

Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 23, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Online Meeting

Members in attendance: Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle, Vice Chair, Carl Valente, Secretary (joined the meeting at 7:40 p.m.), Steve Ferrey, Meryl Kessler, Robin Maltz (joined the meeting at 7:25 p.m.), Seth Parker, Karen Slote.

Members absent: John Lewis, Miles Smith, Jim McGonagle, Commissioner, DPW, Ex-Officio.

Other participants: Waneta Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division, Alan Gordon, Kol Birke.

Approval of August 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes:

On the motion by Karen Slote, seconded by Sunwoo Kahng, the Meeting Minutes of August 18, 2021 were approved 6-0 on a roll call vote. Sunwoo Kahng, Marian Rambelle, Steve Ferrey, Meryl Kessler, Seth Parker, and Karen Slote voting yes.

Approval of September 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Not included on the Agenda):

On the motion by Karen Slote, seconded by Sunwoo Kahng, the Meeting Minutes of September 8, 2021 were approved 5-0 on a roll call vote, with one abstention. Sunwoo Kahng, Marian Rambelle, Steve Ferrey, Meryl Kessler, Seth Parker, and Karen Slote voting yes, and Meryl Kessler abstaining.

Announcements:

Ms. Kahng attended the City's Licensing Commission public hearing on September 21, 2021 for discussion of the "nip bottle" ban being considered in Newton. However, due to an insufficient number of commission members in attendance, the hearing was postponed until October.

Ms. Kahng wrote and submitted a letter to the City's Licensing Commission in support of the nip bottle ban, on behalf of the Commission, as authorized at the September 8, 2021 meeting.

Ms. Kahng testified as an individual at a state legislature committee public hearing in support of a proposed expanded bottle bill.

Ms. Kahng posed the question of whether the Chair can speak on behalf of the Commission in public hearings, such as the above, when the timing does not allow for first obtaining approval by the Commission. Ms. Trabert replied that there is no problem for the Chair to do so in cases where the City Council has already approved a resolution on a particular matter (e.g., extended producer responsibility (EPR)). But it is less clear in cases where the City Council has not voted on or approved a position on a particular matter, as the Commission also represents the City. Ms. Trabert recommended inquiring with Marie Lawlor of the City's Legal Department.

Green Newton and several other organizations recently prepared a survey for the City Council candidates to provide their views on environmental-related issues. Ms. Kahng provided a question for the survey: Do you support reduction of residential waste by 25% by 2030 and by 70% by 2050, and committing the resources for this?

Planning for SMMC Report:

Ms. Kahng led a discussion of the Commission members regarding the SMMC's draft Report on Residential Curbside Waste Management. The discussion began with an overview of Brookline's draft zero waste goals (August 2021), including "reducing the amount of municipal solid waste disposed to landfill and incineration by at least 50% by 2030 compared to 2015, and increase the diversion rate away from landfill and incineration to at least 70% by 2030." Several members expressed that Brookline's proposed 2030 goals seem ambitious. Several members attended Brookline's public meetings on setting draft zero waste goals in the draft report and reported that the Town's DPW and others appeared to be in favor of the proposed goals.

Ms. Trabert recommended including examples of other large municipalities that have implemented biweekly curbside collection, to support the possibility of a shift to biweekly collection to reduce waste. It was also suggested that it would also be helpful to SMMD hire a consultant to prepare a zero-waste plan for the City. The commission will look into the cost of Brookline's zero waste consultant.

Mr. Parker summarized several recent changes made to the draft Report since the version distributed prior to the meeting including: updating the MassDEP waste characterization table; and updating Appendix C.

There was a general consensus to add to the Report a recommendation that the City provide funding to develop a zero-waste plan and that, in addition, the SMMC separately request such funding in a letter to the Mayor.

It was suggested that the SMMC present its Report to the Public Facilities Committee of the City Council.

There was a general consensus to present the Report in January 2022 after the new City Council is seated.

It was agreed that further revisions will be made to the report based on the discussion at today's SMMC meeting with a plan to vote on the Report at the October 28, 2021 meeting.

It was suggested that a chart be added to the Report showing the total cost to the City for trash and recycling collection, disposal and administration.

September 2021 SMMD Update (Not included on the Posted Agenda)

Ms. Trabert reported on the following:

- She would like to schedule a special collection event for paint at the Resource Recovery Center on Rumford Avenue. It was the consensus of the SMMC that Sunday, October 31 would be an acceptable date for such an event.
- In response to Ms. Rambelle’s question, Ms. Trabert reported that recycling markets have improved dramatically. In July the City received \$7,000 in recycling rebates and \$16,000 was received in August. An even larger rebate is expected in September.
- Ms. Trabert had a meeting with City Councilor Alison Leary and the Legal Department to discuss: a recycling mandate ordinance for all entities located in the City; and a requirement that all commercial haulers bundle recycling services with their trash collection service. Said proposed ordinances would be consistent with MassDEP guidance.

Business Recycling-Councilor Alison Leary

This item was postponed.

Public Comments:

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, October 28 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Documents provided/discussed at meeting:

1. *Draft Report on Residential Curbside Waste Management, Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission, (ver. 15, September 2021).*