

**Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, December 17, 2020, 7:00-8:45 pm**  
**Zoom Online Conference**

Members in attendance: Steve Ferrey (except from 7:45 - 8:10 pm), Sunwoo Kahng, Meryl Kessler (except from 7:35 - 8:35 pm), Robin Maltz, Seth Parker, Marian Rambelle (Chair), Miles Smith, Carl Valente

Members absent: John Lewis, Karen Slote

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

**Approval of November 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes:**

Vote taken to approve the following revised paragraphs on page 4 (under Subcommittee 2 - Trash/Recycling Disposal Capacity) of the meeting minutes and passed by all members present:

- *There is sufficient organics capacity in MA, but facilities are not centrally located. Perhaps one anaerobic digestion facility has been permitted in MA. Any plans for more AD facilities?*

- *Saugus City Council appointed a committee to close Waste Management's whole WTE facility when the on-site ash landfill closes (in 2023). WM's Shrewsbury landfill is scheduled to last to the late 2020s or 2030s. When ash landfills close in MA, can ash be placed in an uncontainerized gondola car for rail transport, or must it be containerized at a rail transfer station prior to rail transport?*

**Elections Planning:**

Robin Maltz and Seth Parker, Election Coordinators, have not yet received any nominations for candidates for the upcoming election of officers on January 28, 2021.

The Chair asked Marie Lawlor of the Legal Department how election balloting should be handled during virtual (Zoom) meetings, since the use of paper ballots (per the By-laws) will not be possible during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Marie Lawlor replied that a temporary procedure change to an oral roll call vote will be needed (for the purposes of this election only). Prior to election voting, the Commission should vote to accept the temporary procedure.

The Chair also asked her what to do in case of a tie vote; she replied that the DPW Commissioner (or designee) is an *ex-officio* member of the Commission, with full voting privileges under Robert's Rules (though they may not be counted toward a quorum). So, that can take care of a tie vote, which could occur when the Commission has an even number of members. She also said that if there were a tie vote, you would have to continue to vote and take tallies until the tie is broken or one candidate withdraws.

**Sustainable Materials Management Division (SMMD) Update:**

Public Comments: Two public comments received (from one current and one former SMMD member) regarding recent problems encountered with the bulky waste pickup process. WT will look into the communication issues and report back at the Commission's next meeting.

Hauler 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: No change since last meeting; WT currently remains the City's Grab 'n Go meals program coordinator, currently at 2-3 hours per week. In January, the City's distribution of meals will change from daily to 3 days/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 continues on an appointment-only basis (no timeline for ending). The Swap Shop closed for the season in late November. The Book Shed re-opening protocol remains under review by the City's health department; it is unlikely to open until Phase 4 of the state's COVID-19 reopening plan.

WT's office moved last week from the DPW Crafts Street facility to the new trailer at the RRC. WT already sees the benefits of increased oversight of RRC operations.

RRC's Staff Attendant is retiring after 10 years of service, and an interim person is now in the role. The position includes overseeing the site, communications with residents visiting the site, managing the materials collected at the site, etc. It is a key position at the site, and very public-facing. It is a union position, but the only one with Tuesday - Saturday workdays. CV: Will the interview panel consist of applicable department heads, and can a resident be included on the panel due to the position's important public-facing role? WT: The Commission can write a letter to DPW Commissioner McGonagle to request the addition of a citizen representative on the interview panel.

SK noted that about six residents posted praise for RRC staff last week on the Next Door Newton website.

Grant Applications: A kickoff meeting will be scheduled for the 2021 Technical Assistance Grant recently awarded by MassDEP, to analyze the City's existing curbside collection program and other municipal programs in MA and around the country. SMMC subcommittees will work in conjunction with the TAG review.

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

Organics Dropoff Program: Pilot program for residents at the RRC began last month and is going well.

Other: Yard waste curbside collection has caught up; an early snowstorm last month resulted in a doubling of the typical volume generated and led to a backlog in yard waste pickups.

SMMD will work on updating the 2017 citywide mailing, which will cost \$15-17K. The City's annual \$10K grant from Waste Management (the City's waste hauler) will go toward the cost, and the remainder will be funded by the City's grant and Recycling Dividends funds from MassDEP. The mailing will be a comprehensive guide to the City's sustainable materials programs, such as recycling, bulky waste, overflow trash materials, composting, household hazardous waste, sharps, etc.

In addition, cart informational stickers will be printed next year.

MK: What else will MassDEP grant funds be used for? WT: Citywide spring mailing (above), ongoing supplies/signage for the RRC, school projects.

**MassDEP's Draft 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan (SWMP) update:**

No change: MassDEP is reviewing over 200 public comments received and the final SWMP is expected in early 2021. MassDEP sought comments in three key areas: Environmental Justice (EJ), climate change, and COVID-19 impacts.

**Comments on MassDEP Proposed Waste Ban changes update:**

The public comments letter prepared by WT, with the support of the Commission, was submitted to MassDEP prior to the 12/5 deadline.

**SMMC Subcommittees:**

Subcommittee 1 - Future Trash/Recycling Needs (MK, RM, JL) – No report; no meeting since 11/19.

Subcommittee 2 - Trash/Recycling Disposal Capacity (CV, MS, SF) – No report; no meeting since 11/19.

Subcommittee 3 - Trash/Recycling Strategies in Other Municipalities (KS, SK, SP) reported they are starting to contact other communities (Chicopee, Brookline). Chicopee determined that 35-gal trash carts are sufficient with overflow bags (weekly trash pickup), and they use 95-gal recycling cars with every other week recycling pickup. They began this program in 2017.

Brookline switched 3 years ago to variable trash cart sizes (35, 65, and 95 gal available): found that people underestimated the cart size they needed and then it was difficult to change the cart size.

WT: 5-Year Strategy report (postponed from its original Dec 2020 due date as a result of the pandemic) will be revisited soon. It will incorporate the TAG program data.

WT: All subcommittees will feed information to the upcoming TAG program report, so they should plan to provide the bulk of their findings in a few months.

**Public Comments/Other Announcements:**

MS: Newton Recycling Committee is trying to do more with the Library of Things on the library's website to increase usage (a "borrowing" system).

SMMD website currently has meeting minutes for June and July 2020; all other meeting minutes need to be added.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

**Next meeting - Thursday, January 28, 2021, 7:00-8:45 pm, Zoom Online Conference**