

**Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, October 27, 2022, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom Online Meeting**

**Members in Attendance:** Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle, Vice Chair, Carl Valente, Secretary, Steven Ferrey, Meryl Kessler, Alan Gordon, Karen Slote and Robin Maltz.

**Members Absent:** John Lewis, Miles Smith and Jim McGonagle, Commissioner, DPW, Ex-Officio.

**Other Participants:** Alison Leary, City Council, Phil Arpino, Superintendent of Beautification, Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture, Waneta Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division, Harry Saunders, Shara Ertel, Sonya McKnight and Seth Parker.

**Update on Big Belly and Victor Stanley Public Waste Receptacle Program:**

Phil Arpino, Superintendent of the Beautification Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture provided the following update on this trial program:

- There is approximately a 16 percent contamination rate for the Big Belly receptacles;
- The primary contaminants are food waste and dog waste;
- The Victor Stanley trial receptacles do not appear to be meeting the City's needs, largely due to problems with rodents entering the units;
- The City is planning to stay with the Big Belly receptacles and is currently out to bid with bids due November 3; and
- The newer Big Belly receptacles that are currently available address many of the issues the City has had with the older (6 years) Big Belly receptacles.

**Discussion on Private Hauler Ordinance**

City Councilor Alison Leary briefed the SMMC on the draft Private Hauler Ordinance she would like to propose to the City Council. The following comments were made by Councilor Leary:

- This draft Ordinance needs additional work;
- The Department of Health and Human Services currently issues permit to approximately two dozen haulers, although Ms. Leary would prefer that this task be done by the Department of Public Works;
- In interviews with some haulers, the estimated cost of moving to a separate trash and recycling pick up will be \$200-250 per month, per landlord, for the additional pick up and disposal;
- One hauler said contamination is a significant problem with single stream recycling;

Comments from SMMC members included:

- It may be helpful to do modeling of the cost implications of mandatory recycling by private haulers;

- Perhaps this Ordinance should be put on hold until the Zero Waste Management Plan is completed;
- Recycling Works can provide technical assistance to businesses who wish to undertake a recycling program; and
- Ms. Slote and Ms. Kahng will assist Ms. Leary on redrafting this proposed Ordinance.

Ms. Leary asked the SMMC for a straw vote on whether they would support this type of Ordinance. On a roll call vote: Ms. Kahng, Ms. Rambelle, Ms. Kessler, Mr. Gordon, Ms. Slote and Ms. Maltz voting yes. Mr. Valente voting no. Mr. Ferrey, no position.

### **Approval of September 29, 2022 Meeting Minutes:**

On the motion by Ms. Kahng, seconded by Ms. Kessler, the Meeting Minutes of September 29, 2022 were approved 7-0-1 on a roll call vote. Ms. Kahng, Ms. Rambelle, Mr. Valente, Ms. Kessler, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Ferrey and Ms. Maltz voting yes. Ms. Slote abstaining.

### **Black Earth Customer Survey Results:**

Mr. Gordon led a discussion regarding a recent survey of Black Earth subscribers:

- 300 of the most recent subscribers were surveyed, of which 100 responded to the survey;
- In response to the question, how did you learn about the Black Earth program, 60 responded, ‘by seeing the bins’ and 30 responded, ‘by word of mouth.’
- In response to the question, how long did you wait after learning about the program before signing up, 1/3 responded ‘right away’ and 1/3 responded more than one year.
- When asked about the delay in signing up, more than ½ responded that it was due to the cost.
- When asked for suggestions on promoting this service, responses included:
  - Add a URL on the bins to assist interested residents in signing up
  - Promote at the schools
  - Add an insert to a water bill (in process)
  - Provide countertop bins to users
  - Promote the program at more City events
  - Institute a trial period with a reduced fee.

### **SMMD Update:**

Ms. Trabert reviewed the October SMMD update, dated October 21, 2022, responding to a number of questions and comments from Commission members.

- Ms. Trabert explained for the past two months, the City has experienced significant costs for disposing of recycled materials and this is expected to continue. She was unsure of the reasons other than many recyclables, such as recycled paper, currently have no value on the market.
- In response to a question, Ms. Trabert commented that she expects that the planned zero waste plan will be comprehensive in terms of including all types and producers of solid waste.

- Ms. Traber noted the City’s current fees for the new State-mandated mattress recycling program: \$35/piece for dropoff at the Resource Recovery Center (Rumford Ave.); \$50/piece for curbside pickup.

**Public Comments/Open Announcements:**

There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**Next Meetings:** The next two meetings of the SMMC will be: Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7 p.m. via Zoom and Thursday, December 15, 2022 via Zoom.

***Documents Provided/Discussed at Meeting:***

1. *Draft Private Haulers Ordinance*
2. *Survey data on cost of pick up by private haulers for trash and recycling*
3. *September 29, 2022 Meeting Minutes*
4. *Black Earth customer survey results presentation*
5. *October 2022 SMMD Update, dated October 21, 2022*