

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

DATE: April 27, 2017

ATTENDEES:

SWRAC Members

Michelle Feldman, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful (co-chair)

Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery (co-chair)

Robert Anderson, Curb My Clutter

Paul Kohl, Water Dept.

Charles Raudenbush, Waste Management

Jack Embick, Environmental Law

Vivian Van Story, Community Land Trust

Dominic McGraw, Office of Sustainability

Others Present

Kate Bowdies, Philabundance

Amy Cornelius, Citizen

City Staff/Consultants

Erin Cartwright, Recycling Office/Recyclebank

Marisa Lau, Streets Dept./Recycling Office

Eric Spector, LevLane

Haley Jordan, MDO

Nic Esposito, MDO

LeAnne Harvey, Office of Sustainability

Laura Cassidy, Prisons

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.

March Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes from the March SWRAC meeting were approved by voice vote (Embick move, Kohl 2nd).

Informational Items and Announcements:

- M.Lau sent the revised draft of the solid waste plan to DEP in early April; they have 30 days to provide comments.
- The 10th Philly Spring Cleanup took place on 4/8. The Streets Dept. had 20,000+ volunteers and 800+ registered projects. 650,000 lbs of trash and 10,000 lbs of recycling were collected. An additional 200,000 lbs of yard waste for recycling were

collected as well, and community drop-offs for spring yard waste were also organized by the Department on Sat 4/22. For context, PRO will provide tonnages for past Spring Cleanups to the SWRAC.

- M. Feldman announced that a sign-up sheet with potential dates to volunteer for the Phillies Red Goes Green program is being circulated; she will submit an application for the SWRAC to volunteer at a game this season.
- C. Raudenbush shared that there is a bill (SB 646) before the State Senate to reauthorize the Act 101 recycling fee and remove the sunset date. It has bipartisan sponsorship.
- N. Esposito added that a bill prohibiting municipalities from instituting plastic bag bans (HB 1071) has been introduced in the state legislature.
- R. Anderson gave his final update from ReCommunity. The City was paid for its recyclables in April, but a recent drop in recovered fiber prices means that this will only be temporary.
- M. Feldman reported that:
 - KPB school partnership presentations are wrapping up for the year (2,000+ students received workshops)
 - A 3rd round of KPB microgrants will focus on cigarette litter (grantees will be required to recycle these through Terracycle)
 - KPB, United Blue, and the Water Dept. will hold a cleanup at Penn Treaty Park during Love Your Park week. Litter collected will become part of an art project on display at an upcoming exhibition at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. Exhibition opening is on June 17; more details to come.

Organics Subcommittee Report (P. Kohl):

The subcommittee received several project updates:

- *Prisons* - Construction on the expansion to the composting facility is moving forward, which will double the number of existing bays for composting. The expansion will allow Prisons to compost food waste from all of its facilities.
- *Parks* - Parks has submitted paperwork to PADEP to become a captive facility; this would allow Parks to compost food waste from any city facility along with yard waste. They are currently waiting for a letter of notification. The City is also looking for satellite locations for additional composting facilities and a space to conduct a pilot program that may result in an acceptable permitting process for other composting facilities.
- *MDO* - The Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet data intern, Haley Jordan, described a new waste audit program under development for municipal and commercial buildings. She has been developing new digital tools for the waste audit, which will help to track the city-wide waste diversion rate.

Other updates came from Streets, the EPA regional office, and PWD:

- The solid waste plan has been submitted to PADEP for comments;
- The EPA has given out several municipal grants recently to expand composting programs, or allow yard waste facilities to begin composting food waste;
- The PWD Energy team is working on an RFI for food waste co-digestion; and
- Lastly, the subcommittee heard about ongoing efforts to legislate a ban on organic waste in landfills in NY and MD. Streets is now working to revise City regulations banning food waste from dumpsters.

Group discussions and reports

The SWRAC formed two working groups for the remainder of the meeting to further develop the Zero Waste Partnership program, and to discuss how to track diversion for zero waste. Reports were given at the end of the meeting.

The Partnership group focused on the business membership tier. The main questions posed were: (1) what incentives would be offered to businesses who participate? (2) what actions would businesses have to undertake to earn points towards receiving those incentives?

A number of possible incentives were discussed, including tax credits or discounts on utility bills. Actions for businesses to take to earn points towards being a Zero Waste Partner could include completing a commercial recycling plan and waste audit, eliminating use of single-use disposables such as plastic bags, or organizing regular corridor block cleanups and maintaining street plantings. More thought is necessary to develop a verification process for self-reported actions and activities.

The Diversion Rate group reviewed an updated zero waste matrix that will be used to track City-wide diversion, and the zero waste definition, including policy guidelines. Their feedback will be incorporated into the documents by the next meeting. Key comments received were:

- Hazardous materials from C&D should not be included in the diversion rate. However, these - and similar categories like medical waste - should be tracked and included in City disposal figures.
- For regulated-disposal materials, try to avoid having generators report twice. Can these tonnages be sourced from other databases?
- Philabundance will send write-up of how they track food recovery and waste in their organization.
- Track mail-in recycling programs like Terracycle.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:40 pm.