommittee meeting will be set soon.

### **Organics Subcommittee Report (P. Kohl):**

Earlier this week, Mr. Kohl began the subcommittee meeting with a brief reminder about the purpose of these meetings: to help the city figure out what to do with food waste and other organic waste streams. Given the importance of this objective and the potential for us to effect change in the area of organics recycling, we should all take the work done by this group seriously.

Updates from Streets (S. McGrath), MDO (N. Esposito), and Water (A. Hendricks):

- Scott is meeting with the consultant for the food waste feasibility study following this meeting. The contracts have been conformed for this study, so there are no further administrative hurdles. Work completed to date includes inventory work and baseline market information gathering. Next steps include major market assessment and collection analysis. They will also look at opportunities available for the end product, to ensure that compost can be beneficially used. Parks & Rec (Marc) and Prisons (Laura) both commented that they have no problems moving the compost they produce; in fact they can't make enough to meet demand, which is promising.
  - Kendall asked if a GHG analysis for food waste processing would be conducted. Scott said it would likely not be part of the feasibility study, but they could look at that through other means.
- Paul commented that the consultant and the group should also think about market development. This is the area of organics recycling and diversion that needs to grow. Scott agreed but stressed that the City likely does not have the means to make a large capital investment. It is anticipated that capital investment would be made from the private side, which further demonstrates the need to focus on the commercial market, where such partnerships are cost effective. Apparently one local vendor stopped sending their waste to be composted because of cost issues.
  - A market resource would be a full service waste hauler, able to handle garbage, recycling and organics; we don't seem to have one in Philly. Subcommittee members noted that other cities have such full service vendors, and that after we help establish the market they will come.
  - Even though it is illegal to dispose of food waste in the garbage within Philadelphia it is still legal to take that separated food waste to a landfill. This makes food waste disposal banning critical.
- Nic is now working in the Managing Director's Office. He is focused on litter and waste issues, with an eye toward food waste.

- He is investigating how PPR manages their waste, including recycling, food waste and other waste streams, and spoke about PPR's strategies around composting.
- PPR produces significant amounts of food waste. He estimated that PPR recreation facilities generate approximately 100 tons/year of food waste. To get this estimate, he collected food waste from one Recreation facility for a time period. The food waste was of high quality due to the attention paid to this project, and ended up yielding about 40 pounds or 12.5 tons per year. Thus with 8 similarly-sized recreation centers, each with after school programs that distribute food, he estimates 100 tons a year of food waste.
- To add to this, PPR is the second largest distributor of food in the city by combining its after school and summer programs.
- He is looking for space for the City to conduct additional composting beyond the Fairmount Park facility. The primary issues are staffing and location. He has a potential location in mind, but would likely need to partner with an outside agency for collection and delivery.
- Adam reported that recent movement has taken place on the NJ food waste disposal bill (S-771). It has passed out of the first committee with the following amendments:
  - Changed the radius to a facility from 35 miles to 25 road miles.
  - Clarified that the facility must be within the state of NJ.
  - Changed the start date of the legislation from 2017 to 2019.
  - Added a municipal fee – facilities must pay \$0.50/ton to the municipality they operate in.
- Kendall commented that a bill that bans the disposal of food waste in landfills may be introduced to the New York State Assembly after the new year.
- The next Organic Subcommittee meeting will be December 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-10:00 AM. It will be held at PWD offices located at 1101 Market Street, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (Conference Room 3A).

**Sanitation Division Updates (S. McGrath):**

- PA DEP is now in possession of a copy of the draft plan; as the result of a misunderstanding, they were sent a copy after the public comment period had started.
- Sanitation anticipates that they will be able to bring the plan before City Council for a vote early next year.
- Aside from the helpful comments given by Ms. Cornelius at the last SWRAC meeting and her subsequent emails expanding on these, no other comments have been received. ARI is preparing a response document. Sanitation aims to finish revising the draft plan in December. The public comment period will end on December 14, 2016 (90 days after the second public notice).

- The department is pursuing a new option to fill the position of Recycling Coordinator. They hope to have news to share soon.

#### **Informational Items and Announcements:**

- *Greenworks* – Mr. Sharp will circulate information by email to SWRAC and interested parties about the Greenworks release event on November 2. An RSVP is required, although they are near capacity.
- *Leaf recycling program* – Mr. McGrath said leaf recycling will start on Nov. 7 with mechanical collections; Saturday drop-off events at 23 locations plus collections at the sanitation convenience centers will begin later in the month. Tonnages were up last year, and the same level of service will be provided this year. As the Department continues to catch up with truck replacements for trash and recycling, it is projected that it can look at purchasing leaf trucks in 2-3 years.
- *Total Recycle visit* – Ms. Lau reported that the Philadelphia Recycling Office took a tour of the new J.P. Mascaro MRF in Birdsboro, PA. They are able to provide tours (with a presentation and video beforehand), which may be of interest to the Philadelphia School District, as schools are now sending recycling to this facility. The facility is 75,000 square feet and entirely new. They can process 10k tons per month and currently are doing 5k. She remarked on the noticeable difference in the recycling stream, in which newspaper seemed far more prevalent than in Philadelphia. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Raudenbush suggested that this was because suburban areas generate less plastic and glass (containers) than urban areas.
- *America Recycles Day* – Recyclebank, KPB, and Streets are filming a new recycling PSA in November. Stay tuned!
- *Green Futures Presentations/PD days*
  - Ms. Feldman reported that Keep Philadelphia Beautiful reached approximately 1800 students through 50 separate presentations in 2016.
  - School District GreenFutures presentations will likely resume early next year. The District is determining now which schools will be included in the next wave of facilities receiving recycling dumpsters and bins – presentations will be targeted to students at those particular schools.
  - In response to feedback received from in-classroom teachers, the School District and Keep Philadelphia Beautiful are launching a series of three professional development trainings to assist educators in guiding their students from workshop to environmental action. The first PD day will take place on

11/3 at KPB's offices, and will use the national Eco Schools model to break down how to build a successful school green team.

- *KAB Recycling Bin Grant* – Ms. Feldman reported that the public space recycling bins received through a national Keep America Beautiful grant program have been delivered and will be installed next month. PPR is meeting internally to discuss how they would like to move forward with educational programming associated with the new bins
- *Next meeting* – It was decided to hold a combined Nov/Dec meeting by the group. The final meeting of the year was scheduled for Dec 8<sup>th</sup> at the time, but was subsequently changed to Dec 6<sup>th</sup> due to a scheduling conflict.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:50 pm.

DRAFT