

Brookline Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes for September 6, 2016
Submitted by Barbara Field

The meeting took place in the Public Health Building at 6:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present: All present except Amie Lindenboim.

Review of minutes from June 7, 2016: Approved with a correction.

Election of Chair: John Dempsey offered to serve as chair for the coming year and was voted in unanimously.

DPW Report: Ed Gilbert

- Recycling down at 36.68 tons (last fiscal year)
- Solid waste up at 96.15 tons (last fiscal year)
- So far, this year, solid waste is down 53 tons and recycling down 7 tons
- No market for recyclables except for cardboard and paper
- Metal trip: we need to put dates together.
- Schools:
 - High School: Two compactors on the Tappan Street side; Two compactors for the Lowell Road side; They produce 22,000 pounds of trash (mostly food).
 - Schools have purchased five new compactors.
 - Devotion will use 95 gallon toters.
- Refoam it: Went out of business, and was purchased by E.L. Harvey Co. We will look into when and how to collect foam in the coming year.
- Textiles: E.L Harvey Co. will pick up cloth and small household items and small electronics. When this starts we will put out a green bag.
- Move In/Move Out: Best so far. Private companies had dumpsters. Previous years' most cited landlord turned into this year's best. Forty warning tickets were issued and \$1000 in fines were issued.

Public Hearing Discussion of Warrant Articles regarding plastic bags and polystyrene packaging:

The purpose of the articles is to update by-laws passed in 2012 based on neighboring communities and nationally. The goal is go from simple bans to comprehensive sustainable packaging laws. The basic strategy is to reduce waste, especially non-biodegradable waste.

Bags:

- Reusable bags will now need to be over 4mils thick (up from 2.25, which several Brookline stores have adopted contrary to the intent of the by-law) as in Wellesley, Watertown, etc. No PVC.
- Paper bags must have minimum recyclable content (40%). This will help our solid waste problems by increasing the demand for recycled paper. Identical to Cambridge, Somerville, Newton, Watertown, Wellesley.
- Ban polyethylene produce bags. Produce bags can be reusable or compostable. Identical to Williamstown, Lee and Lenox.
- Cover all retailers (the current by-law exempts small stores).

Packaging:

- In 13 months (Jan. 1, 2018) all food packaging will have to be biodegradable, recyclable or compostable and cannot be PETE in addition to polystyrene. Because of this requirement,

utensils, straws and stirrers made of polypropylene will not be allowed since they are not curbside recyclable.

- No polystyrene utensils, no polystyrene food service ware and packaging material (such as “peanuts”) is to be sold in stores.
- In two years (Jan. 1, 2019), all plastics 1-6 will not be allowed for food packaging similar to Oakland and other California communities.

The petitioners argued that these laws will restrict materials with low recycling rates and low value that are often downcycled into unrecyclable materials, using material which have an overall negative impact health and the environment. Plastics based on non-renewable fossil fuels they are unsustainable. Plastic increases the demand for fossil fuels. Mr. Richmond stated that we can't keep fossil fuels in the ground and meet our climate change goals if we are using them for plastics. The litter issue is significant aesthetically and because it costs DPW and other Town staff time to clean up.

Vacancies on SWAC: We tossed around ideas and plan to reach out to the Green Caucus for a member.

Adjournment: 8 P.M.

Next meeting: October 4, 2016 in The Public Health building @6:30 P.M.