

**Newton Sustainable Materials Management Commission (SMMC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 26, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom Online Meeting**

**Members in Attendance:** Sunwoo Kahng, Chair, Marian Rambelle (left at 8:30 p.m.), Vice Chair, Carl Valente, Secretary, Steven Ferrey, Meryl Kessler (arrived at 8:15 p.m.), Alan Gordon, Karen Slote, Miles Smith, John Lewis and Robin Maltz.

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

**Other Participants:** Alison Leary, City Council (left at 7:50 p.m.), Waneta Trabert, Director, DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division, Shara Ertel, Sonya McKnight and Cheryl Salvucci.

**Approval of December 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes:**

On the motion by Mr. Gordon, Seconded by Mr. Smith, the Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2022, were approved 9-0 on a roll call vote. Ms. Kahng, Ms. Rambelle, Mr. Valente, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Ferrey, Ms. Slote, Mr. Smith and Ms. Maltz voting yes.

**Officer Election:** Ms. Maltz moved the following slate of SMMC officers for 2023:

- Ms. Kahng, Chair
- Ms. Kessler, Vice Chair
- Mr. Valente, Secretary

On the motion by Ms. Maltz, seconded by Mr. Gordon, the slate of officers was approved 9-0 on a roll call vote. Ms. Kahng, Ms. Rambelle, Mr. Valente, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Ferrey, Ms. Slote, Mr. Smith and Ms. Maltz voting yes.

On behalf of the SMMC, Ms. Kahng expressed her appreciation to Ms. Rambelle for her years of service on the Commission, both as Chair and Vice Chair, and particularly for her role to reinvigorate the Commission after an extended period of dormancy.

**Zero Waste Updates:**

Ms. Leary updated the Commission on the proposed Private Haulers ordinance that she is planning to bring to the City Council:

- Private haulers would be required to provide both recycling and trash collection to their commercial and institutional customers;
- The ordinance, if approved, would help put the City's businesses and institutions in compliance with the State (MassDEP) waste disposal bans;
- Ms. Leary is considering including in the ordinance a provision to only require cardboard recycling the first year, followed by comprehensive single-stream recycling;
- In response to a question, Ms. Trabert responded that the City would be unable to collect data on tonnage collected;

- This proposed ordinance is likely to be docketed to the City Council’s Programs and Services Committee in February;
- On the motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Slote, the Chair is authorized to draft and send a letter to the Programs and Services Committee in support of this ordinance, 8-0-1 on a roll call vote. Ms. Kahng, Ms. Rambelle, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Ferrey, Ms. Slote, Mr. Smith and Ms. Maltz voting yes. Mr. Valente abstaining.

Mr. Gordon reviewed the proposed expanded Sustainable Packaging ordinance (led by Councilor Vicky Danberg) to ban certain single use items. This ordinance would expand the number of items listed in the existing ordinance. Some of the proposed items include, but are not limited to: single use water bottles, black plastic (currently not recyclable), food establishments to provide take out utensils only upon customer request, intentional release of helium balloons. The effective date, if passed, would allow time for businesses to use up existing stock of newly-banned items.

It was noted that the Health and Human Services Department does not currently allow customers to use their own container for restaurant take-out food, except when the customer is eating at the restaurant.

On the motion by Mr. Gordon, seconded by Mr. Smith, the Chair was authorized to draft and send a letter in support of the proposed expanded Sustainable Packaging ordinance, 9-0, on a roll call vote. Ms. Kahng, Ms. Rambelle, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Ferrey, Ms. Slote, Mr. Smith, Mr. Valente and Ms. Maltz voting yes.

**Open Announcements:**

Ms. Kahng announced that there will be an on-line discussion/presentation by Green Newton on the proposed expanded sustainable packaging ordinance, “Reducing Single-use Packaging Waste in Newton - What’s in the Works”. This will be hosted by the Library on February 9 from 7-8 p.m.

**Annual Report:**

Ms. Kahng plans to have the final draft of the SMMC 2022 Annual Report for the March meeting. She would like Commission members to email her with any proposed SMMC goals for 2023. This will be further discussed at the February 2023 SMMC meeting.

**Encouraging Collaboration on Zero Waste Beyond SMMD:**

Ms. Kahng asked the Commission members if the SMMC should have more influence on the sustainable materials management in other City departments, e.g., offer its opinion on the construction of new City buildings, in order to encourage the use of more sustainable materials, encourage reuse of materials from de-constructed buildings, and to reduce construction waste.

Ms. Trabert concurred and said she could help outline possible projects, e.g., more could be done in the City schools regarding recycling and zero waste education and the City’s procurement policy could be shaped to include more sustainable materials.

Ms. Kahng commented on a recent presentation by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department regarding the recycling of artificial turf in those City fields slated for turf replacement. The Commission was not interested in joining an effort for a moratorium on artificial turf fields while this matter is further reviewed by the City, but would be interested in inviting representatives from the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department to an SMMC meeting to discuss artificial turf recyclability and toxicity. The Commission members agreed that questions should be sent to the Department in advance of the meeting.

Ms. Kahng asked Commission members to email her with any ideas for encouraging collaboration on zero waste reduction in other City department and agencies.

**Scope of a Comprehensive Zero Waste Plan:**

Ms. Trabert explained that she is currently reviewing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) of other cities and towns who have completed a comprehensive zero waste plan. These RFPs will assist her in developing the Newton RFP. Ms. Kahng wanted to ensure that the City's RFP will include plans for managing sustainable materials management in businesses, construction, schools and institutions as well as in the residential sector as recommended in the SMMC report.

**SMMD Update:**

Ms. Trabert reviewed the January SMMD update, dated January 28, 2023. The Commission members were particularly interested in the Boston College Cart Top Sticker Program Report, dated May 2022, which provided data on the percentage of trash carts that were found to be full, half-full, etc. This data may be useful if the City moves to a variable pricing scheme for carts of different sizes. Ms. Trabert did not think the percentage of 50% full trash carts would necessarily make it more challenging to implement small cart sizes in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

**Next Meetings:** The next meeting of the SMMC will be Thursday, February 23, 2023 via Zoom.

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

- 1. December 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes*
- 2. January 2023 SMMD Update, dated January 23, 2023*
- 3. Boston College Cart Top Sticker Program Report: May 2022*