

Newton Solid Waste Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 3, 2020, 7:00-8:45 pm
Zoom Online Conference

Members in attendance: Steve Ferrey (from approximately 7:20 pm), Sunwoo Kahng, Meryl Kessler, Brita Lundberg (until approximately 8:40 pm), Robin Maltz, Seth Parker, Marian Rambelle (Chair), Karen Slote, Miles Smith, Carl Valente (from approximately 7:55 pm)

Members absent: John Lewis

Others in attendance: Alison Leary (City Councilor) (until approximately 8:10 pm), Waneta Trabert (Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division (SMMD)), Anjali Palepu (until approximately 7:55 pm), Harry Sanders (until approximately 8:00 pm)

Approval of July 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

Vote taken to approve the meeting minutes and passed by all members present.

In the June 25, 2020 Meeting Minutes, John Lewis's membership effective date was listed as August 7, 2020. However, the Chair subsequently learned that his membership effective date is June 22, 2020. No objections were made to revise the June 25, 2020 Meeting Minutes to list John Lewis under "Members in attendance", rather than under "Others in attendance".

Ordinance Change/SWC By-laws Update:

Councilor Leary confirmed that the proposed ordinance (Ch. 5, Sec. 7) change is on the Public Facilities Committee's September 9 meeting agenda (for the original Docket Request submitted to the City Clerk's office on February 10). If the Public Facilities Committee votes to recommend the ordinance change for approval, it will then be sent to the full City Council to vote on its adoption. The Chair will attend the committee meeting and all others are welcome to attend.

The approved SWC By-laws are dependent on several proposed changes in the ordinance, so the By-laws will be submitted to the City Clerk's office after adoption of the ordinance change.

Sustainable Materials Management Division (SMMD) Update:

Public Comments: One public comment received by the Mayor's office regarding a request for a waiver on orange overflow bags or an amnesty week for curbside trash collection limits. The Community Liaison officer responded to the resident that the request would not be granted as it would be too expensive.

New Hauler Contract Startup: The new hauler operations have gone well overall since the new contract with Waste Management (WM) went into effect on July 1, particularly the transfer of management of bulky waste and white goods from the City to WM. WM has hired a subcontractor to manage this program. The management of trash and recycling carts has also transitioned well.

COVID-19 State of Emergency Impacts: WT currently remains as the City's meals program coordinator. Her time spent on the program varies, with more time now in preparation for the start of the school year in about two weeks. Her role in the meals program has not affected SMMD operations.

Resource Recovery Center (RRC)/Swap Shop/Book Shed (Rumford Ave facility): The RRC reopening since June 2 (on an appointment-only basis) continues to proceed smoothly (no timeline for ending), and the process has been good for traffic control and limiting gatherings of visitors there. The City's freeze on non-emergency overtime on weekends continues, so the RRC remains closed on weekends.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) events will be held about every 6 weeks, continuing with one appointment scheduled at a time. The next event is on 9/17. An appointment-only Paper Shredding event is planned for November (date TBA).

Swap Shop opened on 8/7 and the appointment-only system is running well. Some operational issues have arisen between RRC staff and Swap Shop volunteers, and WT is currently working on resolving them. The management of 'scavenging' by visitors to the RRC will be discussed.

A health protocol prepared for reopening the Book Shed (used books dropoff/pickup for reuse) will be sent to the Health and Human Services Dept. for approval. WT is working with the HHS Dept. and expects the Book Shed to reopen soon.

Curbside Compliance: The curbside compliance survey, which is funded by MassDEP grant funds, is planned for the fall. An app developed by the Recollect organization will be used to compile data collected during the curbside survey of carts in selected neighborhoods on trash/recycling collection days.

Recycling cart-top stickers with recycling do's/don'ts will be printed in the fall and may be placed on curbside carts in the spring. MK: How is the Recycle Right Newton app being promoted? WT: Usage of the app has been less than anticipated so far, even with promotion through various methods/events (such as the annual Harvest Fair). There will also be paid social media ads and informational inserts in city bills sent to residents in the spring. Suggestions were made to try promoting it in the school PTO Council newsletters and in the Mayor's newsletter (WT will contact the Mayor's office regarding the newsletter).

Organics Dropoff Program: A new organics (food waste only) dropoff program for residents at the RRC will start in October, on an appointment-only basis initially, and later on a 24/7 basis. Free compostable liners for countertop containers will be available at the RRC (and also planned for later at City Hall). The program will be funded by MassDEP grant funds earned from the Recycling Dividends program. The weight of food waste handled by the dropoff program can be estimated based on the number of carts picked up at the RRC by Black Earth Composting.

There are now about 1,800 Newton household subscribers to the Black Earth curbside organics collection service. The next threshold to qualify for a Newton subscriber fee reduction is 3,000 subscribers.

The DPW's post-Halloween Pumpkin Smash event (promoting organics collection and composting) has been cancelled this year due to COVID-19.

Other items - Private Hauler Regulations: SK: What is the status of the proposed private hauler ordinance change? Councilor Leary: The City has no will to pass legislation that is potentially burdensome to small businesses, as a result of COVID-19 and its negative economic impact on businesses. She suggested getting more involved at the state level (e.g., Conservation Law

Foundation and MA state committees) to promote state legislation, such as for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Pinpoint Donation Presentation on Re-use Options:

Pinpoint Donation is a nonprofit organization created by two local high school students to promote increased reuse of unneeded household goods (and, thus, diversion from disposal). Newton resident Anjali Palepu (one of the founders) gave a short presentation on their Facebook group of over 1,300 members that matches donors of gently-used household goods with dozens of local charities that need them. They maintain a website that provides detailed information on 100+ charities in the Boston area that accept household goods and what type they accept. Pinpoint Donation helps donors find smaller charities that work directly with local families.

They would like to help promote reuse in Newton and raise awareness of reuse options through use of Pinpoint Donation's resources. Members voiced enthusiastic support for Pinpoint Donation's work and discussed ways to promote the organization's resources to residents. WT will check if the Pinpoint Donation link can be added to the SMMD website's resources page to give residents more options for repurposing unwanted items. Pinpoint Donation information can be added to the flyer given to Swap Shop visitors regarding alternative outlets for donations. It can also be promoted in the Mayor's newsletter (WT will suggest) and in Green Newton's newsletter (SK, Green Newton newsletter editor, will follow up). MS: A small barrier to use of the matching service is that Facebook membership is required - Anjali Palepu noted that this was considered but a Facebook group was the easiest way to start, and they hope to expand the matching service beyond Facebook.

MassDEP's Draft 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan public comments:

For the MassDEP's re-opened comment period for the Draft 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan, WT prepared a letter with comments and recommendations on behalf of the City, which the Mayor approved today. The letter was discussed during the meeting. A vote on the SWC's support of the City's comments letter was taken and passed by all members present. This support by the SWC will be included by adding the Chair as a signatory to the letter, in addition to WT (WT to confirm). Comments are due to MassDEP by 9/15.

SK: Newton's Climate Action Plan (CAP) includes a small section on the effects of waste - can more be done in this regard? WT: Waste is usually a small part of this picture, partly as it involves embedded carbon that is difficult to measure. Also, for example, the use of trash collection trucks is not counted. However, she will ask the Planning Dept. about ways to add more focus on waste in the CAP's implementation.

2020 SWC goals implementation:

The final 2020 SWC goals and objectives/methods document, edited based on the last meeting's discussion, was discussed to prioritize and plan implementation. Goal #1 (Long-Term Goals for the City) will be worked on first, with several objectives/methods grouped into three broad categories. A subcommittee was formed for each category, with the following member assignments:

1. Projections of Newton's Trash/Recycling Needs - Meryl, Robin, Brita
2. Trash/Recycling Disposal Capacity Projections - Carl, Miles, Steve, John
3. Other Municipalities' Trash/Recycling Strategies - Karen, Sunwoo, Seth

Goal #1 Possible Objectives/Methods were divided among the subcommittees as follows:

- **Subcommittee #2** - Evaluate (relative to the City's needs) current status and short- and long-term projections of:
 - Trash disposal capacity (in-state and out-of-state)
 - Trash disposal options (e.g., waste-to-energy/incineration, landfill, anaerobic digestion, composting)
 - Recycling capacity and recyclables markets (in-state, out-of-state, international) - including estimated financial impacts to municipalities
- [Hold until 2021: Assist with SMMD data collection and (anticipated) MassDEP municipal data coordinator.] WT will apply in September for a MassDEP Technical Assistance Grant to evaluate curbside collection. The work will then start in 3-4 months and last one year.
- **Subcommittee #1** - Consider findings/recommendations of SMMD reports and data, and Black Earth Composting subscription data.
- **Subcommittees #1, #2 and #3** - Consider MassDEP and EPA guidance and reports, including MassDEP's *Draft 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan*, case studies, EPA's online tools, etc.
- **Subcommittee #1** - Evaluate the City's projected trash/recycling needs based on estimated population, household consumption/generation rates, producer packaging changes (Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mandates), etc.
- **Subcommittee #3** - Research trash/recycling strategies and 'lessons learned' of other communities and states (e.g., Cambridge, Brookline, Natick, Boston, Oregon DEQ, Seattle).

WT: Subcommittees may contact her for resources, especially data on capacity. The Chair will check with Marie Lawler (Legal Dept.) on the ability to use an online repository (e.g., Dropbox) to store resource documents for subcommittees to reference.

The Chair will send out information on the procedures for setting up Zoom meeting, etc. Per Open Meeting Law, meeting agendas must be posted 48 hours prior to a meeting.

As a draft SWC 2019 Annual Report was distributed yesterday, it will be discussed at the next meeting on 9/24 to finalize and file with the Mayor and City Council.

Public Comments/Other Announcements: None.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55 pm.

Next meeting - Thursday, September 24, 2020, 7:00-8:45 pm, Zoom Online Conference