

Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 22, 2020, 7:00-8:45 pm
Zoom Online Conference

Members in attendance: Steve Ferrey, Sunwoo Kahng, Meryl Kessler, Robin Maltz, Seth Parker, Marian Rambelle (Chair), Karen Slote, Miles Smith, Carl Valente

Members absent: John Lewis

Others in attendance: Alison Leary (City Councilor), Waneta Trabert (Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division (SMMD))

Approval of September 24, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

WT: Recycling cost calculation description under Public Comments (top of p. 2) should be amended. Proposed amended text (changes shown in bold): "...the city's recycling cost is calculated as: \$89/ton **minus the blended value** of one ton of recyclables (fluctuates). The city's current recycling cost is typically **\$85/ton...**". Vote taken to approve the amended meeting minutes and passed by all members present.

Ordinance Change/SWC By-laws Update:

The final By-laws approved by the Commission at its 9/24/2020 meeting were submitted to the City Clerk's office on 9/25. The ordinance change was approved by the Mayor on 9/30 and new ordinance and By-laws took effect on 10/20, according to the Legal Dept.

Discussion of the timing of upcoming election of officers, to be held under the By-laws; consensus is to opt to hold elections in January 2021, rather than within 45 days of ratification of the By-laws (i.e., by 12/6). Chair will ask the Legal Department to confirm that opting to hold the election of officers in January 2021 is consistent with the new By-laws.

Sustainable Materials Management Division (SMMD) Update:

Public Comments: No public comments.

New Hauler Contract Operations: Hauler operations continue to run smoothly since the new contract with Waste Management (WM) went into effect on July 1.

COVID-19 State of Emergency Impacts: WT currently remains the City's Grab 'n Go meals program coordinator, currently at 2-3 hours per week. No impact to SMMD operations (with concurrent reduction in some SMMD operations during COVID-19, such as enforcement).

Resource Recovery Center (RRC)/Swap Shop/Book Shed (Rumford Ave facility): RRC summer hours (per union contract) of four 10-hr days/week ended on 9/25. RRC hours are now Mon - Fri 7 am - 3 pm, continuing on an appointment-only basis (no timeline for ending). An incident occurred today at the RRC that will be resolved by SMMD.

The Swap Shop will close after next week. Book Shed re-opening protocol remains under review by the health department; WT will check if it could be open by the winter.

Reuse Options Information: Pinpoint Donation information (which was recently added to the SMMD website) has been added to the handouts provided to residents by Swap Shop staff.

Grant Applications: Technical Assistance Grant application was submitted on 10/19 to DEP. The purpose is to analyze the City's existing curbside collection program and other municipal programs in MA and around the country, culminating in a report on trash reduction options and policy recommendations. Ultimate goal is the adoption by the city of a trash reduction plan. The grant provides 80 hours of consulting assistance from a DEP municipal assistance coordinator. SMMC subcommittee will work in conjunction with the TAG review and findings.

Projected timeline:

- Research/gather data
- Brainstorm applicability to Newton (including political soundness/will)
- Draft recommendations for mayoral review
- Prepare revisions and final report

Curbside Compliance: SMMD staff is gathering curbside data regarding fullness of carts, and type and level of contamination in the recycling cart. No enforcement for now.

Organics Dropoff Program: A soft launch at the RRC is scheduled for 11/2, by appointment only. Residents will be informed via the SMMD newsletter and later in the Mayor's email newsletter.

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

DEP is reviewing public comments to the SWMP and the final SWMP is expected in 2021.

MassDEP Proposed Waste Ban changes:

On 10/16, MassDEP announced a set of proposed waste ban changes, to take effect in October 2021. Public comments are being accepted through 12/5. WT has drafted comments and submitted them to the Mayor for review. SMMC will review the comments at the Commission's November meeting.

Commercial/Institutional Organics (food waste) - the threshold will be reduced from 1 ton per week to 0.5 ton per week. The new threshold could impact Newton South and North High Schools. Primarily restaurants are expected to be impacted - probably 1,300 restaurants in MA will fall under the new threshold (based on pre-COVID-19 waste generation levels). WT proposes a later implementation date of 10/2022 due to COVID-19 impacts. Organics storage is typically indoors and will probably be in a 64-gal cart or a 1-cubic yard gaylord bin, except for very large entities. Question: Does sufficient composting capacity exist? WT: Yes. Question: How will enforcement work? WT: The Recycling Works program (partner with DEP) is reaching out to large businesses and restaurants, but there are no current plans for enforcement.

Textiles – all textiles must be diverted from the waste stream; textiles comprise 5-7% of the state's waste stream. Most Newton residents are already keeping textiles out of the waste stream, but the ban could reduce Newton's waste by 3-5%. Good Will and Salvation Army having

difficulty due to staffing and COVID-19 impacts, and are currently not accepting textiles. Good Will no longer has a trailer at the RRC. WT proposes a later implementation date of 10/2022 due to COVID-19 impacts. School collection boxes program is still being planned; WT is working with Liam Hurley (Newton Public Schools dept). Contractor has given quotes and a plan of proposed locations. Still needed are school principal and PTO approvals, and a revolving account set up through the Finance Committee, to receive the rebates and distribute funds. Other communities have had a positive experience (Brookline, Natick, etc).

CV: Curbside collection of textiles considered? WT: The Commission discussed about 1 or 2 years ago and raised significant concerns about the carbon footprint of additional truck traffic and mailing of plastic collection bags to all residents.

Mattresses (and box springs) - mattresses and box springs must be recycled under the proposed ban. Because the DEP proposal does not plan for the funding of recycling programs, Newton and other municipalities would have to bear the \$15-20 per mattress cost for recycling (plus potential transportation costs). In 2020, est. 1,850 mattresses/box springs disposed by Newton = est. potential \$27,750-37,000 recycling cost. Some states have an eco-fee added to a new mattress purchase to pay for the recycling program. WT does not support this ban until there is an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law or other recycling funding plan is in place. Successful mattress EPR programs exist in CT, RI, and CA.

SMMC Subcommittees:

Subcommittee 2 - Trash/Recycling Disposal Capacity (CV, MS, SF) held its first meeting in October and presented their work to date, including planning for the end of the city's disposal contract (Wheelabrator) on 6/30/2028 and possibilities beyond. Discussion of current outlook for MA disposal facilities. WT: Current contract is for 20 years; next contract period is TBD, but disposal facilities prefer long contracts. MA landfills already at capacity, necessitating sending trash for disposal to other states. Several MA landfill permits will expire in 5-7 years, but may be extended by DEP. Also, waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities generate ash; MA has only a couple ash landfills.

SF noted that WTE facilities accept more types of materials than landfills in MA. RI's landfill is government-owned and does not accept waste from MA. Maine also has a government-owned landfill and is considering a ban on waste from MA.

Next steps: What are the other subcommittees thinking in this area? Identify any overlap with other subcommittees' work and collaborate to avoid potential duplication of efforts.

WT: DEP website has a spreadsheet of MA communities' disposal methods, but no cost information. All subcommittees can send her a list of questions for other communities and then she can create a form covering all questions to ask a community regarding their disposal/recycling practices. Plan and coordinate contacting other communities with WT (e.g., one point of contact per community, etc).

Subcommittees 1 and 3 have not yet met and will report at the November meeting.

Public Comments/Other Announcements:

The 2019 Annual Report was submitted to the City Clerk's office on 10/4 for inclusion in the Friday Packet to City Councilors.

There will be a webinar on 11/12 from 9am-12pm on the future of solid waste management in New England by the Environmental Business Council of New England.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

Next meeting - Thursday, November 19, 2020, 7:00-8:45 pm, Zoom Online Conference