

Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 24, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Online Meeting

Members in attendance: Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle, Vice Chair, Carl Valente, Secretary, John Lewis, Steve Ferrey (joined the meeting at 7:13 p.m.), Meryl Kessler, Robin Maltz (left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.), Seth Parker (joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.), Karen Slote, Miles Smith.

Members absent: Jim McGonagle, Commissioner, DPW, Ex-Officio. Ms. Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division and advisor to the SMMC was unable to join the meeting.

Other participants: Alison Leary, City Council, Sandy Jones, Alan Gordon.

Approval of May 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Rambelle asked for a clarification on whether the Big Belly lease will be cancelled or not renewed, should the Victor Stanley containers be selected by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Culture. Ms. Kahng will contact staff to get this clarification. The approval of the May meeting Minutes will be taken up at the next SMMC meeting.

Public Comments and Announcements:

There were no public comments.

Mr. Smith and other SMMC members have questions for Ms. Trabert about the new recycling sticker that is being affixed to residential recycling containers. These questions will be raised at a subsequent SMMC meeting.

Ms. Kahng was in contact with City Council member Vicki Danberg and suggested to her that the City consider adding black plastic food containers to the current polystyrene ban. Ms. Kahng was speaking for herself, not for the SMMC.

Ms. Kahng commented on the letter she sent to the City Council on behalf of the SMMC in support of funding an additional staff person for the Sustainable Material Management Division. Councilor Leary proposed a resolution in support of this request, which was approved on a 21-0 vote. This request, however, was not supported by the Mayor's Office and, therefore, was not included in the final FY22 Operating Budget approved by the City Council. Councilor Leary recommended making the request early in the budgeting process for FY23 to improve its chances for success.

Ms. Kahng reported that three Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) bills came before a Committee (Hearing) of the State legislature. This can be reported on further by Ms. Trabert at the next meeting, if necessary.

Ms. Rambelle provided an update on the MassDEP Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) meeting held on June 24:

- The Reduce and Reuse Subcommittee reported that it is difficult to quantify the amount of goods in this category; Tufts University recently issued a report in partnership with MassDEP on an economic and spatial analysis of the state's reuse economy;
- There is a Construction and Demolition Subcommittee and the SMMC should review this subcommittee's materials available on the SWAC webpages if it pursues an analysis of C&D waste, which was discussed at the April 22, 2021 SMMC meeting;
- There are MassDEP Micro Grants for innovative reuse initiatives, up to \$5000 available to municipalities and local organizations, with the application due date coming soon.
- John Fischer from MassDEP reported that the release of the Final 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan will be soon, followed by a public meeting on the Plan.
- John Fischer also discussed the solid waste reduction goals (based on 2018 baseline levels) proposed by MassDEP.

Planning for SMMC Report

Ms. Kahng provided the SMMC members with a draft combined report consisting of the three subcommittee reports and Ms. Trabert's draft introduction.

There was a general discussion of the scope of this report. There was general agreement that the scope should be limited to the scope of the work of the three subcommittees on residential curbside waste management. There was general agreement that the report should include an Executive Summary. There was general agreement that the reports will need to be edited to have a consistent style, which Mr. Parker volunteered to undertake.

Ms. Slote asked for clarification on the goal(s) of the report. Is it to be informative/educational for the Mayor and City Council? Should it provide specific recommendations or options for consideration? Ms. Rambelle suggested that the SMMC not lose sight that the report is meant to complement the MassDEP technical assistance grant-supported study being overseen by Ms. Trabert, which will provide a five-year solid waste strategy for the City. Mr. Smith commented that the report should make specific recommendations that support the overall waste reduction goals recommended by the SMMC regardless of the cost implications. Councilor Leary suggested that: the SMMC consider building a broad coalition of community groups, City Councilors and other stakeholders for its recommendations; the SMMC make broad recommendations and not specific implementations recommendations; the SMMC continue to advocate for EPR; and the SMMC consider inviting the Mayor to a future SMMC meeting to discuss the overall direction of the report.

Ms. Kahng suggested that the SMMC-defined zero waste goal should be officially adopted by the City (whether through the Council or Mayor); that curbside food waste composting become an integral part of curbside waste collection; and that a SMART program implementing fees for solid waste disposal be implemented for the next waste collection contract in 2025, or the City will have to wait another five years before the next opportunity.

The SMMC agreed on the following next steps:

1. Mr. Parker will act as the report editor, consolidating the three subcommittee reports;
2. Within the next two weeks, SMMC members should send Ms. Kahng any questions/comments on the draft subcommittee reports and she will forward these to the appropriate subcommittee;
3. At the next meeting SMMC members will be asked to propose/discuss their suggested recommendations for curbside waste reduction for the final report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the SMMC will be a Zoom remote meeting and is scheduled for Thursday, July 22, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Documents provided/discussed at meeting:

1. *May 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes.*
2. *Letter from Ms. Kahng, SMMC Chair, sent to the City Council on behalf of the SMMC in support of additional SMMD staffing, dated June 11, 2021.*
3. *SMMC Subcommittee Reports dated May and June, 2021 and draft Introduction provided by Waneta Trabert (undated).*
4. *June 2021 SMMD Update. Dated June 18, 2021. Provided to the SMMC by Waneta Trabert, SMMD Director, in advance of the meeting.*