

Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 29, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Online Meeting

Members in Attendance: Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle, Vice Chair, Carl Valente, Secretary, Steven Ferrey (at 7:15 p.m.), Miles Smith, Meryl Kessler, Alan Gordon and Robin Maltz.

Members Absent: Karen Slote, John Lewis and Jim McGonagle, Commissioner, DPW, Ex-Officio.

Other Participants: Alison Leary, City Council and Waneta Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division.

Approval of August 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes:

On the motion by Miles Smith, seconded by Robin Maltz, the Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2022 were approved 7-0 on a roll call vote. Sunwoo Kahng, Marian Rambelle, Carl Valente, Miles Smith, Meryl Kessler, Alan Gordon and Robin Maltz voting yes.

SMMC Report Update – Review Meeting with Mayor:

Ms. Kahng led a discussion regarding the August 25, 2022 meeting attended by Mayor Fuller:

- The Mayor committed to funding a consultant for a zero waste comprehensive plan. Ms. Trabert believes \$75,000-\$100,000 has been budgeted for this effort. Further, she anticipates an RFP being developed in Q1 of 2023, and will likely be based on the RFPs for similar efforts in other municipalities. Given this schedule, it is unlikely that the Plan will be completed before the curbside hauling contract RFP is released or negotiations begin. At the next SMMC meeting, Ms. Trabert will discuss her thoughts on the scope of the zero waste comprehensive plan/RFP.
- Within the next few weeks, the DPW Commissioner will complete his review and comments on the DEP Curbside Services draft report.
- Negotiations are ongoing with the Superintendent’s union (Newton Foreman Union) to create a new position for a Superintendent for yard waste, street sweeping and the Rumford Ave. facility. If this position comes to fruition, it will take on operational matters and allow Ms. Trabert to have more time for long-range planning, educational efforts and the coordination of operations within the SMMD.
- Ms. Trabert conveyed that once the Curbside Services report is finalized and released, it will provide an opportunity for reaching out and engaging with community groups that can influence residents regarding the goals in the SMMC report.

Plastics Reduction Ordinance Update:

Mr. Gordon reported that this working group has been looking to expand the current City Ordinance on prohibited plastics. The draft expanded Ordinance will be reviewed by the

Restaurant Committee of the Charles River Chamber of Commerce. The working group has been sharing the draft and seeking feedback and provided an electronic copy to the SMMC. The proposed changes to the Ordinance include, but are not limited to:

- All food packaging containers originating in Newton that are not recyclable, reusable or biodegradable will be prohibited;
- Plastic utensils will not be given out with take-out orders unless specifically requested by the customer;
- Plastic water bottles of less than 1.5 liters will be banned from sale in the City;
- Single use condiments packages will only be provided to customers upon request;
- Certain single use plastic items will be banned for sale in the City;
- Restaurants are to use washable dishware beginning in 2024 unless a waiver is granted by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services;
- Restaurants are to offer an option to customers to provide their own take-out leftover containers;
- Restaurants are to offer the option of reusable/returnable take-out containers starting in 2024 if adequate reusable containers or companies that offer reusable services are available;
- Intentional release of helium-filled balloons will be prohibited; and
- In general, it was anticipated that enforcement of these provisions would take place during the regular restaurant inspections by the Department of Health and Human Services or in response to a complaint.

On Tap Newton-Water Filling Stations:

Ms. Kahng reported that there is an interest in providing more water bottle filling stations within the City, both in public and private facilities. She wanted to explore the number of publicly available filling stations around the city, and to try to generate interest in increasing their numbers in both public and private locations. This will be important should an Ordinance banning the sale of plastic water bottles be enacted. Newton does not currently have any outdoor public water fountains that are operating, but some are planned for the new Gath pool and nearby playground and inside all new school buildings according to the Public Building Commissioner.

Increasing Organics Pickup Service, Education and Promotion:

Ms. Kahng commented that Mayor Fuller is looking for support from residents of an expanded City-sponsored organics collection program before considering such a program. Ms. Kahng suggested that this may be a project for the SMMC to work on with Ms. Trabert. Mr. Gordon, Ms. Kahng and Ms. Trabert have requested that Black Earth survey their most recent subscribers to understand their motivations for participating, and use these findings to develop an education campaign to expand the program.

SMMD Update:

Ms. Trabert reviewed the September SMMD update, dated September 29, 2022, responding to a number of questions and comments from Commission members.

- Ms. Trabert explained that a mattress recycling collection/fee Ordinance will go before the City Council shortly. It is in response to the November 1 State ban on the disposal of mattresses. The Ordinance will provide for a \$35 drop off fee at Rumford Ave. and a \$50 curbside collection fee. Approximately 160 units per month have been collected as part of the existing curbside collection program. The proposed City fee is based on the cost from the vendor on the Statewide contract that will provide this service of collecting units and recycling their components.
- In response to a question, Ms. Trabert commented that the next paint collection day will likely be in the Spring.

Public Comments/Open Announcements:

Councilor Leary would like to bring the proposed private hauler Ordinance before the City Council and asked the SMMC to review and comment on it. Ms. Kahng will send the draft Ordinance to Commission members, to be discussed at the October 27 Commission meeting.

Ms. Rambelle reminded the Chair that the dates of the November and December SMMC meetings will have to be changed because of the holidays.

Ms. Kahng advised the SMMC that the Green Expo will again take place at the Harvest Fair on October 16 at the Newton Center green. Ms. Trabert, Black Earth and the Recycling Committee will all be in attendance.

Ms. Trabert suggested that the SMMC should consider advocating for the public schools to implement food composting in their cafeterias. She would provide support to any school wishing to offer such a program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the SMMC is Thursday, October 27, 2022 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Documents Provided/Discussed at Meeting:

1. *August 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes*
2. *Draft Ordinance expanding the plastics ban*
3. *September 2022 SMMC Update, dated September 29, 2022*