

Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 13, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Online Meeting

Members in Attendance: Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle, Vice Chair, Carl Valente, Secretary, Meryl Kessler (left the meeting at 8:33 p.m.), Robin Maltz, Miles Smith, Karen Slote (joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.), John Lewis, Seth Parker and Alan Gordon.

Members Absent: Steve Ferrey, Jim McGonagle, Commissioner, DPW, Ex-Officio.

Other Participants: Alison Leary, City Council, Waneta Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division, Sonja McKnight.

Approval of November 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes:

On the motion by Miles Smith, seconded by Seth Parker, the Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2021 were approved 9-0 on a roll call vote. Sunwoo Kahng, Miles Smith, Marian Rambelle, Carl Valente, Meryl Kesler, Alan Gordon, Robin Maltz, John Lewis and Seth Parker voting yes.

SMMC Election:

Ms. Kahng reminded the Commission members that Ms. Maltz and Mr. Smith are serving as Election Coordinators for the selection of Commission officers. Nominations should be sent to them. There is currently at least one candidate for each of the three officer positions.

MassRecycle Events with Green Newton Membership:

This item was deferred.

SMMC Report Rollout Update:

Ms. Kahng and Ms. Slote reported on the following:

- Ms. Kahng, Ms. Slote and Ms. Trabert participated in the December 2 forum sponsored by Green Newton and the Newton Free Library (Zoom) on moving to zero waste in Newton. Good feedback was received on the SMMC Report.
- There will be additional presentations on the SMMC Report to the City Council's Public Facilities Committee, on January 19, 2022. Commission members were asked to attend.
- Ms. Kahng and Ms. Slote met with Mayor Fuller, Shawna Sullivan, Deputy DPW Commissioner/Chief of Staff, Jim McGonagle, DPW Commissioner and Jonathan Yeo, CEO, on December 9, 2021 to discuss the SMMC Report. The Mayor expressed her preference to be cautious in making changes to the residential trash/recycling curbside collection program. She encouraged educational campaigns to raise composting and diversion rates while building up to any changes that may be appropriate for the current collection contract when it ends in three years. The Mayor's Office will assess the SMMC recommendations further when the SMMD report (i.e., DEP grant funded study) comes out in June 2022.

- Ms. Kessler suggested that the Commission send an article regarding the SMMC Report to the village 14.com website.
- Ms. Kahng has reached out to the League of Women Voters of Newton for a possible presentation, to be scheduled in May or June of 2022.
- Ms. Leary commented that a draft ordinance requiring private haulers that collect trash to also provide recycling services is close to being ready. She expects significant objections from the business community. Ms. Leary will let the SMMC know when this topic will come before Council committees.

Compostable Ware, Black Earth and Newton Restaurants:

Mr. Lewis and Mr. Gordon reported on their discussion with Black Earth Compost and Eco-Products:

- Eco-Products markets compostable containers that can be used by restaurants.
- There may be a role for the SMMC in informing Newton restaurants of this product and the Black Earth food composting program.

Plastics Reduction Working Group Update:

Ms. Kahng and Mr. Gordon reported that City Councilor Vicky Danberg has organized a group to look at expanding the ban on certain non-recyclable food containers, adding black plastic containers and straws to the list of banned products. The group, which includes high school students, is looking at the much more comprehensive Brookline bylaw on this topic.

Organics Processing Discussion:

Ms. Kahng led a discussion on the composting and anerobic digestion presentation (by Connor Miller of Black Earth Composting and Michael Orr, Recycling Director, City of Cambridge) at the previous meeting of the Commission.

SMMD Update:

Ms. Trabert reported/discussed the following:

- She asked whether a planned paper shredding event planned for April 2022 should not be scheduled during school vacation week. The general consensus was to avoid this week because so many families travel during this time, particularly at the beginning of the week.
- She is looking for a date for another paint collection event.
- She is working with NewTV on Public Service Announcements on various waste disposal/recycling options in Newton.
- The fall yard waste collection program was successful, with few collection delays. City staff had to supplement Waste Management with collection trucks on 26 occasions.
- Relocation of the Goodwill trailer is being considered, perhaps to a site other than Rumford Avenue. In the past, this site has experienced excessive traffic and unauthorized dumping associated with this trailer.

Public Comments/Open Announcements:

There were no additional public comments.

The SMMC recognized and thanked Seth Parker for serving a total of 10 years on the Commission. This is his last meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the SMMC is scheduled for Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Documents Provided/Discussed at Meeting:

- 1. December 2021 SMMD Update, dated 12/9/2021*
- 2. November 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes*