

Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Online Meeting

Members in Attendance: Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle, Vice Chair (left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.), Carl Valente, Secretary, Meryl Kessler, Robin Maltz, Miles Smith (joined the meeting at 7:40p.m.), Karen Slote, John Lewis (joined the meeting at 7:37 p.m.), and Alan Gordon.

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

Other Participants: Julia Malakie, City Council (joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.), Waneta Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division, Vince McKay.

Approval of January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes:

On the motion by Alan Gordon, seconded by Robin Maltz, the Meeting Minutes of January 27, 2022 were approved 7-0 on a roll call vote. Sunwoo Kahng, Marian Rambelle, Carl Valente, Meryl Kesler, Alan Gordon, Robin Maltz and Karen Slote voting yes.

Discussion of 2021 SMMC Annual Report and 2022 Goals:

Ms. Kahng reviewed a draft of the 2021 SMMC Annual Report. SMMC members made a number of suggestions and edits. One specific edit was to add language to both the February 24 SMMC meeting Minutes and the 2021 SMMC Annual Report that explained how the SMMC voted in 2019 (i.e., the 2020 Annual Report) to recommend to the Mayor and City Council adoption of a 70 percent waste reduction goal by 2050. The SMMC recommendation, however, was not formally made to the Mayor and City Council until the issuance of the SMMC's November 2021 report (discussed below).

Ms. Kahng will send a revised draft 2021 Annual Report to SMMC members before its March meeting.

Discussion of Building a Comprehensive Zero Waste Plan:

In the SMMC Report: *Setting the Path to Solid Waste: Recommendations on the Future of Residential Curbside Waste Management in Newton (11/9/2021)*, the Commission recommends that the City fund a comprehensive zero waste plan. Ms. Kahng opined that the Mayor, City Council and taxpayers would likely want to know what such a plan would entail before directing City funds for such a purpose. The following 'visions' of a comprehensive zero waste plan were offered:

- Ms. Trabert suggested that the plan identify key strategies to reduce solid waste; identify how the City can measure and reduce its carbon footprint as it relates to solid waste activities; and identify strategies to be considered in order to achieve a zero waste goal.
- Mr. Gordon suggested that the plan include a financial analysis of the impact of any recommended zero waste strategies.

- Mr. Lewis suggested that the plan include establishing targeted (by year) waste reduction goals and strategies for meeting these goals.
- Ms. Slote suggested that the plan should identify the ‘end goal’ of the City’s solid waste reduction aspirations and target dates when these goals could be met; that there should be financial estimates to reach each goal; and that the plan include a timetable for implementing the zero waste strategies.
- Ms. Kahng suggested that a zero waste plan should guide the City in: understanding the steps to reach waste reduction goals and measure progress; addressing recycling and organics diversion in the Newton Schools; gaining acceptance for businesses to recycle and divert organics; and helping the City design a data tracking and enforcement process.
- Ms. Trabert suggested that the Commission review the waste reduction goals found in the City of Cambridge Zero Waste Master Plan 10/1/2019).
- Mr. Lewis suggested that a zero waste plan should help better coordinate zero waste strategies among various sectors and stakeholders.
- Mr. Gordon suggested that the purpose of the plan should be to establish waste reduction goals for the City, and then strategies for reaching these goals.
- Mr. Smith suggested that the plan should include specific examples of strategies for waste reduction.
- Ms. Slote suggested that the plan include specific waste reduction strategies, similar to the Brookline plan.

Business Recycling Ordinance Update:

This item was postponed to a future meeting.

SMMC Report Rollout Update:

Ms. Kahng reported that on February 3 a presentation on the SMMC Report was made to the Newton League of Women Voters, which was subsequently reported in a Boston Globe article. In addition, the SMMC Chair will send letters to the Mayor and City Council requesting that ARPA funds be used to fund the cost of the zero waste plan recommended in the Report.

Plastics Reductions Working Group Update:

Ms. Kahng reported the following:

- This Working Group will survey 270-290 food establishments regarding switching from black plastic food containers to a product that is recyclable. The next meeting of the Working Group is March 3.

SMMD Update:

The following was reported/discussed:

- A resident has inquired on whether there could be a food compost collection site at the Farmer’s Markets.
- A suggestion was made that the hours at the Rumford Ave. site be easier to find on the Recycle Right App.

- In response to a question, Ms. Trabert responded that she is looking at options for continuing the recycling cart sticker/survey program this summer.
- A question was asked about the status of the recycling markets, as it appears that sometimes the City pays to process recyclables and other times it receives revenues from recyclable materials.
- In response to a question, Ms. Trabert responded that WM, the City's solid waste and recyclable materials collection vendor, is not obligated to share with the City what recyclable materials are actually recycled and what are disposed of.

Public Comments/Open Announcements:

There were no additional public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the SMMC is scheduled for Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Documents Provided/Discussed at Meeting:

1. *February 2022 SMMD Update, dated 2/18/2022*
2. *January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes*
3. *Draft of 2021 SMMC Annual Report and 2022 Goals*
4. *Draft letters to Mayor and City Council requesting ARPA funding for a Comprehensive Zero Waste Plan*