

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

**DATE:** August 25, 2016

**ATTENDEES:**

SWRAC Members

Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery (co-chair)  
Bob Anderson, ReCommunity Recycling  
Scott McGrath, Director of Environmental Services, Streets Dept.  
Emily G. Hill, Philadelphia Water Department  
Sal Iadonisi, U.S. Recycling  
Paul Kohl, Philadelphia Water Department  
Denis Murphy, Commerce Department  
Charles Raudenbush, Waste Management  
Maurice Sampson, Niche Recycling  
Vivian Van Story, Community Land Trust Corp.

Others Present

Laura Cassidy, Philadelphia Prisons System  
Nicholas Esposito, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

City Staff/Consultants

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

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**Call to order/introductions:**

The meeting was called to order by SWRAC co-chair Fern Gookin at approximately 3:15 p.m.

**Minutes:**

Meeting minutes from the June SWRAC meeting were approved by voice vote (Raudenbush move, Anderson 2<sup>nd</sup>).

**Organics Subcommittee Report (Paul Kohl):**

- Mr. McGrath gave an update to the subcommittee. He distributed the 6-month report on the Organics Feasibility Study prepared for DEP, showing that the consultants are now working on a marketplace assessment (task 2).
- Consultants for this study and the Act 101 plan will be back under contract soon. As part of those new contracts, the consultants will also initiate a waste characterization study of the residential stream, and a small, focused study with a waste sort of one commercial sector.

McGrath suggested the hotel sector and asked for additional suggestions. Streets has received preliminary approval from PA DEP to apply for grants to support these studies.

- Regarding the regulatory environment, the re-authorization of the \$2/ton fee on waste disposal may represent an opportunity to seek changes to the PA waste disposal planning process.
- With the help of the SWRAC, Streets will work on revising several regulations that relate to the prevention of food waste disposal.
- Next, Mr. Kohl reported to the subcommittee that he had met with PWD's commissioner (D. McCarty) to discuss PWD digesting food waste. The meeting was positive but no immediate decisions were made.
- PWD's operations division still needs to confirm the initial capacity assessment to determine how much food waste the department could take and how to phase it in.
- PWD also has an RFI in internal review for the pre-processing of food waste. PWD has made it clear that unlike East Bay MUD, it is not interested in receiving waste streams directly. The concept of concession contracting was discussed. Streets used this method to move forward with Big Belly advertising.
- Cost of food waste disposal, landfill tipping fees, composting and other processing information was obtained by consultant as they conducted the regional survey. This information will be shared with PWD. At the meeting it was presented that the fees varied widely and even the basis of the cost was not uniform. Some fees based on volume (cubic yards), some on weight (tons) and some on an algorithm of frequency of pick up.
- Regarding the possible selection of a targeted first market, the committee suggested two things.
- Any food handling (processing) facility will have 20% to 40% of its process stream as a waste stream. This is a big market.
- Specifically, grocery stores are a big and high quality market, and should be pursued first. The targeting of such a high quality stream is in the interest of the whole organic recycling industry. Even though this supply would make excellent soil via composting, the overall capacity to process food waste is currently small enough that any improvement in the "receiving" market would increase the development of collection market. This would lead to more competition.
- Emily Hill from PWD briefly introduced PWD's Utility Wide Strategic Energy Plan to the subcommittee. This plan sets goals for greenhouse gas reductions and renewable energy generation. In order to meet these goals, PWD would need to produce more biogas, which will require additional high strength wastes (ideally organics) to be processed by PWD.

#### **Update on Goals Subcommittee and Solid Waste Plan (Scott McGrath):**

- Streets has prepared a public notice. The draft plan for public comment will be available at five libraries and at philadelphiastreet.com during the 90-day public comment period

starting in early September; the public will be invited to comment on the plan at the SWRAC meeting on Sept 22.

- Mr. Anderson suggested that a regional list of recycling facilities be added to the plan.
- The framework for Greenworks has taken shape, which will help guide the formulation of a zero waste strategy by the Goals subcommittee. PRO will contact subcommittee members about meeting in September. Feedback received during the public comment period can be used by the SWRAC to develop goals and targets for the plan.
- SWRAC can convene a new subcommittee to help rewrite related regulations and ordinances.
  - Ordinances address a range of issues that are all important to a sustainable future and enhanced quality of life in Philadelphia; these will need to be worked on simultaneously for the most part.

#### **Recycled Artist in Residency presentation (Fern Gookin):**

- Presentation included an overview of RAIR (Recycled Artist in Residency), which is a non-profit housed within Revolution Recovery. RAIR is an art and industry collaboration that interrupts the waste stream to promote and support sustainable practices in the worlds of art and design.
- Reviewed residency projects, the on-site series “RAIR: Live at the Dump,” design/fabrication projects, and educational programs. More information can be found at [www.rairphilly.org](http://www.rairphilly.org).
- Upcoming events include the annual fundraiser and silent auction, the “Trash Bash,” on November 16, 2016 from 6-10pm, and an exhibition at Moore College of Art and Design from January through March 2017.
- This presentation will be made available on the SWRAC section of the Streets website.

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

- *Recycling Coordinator Search* – Mr. McGrath reported that the Deputy Commissioner will provide an update when he returns from vacation.
- *Greenworks Update* – Mr. Sharp sends his apologies for not being able to attend. Instead, meeting attendees shared recent announcements made about the new sustainability plan due later this year. Key points are:
  - The plan will be framed around 8 visions (one example being “All Philadelphians will waste less and keep our neighborhoods clean”) that will allow for the identification of specific goals/targets, as well as long-range planning objectives. These visions are based on feedback received from stakeholders about critical issues for a sustainable future in Philadelphia.
  - This framework will help engage a wide variety of stakeholders around Greenworks and new sustainability initiatives that result.

- Monitoring and evaluation will include robust data collection that can be shared with stakeholders to help inform their programs and operations, and help them to design data-driven interventions.
- Mr. McGrath also reported that he met with Christine Knapp and the Managing Director's Office. A broader set of waste and sustainability metrics will be introduced in the upcoming plan, expanding beyond the landfill diversion target set in the first Greenworks.
- *Keep America Beautiful Grant* – Mr. Esposito announced that a grant will fund 30 new recycling bins for parks and recreation centers this fall. He noted that this grant opportunity was brought to his attention at a SWRAC meeting, and credited Ms. Feldman, Mr. Sharp, and Ms. Lau for helping to submit a successful application. Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, the Office of Sustainability, and Streets Department will continue to work with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation this fall during the implementation of its outdoor recycling initiative at all 21 of its sites in the Northwest District.
- *Other announcements* – Ms. Van Story brought up two issues. First, she has learned that the City has identified early trash and recycling set-out in the neighborhood around Temple University as a problem. She offered to have her organization work with Sanitation to address this. She also requested that the Recycling Office assist a group of local students who wrote an original song to teach people how to recycle by reviewing it for accuracy. Ms. Sands announced that she is transitioning out of her role as Community Outreach Coordinator to take a new data management position with Recyclebank that will be based here in Philadelphia. Recyclebank is looking for her replacement; if the SWRAC knows of any qualified candidates, they should contact Denise McVeigh. Mr. McGrath also noted that September 24<sup>th</sup> will be the first Philly Free Streets event, which will highlight the intersection of active transportation and public health. Volunteers are needed to ensure this event offering free, fitness activities and educational programming is a success. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact him or sign-up at [philadelphiastreet.com](http://philadelphiastreet.com).

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:15 pm.