

**Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 25, 2021, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom Online Meeting**

**Members in attendance:** Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle, Vice Chair, Carl Valente, Secretary, Steve Ferrey (joined the meeting at 7:40 p.m.), John Lewis (joined the meeting at 8:00 p.m.), Meryl Kessler (left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.), Robin Maltz, Seth Parker, Karen Slote, Miles Smith.

**Members absent:** None.

**Other participants:** Alison Leary, City Council, Waneta Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division, Alan Gordon, Sandy Jones.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

On the motion by Miles Smith, seconded by Seth Parker, the Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2021 were approved. Unanimous (Mr. Ferrey and Mr. Lewis joined the meeting after this vote.)

**Sustainable Materials Management Division (SMMD) Director's Update, Questions and Comments:**

Ms. Trabert presented her update report, provided in writing in advance to the Commission. Questions/comments asked by Commission members included:

- The Director reported that she is evaluating whether to contract with the firm, Helpsy, a curbside collector of textiles and shoes. If retained, they would collect in Newton one day per week, based on requests for pick up placed by residents on the Helpsy website. Helpsy would then send the number of vehicles necessary to collect the materials in Newton. The textiles and shoes are marketed for resale or shredded for use in other products. This program could be offered at no cost to the City which, in fact, would be eligible for a 'rebate' from Helpsy depending on the quantity of materials collected. MassDEP has a guidance document on the collection of textiles, which Ms. Trabert will send to the Commission.
- Mr. Smith commented that the Recycling Committee and the Director are seeking volunteers to assist with a survey of trash and recycling carts this summer. In addition, the volunteers would apply a sticker to the recycling carts which outlines acceptable and unacceptable materials. This effort would take place weekdays, from 7 to 10 a.m. Ms. Trabert will send to the Commission a copy of the recycling sticker for its review.
- Ms. Trabert reported that she is evaluating locations for placing Big Belly organics collection receptacles. They will likely be located in various geographically spaced areas of the City.
- Ms. Trabert reported she is working with the City's Engineering Division on drainage issues at the Resource Recovery Center (RRC).

**MassDEP Updates:**

Ms. Rambelle reported that:

- The Solid Waste Advisory Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on April 22.
- MassDEP is promoting the Massachusetts Recycling Conference, an on-line conference scheduled for April 15-16. Ms. Trabert will lead the Education and Outreach Roundtables during the conference.

**Proposed Extended Producer Responsibility (ERP) Resolution:**

City Councilor Alison Leary reported on the draft Resolution of the City of Newton Supporting Extended Producer Responsibility and an Expanded Bottle Bill. Ms. Leary reported that:

- She is currently gathering co-sponsors on the City Council for this Resolution.
- She expects the Resolution will come before the Programs and Services Committee of the City Council soon, and then be forwarded to the City Council for action.
- The Resolution, if passed, will permit the SMM Director to advocate for legislation in support of ERP.
- There appears to be less support at the State level for expanding the Bottle Bill.
- Ms. Trabert reported that the Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) do not currently support an expanded Bottle Bill, as plastic bottles currently are a valuable market for them (but glass recyclables are not and the MRFs pay to dispose of them).
- If the ERP Resolution is approved by the City Council, it needs to be followed-up with advocacy for State legislative action.

**SMMC Subcommittees Updates and Preparing Final Reports:**

Ms. Kahng opened a discussion regarding the work of the three SMMC Subcommittees. There was general agreement that:

- The audience for the reports will be the Mayor and City Council. Further there may need to be various versions/presentations of these reports, depending on the intended audience (e.g., general public, Newton businesses).
- The target date for draft reports, to be reviewed and discussed by the SMMC, is the June SMMC meeting.
- Ms. Trabert suggested that these reports will feed into the MassDEP Technical Assistant grant project currently underway. The MassDEP grant report is likely to be presented to City officials in June 2022.
- The individual Subcommittee reports should be generally framed as: 1) Solid waste and recycling challenges facing the City; and 2) Options for meeting these challenges.
- Ms. Leary believes that this report will be very useful to the City Council members especially to newer members and candidates running for City Council.

Subcommittee 1: Future Trash/Recycling Needs - Ms. Maltz and Mr. Lewis provided an update on this Subcommittee's analysis. Their primary finding was that if 30 percent of the households

in Newton participated in the composting program, this could reduce solid waste tonnage by approximately 15 percent.

**Discussion of 2020 Annual Report and 2021 SMMC Goals:**

Ms. Kahng led a discussion regarding the draft 2020 Annual Report including the 2021 SMMC goals. The Commission members made a number of edits to the draft report, which the Chair will incorporate into the final report.

On the motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Parker, the Commission approved the 2020 Annual Report and 2021 Goals, as amended, and authorized the Chair to finalize the report for forwarding to the appropriate City offices. Unanimous. (Ms. Kessler had left the meeting prior to this vote.)

**Public Comments/Announcements:** There were no public comments or announcements.

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

**Next meeting:** The next meeting of the SMMC is scheduled for Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 7 p.m., as a Zoom online meeting.

***Documents provided/discussed at meeting:***

- 1. SMM Update dated March 18, 2021: Update from SMM since February 25 SMMC Meeting. Provided to the Commission by Waneta Trabert, SMM Director, in advance of the meeting.*
- 2. Draft Resolution of the City of Newton Supporting Extended Producer Responsibility and an Expanded Bottle Bill.*
- 3. Subcommittee 1 Chart: Newton Solid Waste Production and Reduction with Composting.*
- 4. Draft of 2020 Annual Report, City of Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission, Newton, Massachusetts.*