

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

DATE: September 28, 2017

ATTENDEES:

SWRAC Members

Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery (co-chair)
Michelle Feldman, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful (co-chair)
Robert Anderson, Curb My Clutter
Jack Embick, Environmental Law
Paul Kohl, Water Dept.
Denis Murphy, Commerce Dept.
Maurice Sampson, Clean Water Action

Others Present

Jenny Reeverts, eForce Recycling
Jim Mack, eForce Recycling
Don Lucy, Waste Management
Christian Saveoz, Republic Services
Sara King, Penn
Amy Cornelius, Citizen

City Staff/Consultants

Erin Cartwright, Recycling Office/Recyclebank
Denise Diorio-McVeigh, Recyclebank
Marisa Lau, Streets Dept/Recycling Office
Daniel Lawson, PPR
Tiara Clark, PPR/PowerCorps
Sofia Guernica, Office of Sustainability
Foster Hardiman, OIT
Tamika Davis, PHL
Nic Esposito, MDO

Call to order/introductions:

The meeting was called to order by SWRAC co-chairs Fern Gookin and Michelle Feldman at 3:00pm.

July Meeting Minutes:

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

Streets Department Zero Waste Partnerships Update

- Commissioner Williams presented on the Streets new Zero Waste Partnership Program. Denise Diorio-McVeigh of Recyclebank discussed the residential component, Philacycle, which will replace the program formerly known as Philadelphia Recycling Rewards. The presentation will be circulated by email after the meeting.
 - Partnership programs are designed to introduce the concept of zero waste to residents, community-based organizations, and businesses
 - Business leaders in sustainability will be highlighted and recognized for their efforts
 - DEP grant funds for recycling performance will be reinvested in communities through a new grant program
 - Streets is looking to Commerce Dept grant program for ideas
 - Philacycle – overview of brand development and current state of the recycling rewards program
 - Existing members will become Philacyclers when the program launches
 - There will be expanded opportunities for residents to earn points
 - Re-branding will make it easier for residents to engage with the platform through multiple entry points (web, app, events, shopping)

Organics Subcommittee Report

- Paul Kohl reported on the results of PWD's Request for information (RFI) for the collection and processing of food waste (FW) to be delivered to PWD's water pollution control plants. In total, PWD received 12 responses with 3 additional inquiries.
- Adam Hendricks of PWD presented on the responses at September's subcommittee meeting. Presentation slides and meeting notes were distributed to that group.
 - The responses varied in length and thoroughness. Additionally, there were some alternative proposals to what PWD had suggested in the RFI.
 - Sources of FW varied but most responses focused on industrial and institutional sources.
 - Most respondents indicated they would be able to scale up the amount of FW to be delivered to PWD by adding shifts or modules at the pre-processing facility.
 - Typical pre-treatment process was as follows: Mechanical separation, inert material removal, maceration/liquefaction, and grit removal
 - Key takeaways from RFI responses:
 - The responses were highly varied in both strategy and thoroughness
 - Most Respondents suggested that they would subcontract hauling
 - The FW characteristics were fairly consistent between Respondents

- The primary purpose of the RFI was to ascertain if the business strategy that PWD had in mind was viable. The responses to the RFI suggest that, aside from some minor details, that the business strategy was sound.
- It was reiterated that the City is always looking at its toolbox (e.g. anaerobic digesters, composting facility, etc.) to find ways to improve its capacity to take organic waste. For example, a proposal for a composting facility was submitted to the 2017 Bloomberg Philanthropies' Mayors Challenge this fall. How else can we encourage investment and change the way we think about food waste as a city?
- PWD may want to focus on types of food waste generators that are most beneficial for biogas production. The value of biogas can change dramatically when it is used as a fuel. Currently the driving factor of these operations is tipping fees, but that would change dramatically if the biogas was used for transportation fuel.

SWRAC August Planning Meeting Report

- M. Lau, M. Feldman, and F. Gookin reported on the August 18th SWRAC planning meeting. Meeting notes will be circulated by email.
 - Proposed changes include: establishing bylaws and attendance requirements; changing schedule to alternate monthly general meetings; including more programming to help SWARC members be effective advocates
 - SWRAC members indicated that Executive Order 15-08 outlines the role of the SWARC. Would a new Executive Order be required to make these changes?
 - Not all attendees recalled seeing the planning meeting announcement sent on August 9th
 - Discussion postponed until SWRAC leadership and Streets Dept can discuss these considerations.
- Questions and comments on information received at this meeting so far:
 - A. Cornelius asked what the Commerce Dept is doing to support zero waste. Streets Dept answered that they will coordinate with Commerce on the business partnerships program.
 - M. Sampson indicated that the zero waste program is on the right track with the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet, having come full circle from the City's early efforts to convene a interagency task force on diversion.
 - Group discussion on the potential impact of China's National Sword program. B. Anderson shared that China will be looking at the quality of materials (contamination must be < 1.5%) We need to develop new markets and take into account that the recycling industry will need 18-24 months to install new technology to meet these stricter standards.

PRO Update

- M. Lau shared that the Streets Dept and its consultant continue to work on the non-substantial revision of the municipal solid waste plan to be submitted to DEP.
- She went over changes to the bin program. The department has ordered lids that will be made available to residents, based on the initial results of the ZWL study and survey. Lids will fit standard 22-gallon bins distributed by Streets, including older bins.
 - Starting in October, bins with RFID chips will be available, and residents will be required to register with their address at all distribution points. Program changes and technology upgrades (including new readers) will allow the department to better manage the bin inventory and reduce the amount spent on bins.
 - More information and a request form are available at:
<http://www.philadelphiastreet.com/binrequest>

Zero Waste & Litter Cabinet Update

- N. Esposito shared that municipal building waste audits will be underway before the end of the year, as detailed in the action plan.
- He explained that the Office of Sustainability's former Waste Watchers program is now under the Philacycle umbrella (the action plan references "Waste Watchers" but that name had already been trademarked).
- Higher-tier Philacyclers will have to attend an initial training, make presentations in their community, and volunteer at zero waste events.

Recyclebank Update

- E. Cartwright announced that the Green Schools program is now accepting applications. A flier will be sent to the email list after the meeting. She pointed out that deadlines for this year are slightly different.
- M. Lau indicated that Recyclebank completed two additional projects in the last two months – a recreation center contest for facilities that received new recycling bins, and a joint (PARK)ing Day parklet. See photos at #reducereuserudbeckia.

PA State Budget Update

- S. McGrath reported that the House has adopted a budget that would empty the recycling fund but the Senate does not support the bill.
- Continue to contact your representatives. Information provided by PROP will be sent to the email list.
- \$2 recycling fee still needs to be extended; a 3-year extension would be a compromise

- Members of the Environmental Resources Committee are calling for a “comprehensive” review of Act 101. Unclear what this would entail other than a broader focus on more than just disposal capacity.

Informational Items and Announcements

- Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, United By Blue and the Water Department are hosting a panel discussion at the Fairmount WaterWorks on Oct 25th. Additionally, KPB is hosting its last cleanup of the season with the Nature Conservancy and the Nationalities Service Center for Make a Difference Day on October 28th.
- Clean Water Action is honoring PA Attorney General Josh Shapiro with an environmental leadership award at its annual auction and party this year at Fairmount Water Works.
- SWRAC leadership will email minutes and additional follow up information from today’s meeting, as well as the next general session meeting date.

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

DRAFT