

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

DATE: March 23, 2017

ATTENDEES:

SWRAC Members

Michelle Feldman, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful (co-chair)
Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery (co-chair)
Robert Anderson, ReCommunity
Paul Kohl, Water Dept.
Denis Murphy, Commerce Dept.
Scott McGrath, Streets Dept.
Charles Raudenbush, Waste Management
Jack Embick, Environmental Law
Maurice Sampson, Clean Water Action
Vivian Van Story, Community Land Trust
Dominic McGraw, Office of Sustainability

Others Present

Sara King, U Penn
Kathleen Grady, Temple
Kate Bowdies, Citizen
James Gill, Citizen

City Staff/Consultants

Denise Diorio McVeigh, Recycling Office/Recyclebank
Everett Burgess, Recycling Office/Recyclebank
Erin Cartwright, Recycling Office/Recyclebank
Marisa Lau, Streets Dept./Recycling Office
Jason Rossano, LevLane
Eric Spector, LevLane
Carlton Williams, Streets Dept.
Faruq Scott, Streets Dept.
Haley Jordan, MDO
Nic Esposito, MDO
LeAnne Harvey, Office of Sustainability
Keith Warren, Streets Dept.
Laura Cassidy, Prisons
Tamika Davis, PHL

Call to order/introductions:

The meeting was called to order by SWRAC co-chairs Fern Gookin and Michelle Feldman at approximately 3:05 p.m.

February Meeting Minutes:

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

Informational Items and Announcements:

- *Solid Waste plan (M.Lau)* – Solid waste plan will be sent to DEP this week.
- *Upcoming Streets Department Events (M. Lau and M. Feldman)* - The Mayor's Kick-off event at Hunting Park was held on 3/8, and the PMBC Block Captain Rally will be on 3/25. The 10th annual Spring Cleanup will take place on 4/8. Household hazardous waste events also start in April.
- *Recyclebank Green Schools results (E.Burgess)* – 2017 was the biggest year yet for the Green Schools program. 17 of the Philadelphia school projects were fully funded, and all were funded over 85%. 22 schools will receive a combined total of \$46,934, a record for one year. Details about the check ceremonies coming soon.
- *KPB update (M.Feldman)* – KPB's 2016 annual report has been released, and two interns have recently joined the team to support communications and social media.

Organics Subcommittee Report (P. Kohl):

March meeting was cancelled due to snow.

Zero Waste Partnership presentations

After an introduction from Commissioner Williams, Eric Spector of LevLane gave a presentation on the Zero Waste Partnership Program under development by the Streets Dept. The three program tracks (for business and industry, community-based organizations (CBOs), and residents) will incentivize waste reduction behaviors and promote methods of diversion. New partnerships, grants, and education and engagement (offered by Recyclebank) will be at the core of this program. LevLane is integrating a zero waste message into the upcoming rally and cleanup, and will make messaging and branding consistent across all platforms, programs, and events. The new tagline, "Zero starts with one," was chosen in part for the flexibility it offered; new ads are planned for digital, transit, radio and social media. Mr. Spector showed a preview of the new Litter Index and website. The website will have information on every block in the city and connect residents to block-specific resources in order to encourage people to take action.

Questions:

- Can the public edit the Litter Index website? [They will not be able to edit the information when the website goes live; perhaps in a future iteration.]

- Are hospitals considered eligible for the partnership program? If not, why not? [Hospitals, universities, and similar large institutions can become partners. Although the program categories are still being defined, the goal is to be inclusive.]

Comments:

- Different types of diversion should be prioritized; for example, organizations like Philabundance that do food recovery serve a more important need than composting. More emphasis on waste minimization is needed to get to zero waste.
- Consider making recycling contamination one of the metrics to measure the success of outreach efforts.
- More explanation is needed of what the business/industry category includes; different commercial sectors have very different waste streams and will need a tailored approach in outreach and education.
- Although the City aims to reach zero waste by 2035, it has to become litter-free much sooner than that.
- Zero waste should make the connection between cleaning up our neighborhoods and promoting safe and healthy environments; there is clear overlap with Vision Zero here.

Next, Denise Diorio- McVeigh of Recyclebank presented a new strategy to support Philadelphia’s zero waste goal. Recyclebank sees residents as the building blocks of this initiative, being both members of the Philadelphia workforce and community organizations. Keeping people engaged and promoting education (by teaching what zero waste is and steps to get closer to zero, and why it’s important) will remain the program focus, with rewards used to reinforce and incentivize zero waste practices. Building on this core program, customized features will include a new digital user experience for Philadelphia members with educational content focused on localized zero waste information.

Questions:

- Could “Resident” category be changed to “Individual” to include the 200,000 daily commuters to Philadelphia?
- Would it be possible to award points to residents for not having plastic bags in their recycling? Also include good behaviors like bringing reusable bags to shopping.

Comments:

- Presentations are using the terms “corporate/commercial/business” interchangeably; specify what each terms means other than “not community” and be consistent in how groups are referred to. The commercial sector is varied; for example, large and small businesses will need to be approached differently.

Group discussions and reports

The SWRAC formed two work groups for the remainder of the meeting to discuss the Zero Waste Partnership program and a Zero Waste definition and diversion framework.

The Partnership group discussed:

- Is each CBO grant cycle themed? Potential themes could first be based on barriers to litter prevention and recycling participation that have been identified by communities.
- Award criteria and reporting requirements
- Funding tiers and grant sizes
- Organizational partners to help facilitate grant applications, project implementation, and reporting

The Definition and Framework group discussed:

- How should we be defining zero waste? Is it an aspirational goal? Why can't zero actually mean zero? We can debate which policies should be adopted in order to achieve zero waste, but the definition may not be debatable.
- We are unable to anticipate what new technologies will develop over the next decades to aid in reaching zero waste, making long-term goal setting more difficult.
- Independent haulers are already incentivized to minimize waste and maximize recycling; how can you build on this?
- Suggestions for which specialized processors to contact for key data about the Philadelphia waste stream.
- A draft framework prepared by the Recycling Office (zero waste matrix) showing materials that will be counted toward the City's diversion rate; the matrix includes both processes and materials. Matrix categories need to be defined.

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