

## **Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes for April 5, 2016

Submitted by Cynthia Snow

The meeting took place in the Public Health Building Library at 7:00 P.M.

**Committee Members Present:** John Dempsey, Cynthia Snow, Clint Richmond, Susan Rittling, Amie Lindenboim, Ed Gilbert

**Absent:** Barbara Field

**Public:** Harry Friedman, Susan Granoff, Eric McNulty, Mary Dewart

**Handouts:** Agenda, Minutes from March meeting, Tonnages and commodity spreadsheets for March

**March 2016 Minutes** were approved as circulated

### **DPW Report**

Mr. Gilbert reviewed the tonnage spreadsheet and commodity rates distributed. Year-to-date, recycling is down about 3% (160 tons); solid waste is up slightly (21 tons). One possibility for some of the change may be a change in the mix of recycling, e.g., more light weight plastic bottles. Charges for recycling were down slightly in March.

A survey of residents on a plastic bottle ban (600 responses so far) shows 60% opposed, 40% in favor.

Mr. Gilbert is exploring a new company for recycling of electronics: Virescentint (<http://www.virescentintl.com/>). Recycling is done at the company site in Norwood, and the Town would realize some income based on sales of recovered materials. (At present, we pay 16c per pound for electronics recycling for an average of 4 tons/month.)

The organics collection bins at the Teen Center were opened at an event earlier in the day.

### **Public Hearing on Warrant Article #17 (Resolution Regarding the Mechanization of Trash Pickup by the Town)**

Four members of the public attended the public hearing section of the meeting to comment in favor of Warrant Article 17, which is a non-binding resolution recommending that exceptions to cart requirements be made in some situations. The following points were made:

- Toter carts (required for automated pick-up) are sturdy enough to withstand mechanized handling but are more unwieldy and heavier when filled with trash (as opposed to recycling) than light-weight trash barrels or bags.
- Having toters for trash as well as recycling will increase the total number of toters that residents have to store and move.
- Toters would be difficult to handle for some residents because of the configuration of their property, e.g., on Claflin Road, some of the attached row buildings have as many as four units, with little or no common area in a basement for cart storage. Some of these buildings also have no rear access to an alley, and the exit to the street from the basements is a small door with steps inside and/or outside that make it difficult or impossible to get a wheeled cart out.
- Some elderly or disabled residents may not be able to move trash toters to the street or to lift them onto snow banks in the winter. Hiring someone to handle trash can be difficult

- and expensive. Accommodations in such cases would seem to be required under the state and federal Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Toters stored in front yards or on front porches create an eyesore.
  - Trash barrels can be nested to take up less indoor space when not in use; toters cannot be.
  - Some procedure needs to be developed for those who wish to seek exemptions.

Mr. Dempsey noted that exemptions were well handled by DPW staff when toters were introduced in 2010 for single stream recycling. Now DPW's need for two new trucks has resulted in the decision to purchase side-loading trucks, which have worked well for the contractors who pick up the Town's recycling and which are becoming more standard in the industry.

During further discussion after the public hearing, the committee noted the following:

- Some flexibility is needed to handle special circumstances, and constructive suggestions to DPW may be helpful.
- The majority of towns in Massachusetts do not have written exemption policies for trash pick-up.
- Other possibilities that might be considered include smaller toters and/or toters without wheels.
- Any exemption policy should be clear and not lead to large numbers of exemptions.

The committee VOTED: That Mr. Dempsey will draft a letter to the Selectmen recommending that they support the intent of the resolution and work with DPW to develop a protocol to accommodate special situations. At the request of the DPW Commissioner, SWAC would be happy to work with him to develop the protocol, for example by offering smaller standardized carts.

**Adjournment:** 8:50 P.M.

**Next meeting:** May 10, 2016 (to avoid conflict with Town election on May 3<sup>rd</sup>).